

**Bindura University  
of Science Education**



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK**

**BACHELOR OF SCIENCES (HONOURS) DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK**

**RESEARCH PROJECT**

*Exploring re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwe prisons. A case study of Chinhoyi  
Remand.*

**By**

**FARAI MUTYANDA (B213009B)**

**JUNE 2025**

**A dissertation submitted to Bindura University of Science Education, Faculty of Social  
Sciences and Humanities, Department of Social Work, in partial fulfillment of  
requirements for the Bachelor of Science Hours Degree in Social Work**

**Declaration**

I, Farai Mutyanda (B213009B) do hereby declare that this work is for my own origin and it has not been submitted in any faculty at this university or at any other colleges or universities for the award of a degree, diploma or certificate.

Candidate

Date

...../.....20.....

FARAI MUTYANDA (B213009B)

Supervisor

Date

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## Release Form

I certify that **Farai Mutyanda** student number B213009B was under my supervision. I further certify that he was attended all the scheduled meetings with me and that he has fulfilled all the requirements that I have set before him as the supervisor. It is my professional judgement that the research project is of sufficiently high standard as to be submitted with my name attached to it's as the supervisor. I hereby release the student without reservation to submit his research project for marking.

Name of Supervisor: Mr Gonorashe

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

## Chairperson of the Department Board of Examiners

The departmental board of examiners is satisfied that this dissertation report meets the examination requirements and therefore I recommend Bindura University of Science Education to accept this research project by Farai Mutyanda titled: **Exploring re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwe prisons. A case study of Chinhoyi Remand Prison** in partial fulfilment of the Bachelor of Science, Honors Degree in Social Work.

Chairperson

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## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to thank Almighty God for granting me the strength, wisdom, and perseverance throughout this academic journey. I am deeply grateful to my father, whose unwavering support, encouragement, and belief in me have been my greatest source of motivation. His sacrifices and prayers have carried me through the most challenging times.

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May God bless you all abundantly?

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



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*22/8/25*

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*22.08/25*

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## **Dedication**

I wholeheartedly dedicate this study to my father, Mr. A. Mutyanda, for being my unwavering source of strength and for his constant love and support throughout this research.

## Plagiarism report

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### MARKING GUIDE: UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PROJECT

<b>Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>Possible Mark</b>	<b>Actual Mark</b>
Abstract	10	
Background to the study- what is it that has made you choose this particular topic? Include objectives or purpose of the study	20	
Statement of the problem	10	
Research questions	15	
Assumptions	5	
Significance of the study	15	
Limitations of the study	5	
Delimitations of the study	5	
Definition of terms	10	
Summary	5	
Total	100	
<b>Weighted Mark</b>	15	

Comments.....  
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### Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction- what do you want to write about in this chapter?	5	
Conceptual or theoretical framework	10	
Identification, interpretations and evaluation of relevant literature and citations	40	
Contextualisation of the literature to the problem	10	
Establishing gaps in knowledge and how the research will try to bridge these gaps	10	
Structuring and logical sequencing of ideas	10	
Discursive skills	10	
Summary	5	
Total	100	
<b>Weighted Mark</b>	20	

Comments.....  
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### Chapter 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction	5	
Research design	10	
What instruments are you using to collect data?	30	
Population, sample and sampling techniques to be used in the study	25	



Procedures for collecting data	<b>15</b>	
Data presentation and analysis procedures	<b>10</b>	
Summary	<b>5</b>	
Total	<b>100</b>	
<b>Weighted Mark</b>	<b>25</b>	

Comments.....

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#### **Chapter 4 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

Introduction	<b>5</b>	
Data presentation	<b>50</b>	
Is there any attempt to link literature review with new findings	<b>10</b>	
How is the new knowledge trying to fill the gaps identified earlier	<b>10</b>	
Discursive and analytical skills	<b>20</b>	
Summary	<b>5</b>	
Total	<b>100</b>	
<b>Weighted Mark</b>	<b>30</b>	

Comments

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#### **Chapter 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Introduction- focus of the chapter	<b>5</b>	
Summary of the whole project including constraints	<b>25</b>	
Conclusions- have you come up with answers to the problem under study	<b>30</b>	
Recommendations(should be based on findings) Be precise	<b>30</b>	
References	<b>5</b>	
Appendices i.e. copies of instruments used and any other relevant material	<b>5</b>	
Total	<b>100</b>	
<b>Weighted mark</b>	<b>10</b>	

Comments

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**SUMMARY:-**

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**Chapter 2** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Chapter 4** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 5**

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## **Abstract**

*Re-offending among juveniles remains a significant challenge within Zimbabwe's criminal justice system, undermining efforts toward rehabilitation and social reintegration. This study explores the underlying causes and contributing factors to juvenile recidivism, using Chinhoyi Remand Prison as a case study. Employing a qualitative research design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, Focus group discussions and document analysis with incarcerated juveniles, correctional officers, and social workers. . The study also, utilized a sample size of fifteen including nine juvenile's re-offenders, four correctional officers and two social workers who provided useful information to the researcher. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns and themes within the data. Key findings reveal that re-offending is driven by a complex interplay of factors, including lack of effective rehabilitation programs, peer influence, poverty, family breakdown, and stigmatization upon release. The study also found that institutional shortcomings, such as overcrowding, inadequate psychological support, and absence of post-release follow-up services, contribute significantly to the high rate of juvenile recidivism. These insights highlight the urgent need for a more holistic and rehabilitative approach within the juvenile justice system in Zimbabwe. The study recommends policy reforms focused on rehabilitation, family involvement, and community-based support mechanisms to reduce re-offending and promote successful reintegration of juvenile offenders Understanding these factors contributing to re-offending is crucial to social work profession and other Organizations who serve this population to improve.*

## List of Abbreviations

<b>ACPF</b>	African Child Policy Forum
<b>CJS</b>	Criminal Justice System
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of Child
<b>CRP</b>	Chinhoyi Remand Prison
<b>CP</b>	Commissioner OF Prisons
<b>DSD</b>	Department of Social Development
<b>FDG</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Funds
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>UPS</b>	Uganda Prisons Services
<b>ZPCS</b>	Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

### **Introduction**

Re-offending among juvenile inmates remains an urgent challenge for criminal justice systems worldwide. In Zimbabwe, juvenile recidivism not only undermines public safety but also indicates potential shortcomings within rehabilitation and reintegration mechanisms. Chinhoyi Remand Prison, located in Mashonaland West Province, houses a significant number of young offenders aged 12–18 who have been convicted of various offences. Despite efforts by Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services (ZPCS) to provide rehabilitative services, many juveniles released from Chinhoyi Remand Prison return to criminal activity, perpetuating cycles of violence and undermining community cohesion. This chapter introduces the study, outlines its background, articulates the problem statement, and presents the research objectives, questions, significance, scope, limitations, and definitions of key terms.

### **1.2 Background of the Study**

The issue of juvenile offending and subsequent re-offending is a critical challenge facing many criminal justice systems globally, including Zimbabwe. Juvenile offenders, who represent a vulnerable and often marginalized group in society, face a complex array of factors contributing to their involvement in criminal activities. In Zimbabwe, the situation is particularly concerning, as many juvenile offenders re-enter the criminal justice system after serving time, indicating a failure in rehabilitation and reintegration efforts. The background to this study is rooted in understanding the socio-economic, psychological, and institutional factors that influence juvenile offenders' likelihood of re-offending. In Zimbabwe, a variety of factors contribute to the persistence of juvenile crime, including poverty, lack of educational opportunities, familial instability, and exposure to violence. In prisons, these young offenders are often subjected to harsh conditions that may reinforce their criminal behavior rather than support their rehabilitation. Therefore, this background is going to focus on the issues that contribute to re-offending among juveniles, re-integration challenges, among others starting from global to local as these issues differs depending on the location.

Re-offending among juvenile inmates remains a significant global challenge, despite various efforts by international organizations to reform justice systems and reduce recidivism. While the specific causes of juvenile re-offending may vary across countries, common challenges persist worldwide. These include inadequate rehabilitation services, insufficient reintegration strategies, and adverse socio-economic conditions that contribute to the recurrence of criminal behavior among young offenders. This section examines the global scope of juvenile re-offending, providing relevant statistics and identifying key contributing factors. Juvenile recidivism rates remain alarmingly high in many parts of the world, highlighting the limited effectiveness of current rehabilitation efforts. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2016), recidivism rates among juveniles can reach up to 50% within three years of release in both developed and developing countries. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the Youth Justice Board (2020) reported that over 40% of young offenders re-offend within one year of release, with some engaging in more serious criminal activities. In Australia, the Australian Institute of Criminology (2018) found that around 50% of juvenile offenders re-offend within two years post-release. These statistics underscore the persistent nature of juvenile recidivism and emphasize the urgent need for comprehensive, evidence-based rehabilitation and reintegration programs tailored to the unique needs of young offenders.

There are multiple global causes contributing to juvenile re-offending, with inadequate rehabilitation programs being among the most prominent. Effective rehabilitation should encompass education, vocational training, psychological counseling, and social support systems tailored to the needs of young offenders. According to Lipsey (2018), evidence-based interventions that include cognitive-behavioral therapy, family-based programs, and skills training are more likely to reduce recidivism among juveniles. However, many juvenile justice systems, especially in developing countries, lack such comprehensive programs, leading to incomplete rehabilitation and increased likelihood of re-offending. Socio-economic factors also play a critical role in juvenile delinquency and re-offending. Research by Schwalbe et al. (2017) found that poverty, limited access to quality education, and family instability significantly heighten the risk of repeat offending among youth. The absence of supportive family environments and continued economic hardship makes reintegration into society more difficult, often pushing juveniles back into criminal behavior. Moreover, adolescence is a crucial developmental stage marked by identity formation

and a strong desire for social acceptance. Studies by Monahan, Steinberg, and Cauffman (2015) highlight how peer influence can significantly impact decision-making during this period, especially in environments where adult supervision is limited. When familial or community support structures are weak, juveniles become more susceptible to negative peer pressure, increasing the chances of re-offending. As such, addressing re-offending among juveniles requires a multidimensional approach that includes targeted rehabilitation, community engagement, and strengthened socio-economic support systems.

In order to comprehensively understand juvenile re-offending, it is essential to examine contributing factors specific to the African context. Juvenile justice systems across the continent are often under-resourced and face numerous challenges that hinder effective rehabilitation and reintegration. Key issues include a lack of institutional infrastructure, limited access to educational and vocational programs, and pervasive socio-economic disparities, all of which contribute to elevated recidivism rates. While comprehensive data is scarce for many African countries, existing reports highlight several common concerns. In South Africa, overcrowding in juvenile detention centers remains a significant barrier to effective rehabilitation. According to the South African Human Rights Commission (2015), many juvenile facilities operate above capacity, with limited provision of educational, psychological, or vocational support services. Similarly, in Nigeria, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2016) reported that juvenile detention centers often offer only basic education and lack sufficient vocational training or psychological counseling. This inadequacy leaves many young offenders ill-equipped for successful reintegration, thereby increasing the risk of recidivism.

Across the continent, various national studies emphasize the impact of socio-economic conditions on re-offending. In Uganda, the Uganda Prisons Service (2016) found that approximately 35% of juveniles released within the previous year had been re-arrested. Contributing factors included poverty, limited education, and lack of access to essential social services. Similarly, the Kenya Prisons Service (2018) reported a juvenile recidivism rate of nearly 40% in urban areas, driven largely by peer pressure, unemployment, and the prevalence of gang activity. These findings

underscore the need for systemic reform and targeted interventions to address the root causes of juvenile re-offending in Africa.

Additionally, this research was focusing on understanding of re-offending among juvenile inmates in Zimbabwe a case study at Chinhoyi Remand Prison which is the local area of the researchers where there are various issues to look at. Like many other nations, Zimbabwe faces a high rate of juvenile recidivism, with young offenders frequently returning to crime after release from juvenile detention facilities. This section explores the factors contributing to juvenile re-offending in Zimbabwe, focusing on statistics, key problems, and the underlying causes of this issue. According to a 2017 report by the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service (ZPCS), recidivism among young offenders is high, with a notable proportion of juveniles who are released from detention returning to crime. The ZPCS Annual Report (2017) indicated that approximately 30% of juvenile offenders in Zimbabwe are rearrested within a year of their release, with many being involved in crimes such as theft, assault, and substance abuse-related offenses. The UNICEF Zimbabwe report (2018) also highlighted the issue of juvenile recidivism, indicating that a significant number of youth involved in the juvenile justice system in Zimbabwe come from disadvantaged backgrounds, making reintegration into society difficult. The lack of reintegration programs and post-release support services contributes to the high rate of re-offending in the country.

Chinhoyi Prison is located in Mashonaland West and serves as one of the correctional facilities for juvenile offenders in Zimbabwe. The prison has a limited capacity for housing juvenile offenders, but due to overcrowding in Zimbabwe's prison system, it frequently holds more detainees than its intended capacity. This overcrowding results in poor living conditions, limited access to rehabilitation programs, and inadequate staff to properly manage the needs of juvenile offenders. Juveniles in Chinhoyi Prison face a combination of institutional neglect, lack of resources, and societal factors that complicate their rehabilitation process. Chinhoyi Prison's juvenile section is particularly affected by insufficient educational facilities and a lack of vocational training opportunities. Despite the best efforts of some staff members, these systemic issues persist, resulting in many juveniles being incarcerated without the tools to change their behavior or reintegrate effectively into society upon release.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

The issue of juvenile re-offending in Zimbabwean prisons, particularly within the context of Chinhoyi Prison, remains a significant challenge. Despite efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate juvenile offenders, a high recidivism rate continues to undermine the effectiveness of juvenile justice systems and rehabilitation programs. Understanding the root causes and factors contributing to re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwe's prison system is crucial for informing policy and intervention strategies aimed at reducing repeat offenses. It is important to understand that, many researchers' focuses on the adults re-offending especially at Chinhoyi Remand Prison where young offenders are minority group leaving gap for understanding juvenile offending and their criminal behaviors. Also, the specific context of Zimbabwe's penal system, particularly the cultural, and institutional factors that influence juvenile offenders, remains under-explored. While re-offending among juveniles is a global concern, its specific manifestations in the Zimbabwean context are not well-documented, making it difficult to tailor interventions effectively. Due to intimidation and strictness of Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services it will be difficult to collect information on re-offending among juvenile inmates leaving a gap for researchers with limited information to understand issues behind the bars.

### **1.4 Justification of the Study**

The study examined the existing rehabilitation strategies at Chinhoyi Prison, assessing their effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement in order for successful reintegration of juvenile offenders into the society. By understanding how current programs affect juvenile offenders and where they may be failing, this research could lead to the development of more targeted, evidence-based rehabilitation programs that meet the educational, psychological, and social needs of juvenile in paving for their successful reintegration into the society. This research is also important for government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and justice systems for them to revisit legislatives in order to prevent recidivism among juvenile offenders in Zimbabwe. This research is also crucial to the juveniles in Zimbabwe as it may help them to avoid being conflict with the law knowing that at some point prison's conditions is not that conducive to accommodate them. The study is also significant due to the fact that it explores that qualitative research methods allows participants to share their knowledge and experiences without a room of

generalizing the outcome. So this study contributes to new knowledge in the area of methods for example it allows the researcher to understand issues from the horse's mouth and to compare the information to what is already known about a phenomenon.

### **1.5 Aim**

To explore re-offending among juvenile in Zimbabwe prisons. A case study of Chinhoyi Remand Prison.

### **1.6 Objectives**

- To investigate factors contributing to re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwe prisons.
- To examine impact of re-offending on inmate rehabilitation and community safety
- To analyze the available measure to address re-offending
- To develop a model for successful reintegration in Zimbabwe

### **Research questions**

- What are rehabilitation programs specifically for juveniles at Chinhoyi Remand Prison?
- What are possible solutions that can be done by Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional
- Do you feel that your time in prison has changed you? In what way? (Has it made you more determined to avoid re-offending or more likely to return to crime?)
- How involved is your family in your life while you're incarcerated? Do they visit or offer you emotional support?
- What challenges did you face in your community or family before coming to prison that may have led you to commit crime?
- How do you feel about the rehabilitation programs offered in prison, and do you think they are helping you change your behavior?
- What improvements do you think should be made to the current juvenile rehabilitation programs at Chinhoyi Remand Prison?

## **1.7 Limitations**

This study contains various limitations in the fact that Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services (ZPCS) is a para-military operates with tight security where this made it difficult to collect adequate information. Sampling size is one of the major challenge, where the researcher focuses on limited number 5-10 juveniles, 2-4, correctional officers and 2 probation officers which may not be representatives of entire population in understanding of juvenile re-offending in Zimbabwe. Also, there is limited geographic scope in which the study's focus on urban area Chinhoyi Remand Prison located in Mashonaland West Province not capturing the experiences of juvenile in rural areas in which environment differs. The time frame of data collection may be limited due to prison's restrictions and laws which could impact the quality and depth of the data collected. Meanwhile, there is room to look at methodological limitations as the use of qualitative research methods may not provide generalizable results, as the data is collected from a small, non-representative sample.

## **1.8 Delimitations of the Study**

This research focused on various delimitations in different specific areas which includes; geographic scope, Age range for juveniles, types of offences, data collection methods, time frame, sample size among others to be discussed on this section. The study will use qualitative research methods, including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observations and document analysis to mention a few to collect data from juveniles admitted at Chinhoyi Remand Prison, Correctional officers and social workers. The study also acknowledges the cultural diversity of Zimbabwe, but will not focus on specific cultural or ethnic group. On the basis of the sample size the study will involve 5-10 juvenile offenders, 2-5 correctional officers, and 1-3 social workers in order to collect information from all of them to understand issues of re-offending among juvenile offenders. The study looked at those juveniles who committed non-violent crimes such as theft, vandalism, assault, fraud, drug and substance abuse to mention a few. By focusing exclusively on juveniles, the study delimits its scope from the broader prison population, which may include adult offenders and a different set of dynamics, challenges, and rehabilitation methods. This choice

allows for a more detailed exploration of juvenile-specific issues, such as the effectiveness of juvenile rehabilitation programs, the influence of peer groups, and the impact of family and community reintegration.

## **1.9 Definition of key terms**

This section defines all key terms used by the researcher in exploring re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwe prisons using Chinhoyi Remand as a case study.

### **1.9.1 Re-offending**

Re-offending refers to the repeated involvement in criminal behavior by an individual who has previously been convicted and released, particularly among youths and juveniles, indicating a failure in the rehabilitation and reintegration mechanisms of the justice system (Muzvidziwa, 2018). This definition emphasizes the recurrence of criminal behavior and links it directly to systemic gaps in rehabilitation and reintegration efforts, particularly within the Zimbabwean context where resources, infrastructure, and policy implementation may be limited. Juvenile re-offending refers to any new arrest or police contact following an initial intervention, regardless of whether the case proceed to court (Mulvey & Schubert, 2021). These definitions highlight the recurrence of criminal or delinquent behaviors among juveniles, often linked to the effectiveness of justice interventions.

### **1.9.2 Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services (ZPCS)**

Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services is a government department responsible for administration of prison and correctional facilities in Zimbabwe (ZPCS, 2020). ZPCS mandate is to provide secure, humane, and rehabilitative custody for prisoners and to prepare them for reintegration into society (Zimbabwe Government, 2013). At its inception in 1980, the Zimbabwe Prison Service was created in terms of Section 99 (1) of the Lancaster House Constitution which provides that; “There shall be a Prison Service for the administration of prisons in Zimbabwe and for the protection of society from criminals through the incarceration and rehabilitation of



offenders and their re- integration into society”. The new Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) provides for the creation of the Prisons and Correctional Services. The addition of the words “Correctional Services” seems to suggest that the incarceration now has a bias on rehabilitation of offenders.

### **1.9.3 Juveniles**

Juveniles are defined as individuals who have not yet reached the age of majority, typically considered to be between 12 and 18 years old, depending on the jurisdiction. According to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency prevention Act of 1974, a juvenile is defined as a person who has not attained his eighteenth birthday or her nineteenth.

## **1.10 Dissertation Outline**

**Chapter 1** - introduces the research topic, background, statement of the problem, research questions, and significance of the study. It also outlines the scope, limitations, and structure of the dissertation.

**Chapter 2**- reviews existing literature on juvenile delinquency, re-offending, rehabilitation practices, and theoretical perspectives. Highlights gaps in knowledge and positions the study within scholarly debates.

**Chapter 3**- covers research methodology that will be used in carrying out the study. It will explain in detail the research design and methods that will be used in conducting the research and analyzing the research finding and finally sampling and sampling methods

**Chapter 4**- presents the findings from interviews and observations. Organizes data into key themes and categories, supported by participant quotes and narrative analysis.

**Chapter 5**- summarizes the main findings, draws final conclusions, and offers recommendations for policy, practice, and further research. Reflects on the contribution of the study.

### **1.11 Summary**

In conclusion, Chapter One has introduced the topic of juvenile re-offending, emphasizing its importance in the context of Chinhoyi Remand Prison and Zimbabwe's juvenile justice system. It outlines the research problem, objectives, and questions, focusing on understanding the factors that contribute to re-offending and evaluating the effectiveness of current interventions. The study aims to provide insights that could guide policy improvements and enhance rehabilitation efforts for juvenile offenders. This chapter establishes the foundation for the analysis and discussion in the chapters that follow. This chapter also provides light on the position of justice system on the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders for their successful reintegration in order to avoid cases of recidivism among minors in Zimbabwe.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter reveals literature from different sources in order to come with deeper understanding of juvenile offending in Zimbabwe prisons. It also presents a critical review of literature related to juvenile reoffending, with a focus on the Zimbabwean prison context. Reoffending among juveniles is a complex issue influenced by social, economic, psychological, and institutional factors. Understanding the causes of recidivism is essential for developing effective rehabilitation strategies. The chapter begins by exploring theoretical perspectives on juvenile delinquency, such as social learning and strain theories. It then examines global and regional trends in juvenile recidivism. Particular attention is given to the Zimbabwean juvenile justice system, including laws, policies, and correctional practices. Previous studies on reoffending and rehabilitation efforts in Zimbabwean prisons are also reviewed. Key factors such as family background, education, peer influence, and institutional conditions are analyzed. The literature review helps to identify gaps in

existing research and provides a foundation for the current study. Ultimately, this chapter informs the methodological and analytical framework of the research.

## **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

Desistance theory focuses on the process through which individuals gradually stop engaging in criminal behavior. It emphasizes personal transformation, social bonds, and life events that encourage a move away from offending. Unlike traditional criminological theories that explain why people offend, desistance theory explores why and how they stop. This framework is particularly relevant to understanding juvenile offenders, whose identities and behaviors are still forming. Factors such as family support, education, and positive role models play a vital role in desistance. Applying this theory helps to develop rehabilitation strategies that reduce recidivism among young offenders.

### **2.1.1 The Implications of Desistance Theory for Juvenile Offending**

Desistance theory, which focuses on the processes by which individuals cease to engage in criminal behavior, has significant implications for understanding juvenile offending. This theoretical framework offers insights into the dynamic, developmental, and often reversible nature of youth involvement in crime (Farrall & Calverley, 2020). Recent scholars emphasize the importance of individual agency, social relationships, and systemic support in this process. This essay explores the implications of desistance theory for juvenile offending under five key subthemes: the developmental nature of youth offending, the role of social bonds, identity transformation and agency, the gradual nature of desistance, and policy and practice implications. (Paternoster & Bushway, 2019).

### **2.1.2 Developmental Nature of Juvenile Offending**

Desistance theory aligns with developmental criminology in recognizing that juvenile offending is often part of a normative developmental trajectory rather than a sign of entrenched criminality. Recent research supports the idea that many adolescents engage in offending due to contextual factors such as peer influence, identity exploration, and limited impulse control, rather than deep-

seated criminal tendencies (Giordano, 2018). This differentiation is important in avoiding the over-criminalization of youths whose behaviors may be temporary and developmentally typical. Desistance theory encourages viewing such behaviors as part of a broader growth process and emphasizes the importance of developmentally sensitive interventions that support youths as they mature (Calverley, 2020).

### **2.1.3 The Role of Social Bonds and Relationships**

Recent developments in life-course theory highlight the importance of social bonds in promoting desistance. Stable attachments to family, school, and community can serve as turning points in an offender's life. Contemporary scholars argue that positive relationships create informal social controls and instill a sense of responsibility, reducing the likelihood of recidivism (Bersani & Doherty, 2018).

In the context of juvenile offending, this implies that the presence of caring adults such as parents, mentors, social workers, or community child care workers can have a transformative effect on a young person's behavior. Supportive environments and pro-social role models help youth build trust, feel valued, and develop goals that are incompatible with continued offending (Kazemian, 2015).

### **2.1.4 Identity Transformation and Agency**

Another critical contribution of desistance theory is its emphasis on the role of personal agency and identity change in the desistance process. Recent research shows that individuals who desist from crime often develop a new, coherent narrative of the self-one that emphasizes redemption, responsibility, and hope (Weaver, 2015). For juveniles, programs that encourage reflection, self-awareness, and goal-setting are crucial. Identity-based interventions such as restorative justice practices or strengths-based counseling allow young people to shift from viewing themselves as "offenders" to seeing themselves as capable of positive change. Scholars argue that this redefinition of self is often nurtured in environments that are affirming, non-stigmatizing, and future-oriented (Nugent & Schinkel, 2021).

### **2.1.5 The Gradual and Non-linear Nature of Desistance**

Desistance is rarely a linear process; it often involves periods of relapse before sustained change is achieved. Recent research highlights desistance as a gradual process, where young people may cycle between conformity and deviance before establishing lasting behavioral change. This perspective has important implications for juvenile justice systems in how they interpret relapse or non-compliance. Rather than viewing setbacks as failures, practitioners informed by desistance theory understand them as part of the ongoing change process. Therefore, long-term, consistent support is essential for youth navigating complex social and emotional transitions (Andrews & Stevens, 2020).

### **2.1.6 Policy and Practice Implications**

The insights offered by desistance theory advocate for a shift in juvenile justice from punitive to rehabilitative and developmental approaches. Interventions should prioritize education, skills development, mental health support, and opportunities for meaningful social participation. Smith and Wilson (2019) emphasize that offender management must be person-centered and strengths-based, focusing on enabling youth to build fulfilling lives beyond crime. For marginalized youth, particularly those in under-resourced rural communities, access to these services is vital. Consequently, policy should support community-based alternatives to incarceration, invest in youth development programs, and strengthen systems of care that promote pro-social engagement according to above scholars.

### **2.1.7 Conclusion**

Desistance theory provides a nuanced and compassionate framework for understanding juvenile offending. By emphasizing developmental trajectories, the importance of social relationships, identity change, and the complex nature of behavioral transformation, the theory shifts focus from punishment to potential. Justice systems are encouraged to support young people's capacity to change rather than reinforcing cycles of exclusion and marginalization. As juvenile justice systems increasingly adopt evidence-based, child-centered models, desistance theory offers a powerful roadmap for fostering long-term reintegration and personal growth among youth.

## **2.2 Main Literature**

This section highlights several factors of juvenile offending starting from global perspective in order to understand causes, measures, rehabilitation programs offered in different correctional centers such as Chinhoyi Remand Prison among others.

### **2.2.1 Global Overview of juvenile offending**

Juvenile offending, or the involvement of young people in criminal activities, remains a pervasive issue globally, with countries facing varying challenges in addressing juvenile delinquency. The characteristics and nature of juvenile crime vary across regions, but it often stems from a combination of socio-economic, psychological, and environmental factors. Understanding these factors, as well as the responses to juvenile offending, is crucial in developing effective interventions that reduce recidivism and promote rehabilitation.

#### **2.2.1.1 The Role of Unemployment and Poverty in Juvenile Re-offending: A Global Perspective**

The causes of juvenile offending are multifaceted, often involving a complex interplay of individual, familial, and societal factors. Recent developmental theories of juvenile delinquency suggest that early behavioral problems, social influences, and family dynamics can predispose young individuals to criminal behavior (Shader, 2019). Among the numerous contributing factors, unemployment and poverty stand out as both prominent and interrelated. Economic instability frequently traps juveniles in cycles of criminality, as limited access to education, employment, and social reintegration creates significant barriers to desistance (Odgers & Moretti, 2020).

This essay explores how unemployment and poverty contribute to juvenile re-offending globally, supported by scholarly evidence, statistics, and country-specific examples. Poverty and unemployment are deeply intertwined and often exacerbate one another. Poverty restricts access to quality education, healthcare, and opportunities for upward mobility, while unemployment perpetuates poverty by limiting income-generating potential. Contemporary criminological research posits that when individuals lack legitimate means to achieve culturally approved goals, they may resort to deviant behaviors, including crime a concept still supported in updated

interpretations of strain theory (Agnew, 2016). Juveniles are especially vulnerable to these pressures, particularly when growing up in economically marginalized environments (Graham & Bryant, 2019).

Environmental stressors such as poverty, educational deprivation, and exposure to violence significantly influence juvenile criminal behavior. Recent research shows that juveniles from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to become involved in criminal activity due to restricted access to legitimate opportunities and heightened exposure to risk factors such as substance abuse and neighborhood violence (Gifford-Smith et al., 2019). Adolescence is a critical developmental stage marked by a strong desire for social acceptance and belonging. Contemporary studies in adolescent development emphasize that youth often grapple with identity formation and role confusion, increasing their susceptibility to peer influence, particularly in the absence of supportive family or community structures (Meeus, 2016).

In addition to socio-economic influences, psychological and emotional factors also contribute to juvenile offending. Adolescents are more likely to act impulsively, which may explain their overrepresentation in certain types of crimes, such as property theft or violent acts (Frick & Matlasz, 2018). Moreover, studies highlight the impact of early childhood trauma, abuse, and neglect on shaping juvenile delinquency. Adolescents who experience such hardships are more likely to exhibit maladaptive behavior and engage in criminal acts as a coping mechanism.

Globally, responses to juvenile offending vary significantly depending on the legal and cultural frameworks of individual countries. In many Western countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, there has been a shift from a purely punitive approach to a more rehabilitative model, emphasizing the importance of addressing the underlying causes of delinquency. Recent studies highlight the effectiveness of integrated support systems that combine education, mental health services, and community-based programs in reducing recidivism among juveniles (Goldson & Muncie, 2019). The juvenile justice systems in these countries increasingly provide education, counseling, and vocational training as part of rehabilitation efforts, aiming not only to punish but to reintegrate young offenders into society successfully.

However, in many developing countries, the response to juvenile crime tends to be more punitive. The criminal justice systems in countries like Zimbabwe, for example, often lack the resources and infrastructure to provide comprehensive rehabilitation services for juveniles (Chitando, 2014). Juvenile offenders in such settings may face overcrowding, lack of education, and poor mental health services, which exacerbates their chances of re-offending. As a result, many of these countries face challenges in effectively addressing juvenile delinquency and breaking the cycle of recidivism

One of the most critical issues in the study of juvenile offending is understanding the risk factors that contribute to re-offending, or recidivism. Recent research identifies risk factors such as peer influence, substance abuse, lack of familial support, and mental health problems as increasing the likelihood of a juvenile re-offending after their release. Peer influence is particularly crucial, as adolescents are more susceptible to peer pressure and are likely to re-engage in criminal activities when they associate with other offenders. Additionally, juveniles who face inadequate rehabilitation programs or who return to communities with few support systems are more likely to re-offend (Baglivio et al., 2017).

Programs that focus on education, vocational training, and psychological support have been shown to significantly reduce recidivism among juvenile offenders. However, in environments where such programs are underfunded or poorly implemented, young offenders are less likely to acquire the skills and support necessary for successful reintegration into society. Consequently, an effective juvenile justice system must incorporate comprehensive rehabilitation services that address the diverse and complex needs of youth in conflict with the law (Barnert et al., 2017).

Globally, juvenile crime rates have fluctuated over the past few decades, with some countries experiencing declines while others have observed increases. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2019), juvenile offending continues to be a significant concern worldwide, particularly in urban areas characterized by socio-economic inequality and high levels of violence. In many high-income countries, juvenile crime rates have decreased, largely due to proactive social programs, early intervention strategies, and a shift toward



rehabilitative justice. In contrast, many low- and middle-income countries continue to face high rates of juvenile crime, compounded by poverty, inadequate access to education, and the criminalization of children for minor offenses (UNICEF, 2020).

In Africa, juvenile crime presents unique and pressing challenges. In Zimbabwe, for instance, young offenders often face harsh conditions within the correctional system, and the absence of effective rehabilitative programs contributes significantly to cycles of re-offending. Chitando (2014) emphasizes that the punitive nature of Zimbabwe's juvenile justice system fails to promote meaningful reform or reintegration. A study by the International Centre for Prison Studies (2014) reported that juveniles in Zimbabwean correctional facilities often endure overcrowding, inadequate healthcare, and a lack of access to educational opportunities. These conditions not only violate children's rights but also increase the likelihood of recidivism.

### **2.2.2 Regional Overview of juvenile offending**

Juvenile offending is a critical issue affecting societies globally. Across regions, factors such as socio-economic conditions, cultural contexts, and criminal justice systems significantly influence the prevalence and nature of juvenile delinquency. In this literature review, we will explore juvenile offending through a regional lens, focusing on Africa, the United States, and Europe, highlighting key contributing factors, consequences, and responses to juvenile crime.

In Africa, juvenile offending is frequently viewed as both a symptom of broader socio-economic challenges and a consequence of deficiencies within the criminal justice system. According to the African Child Policy Forum (2014), key contributors to juvenile delinquency include widespread poverty, family instability, and limited access to quality education. In many African countries, children living in poverty are often exposed to crime as a means of survival, becoming either perpetrators or victims of criminal activity (Sifuna, 2019). The absence of adequate rehabilitation programs within juvenile detention facilities further compounds the issue, contributing to persistently high recidivism rates among youth offenders.

Moreover, the criminal justice system in many African countries is inadequately equipped to manage juvenile offenders through rehabilitative approaches. Chinyoka (2013), in a study on juvenile justice in Zimbabwe, highlights that young offenders are frequently not separated from

adult inmates, which increases their vulnerability to abuse and heightens the risk of adopting criminal behaviors. This lack of protective separation undermines their psychological well-being and fosters conditions that encourage re-offending. Additionally, the absence of tailored rehabilitation programs means that many juveniles are released back into their communities without the skills, emotional support, or coping mechanisms necessary for successful reintegration, thereby increasing the likelihood of recidivism (Kigotho, 2015).

The United States has one of the highest rates of juvenile incarceration globally, although it has made significant strides in reforming its juvenile justice approach over the past few decades. According to recent data, juvenile crime rates have generally declined; however, factors such as gang involvement, substance abuse, and mental health challenges continue to drive juvenile offending (Puzzanchera & Hockenberry, 2023). The U.S. criminal justice system has often been criticized for its punitive treatment of juvenile offenders, particularly the practice of trying and sentencing youth as adults in cases involving serious crimes. Current research indicates that this approach is associated with higher rates of recidivism and increased mental health problems among former juvenile offenders (Baglivio et al., 2017). In response to these concerns, several states have adopted more rehabilitative models focused on addressing the root causes of juvenile delinquency. Programs emphasizing restorative justice, education, and mental health services have shown promising results in lowering re-offending rates. For example, the Washington State Juvenile Justice Reform Initiative demonstrated that diversion programs for first-time offenders, combined with educational and vocational training, significantly reduced the likelihood of recidivism (Barnert et al., 2017).

In Europe, juvenile offending is often addressed with a focus on rehabilitation rather than punishment, with many countries adopting a more progressive stance on juvenile justice. According to the European Commission (2020), countries such as Norway, Finland, and the Netherlands have implemented child welfare models that emphasize reintegration and rehabilitation over incarceration. In these countries, juvenile offenders are treated as children in need of protection and support, rather than as criminals. This approach has resulted in lower incarceration rates and reduced recidivism among young offenders (Baker, 2013). However,

despite progress in some parts of Europe, challenges remain in addressing juvenile crime. For example, in the United Kingdom, concerns persist regarding the over-representation of ethnic minorities in the juvenile justice system. A study by the Youth Justice Board (2018) found that Black and ethnic minority youth are more likely to be arrested, sentenced, and incarcerated even for minor offenses compared to their White counterparts. This disparity in treatment is compounded by socio-economic disadvantages and discrimination, which increase the likelihood of juvenile offending among these groups.

Across regions, certain common factors contribute to juvenile offending. Poverty, family dysfunction, peer pressure, and lack of education are recurring themes in recent literature (Shader, 2019; Graham & Bryant, 2019). Addressing these underlying issues is essential for reducing juvenile delinquency globally. Moreover, criminal justice systems in many regions have recognized the importance of rehabilitative rather than punitive measures. Programs focused on education, skill development, mental health support, and community reintegration have been shown to reduce recidivism and support the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders (Odgers & Moretti, 2020).

Restorative justice practices, which emphasize repairing harm and rehabilitating offenders through dialogue with victims and communities, have also emerged as effective interventions in several countries. Contemporary research suggests that restorative justice programs can reduce re-offending by fostering empathy, accountability, and social reintegration (Walgrave, 2015). These approaches have been widely implemented in European countries, with growing interest in their adoption in the United States and Africa.

### **2.2.3 Local Overview of juvenile offending**

Juvenile offending in Zimbabwe, like in many other nations, is a critical issue that reflects broader socio-economic challenges within the country. Zimbabwe's socio-political environment, characterized by high levels of poverty, unemployment, and a weakened education system, significantly contributes to the growing number of juvenile offenders. Research indicates that a considerable number of young people in Zimbabwe engage in criminal activities as a result of

socio-economic factors such as family breakdown, lack of access to education, and peer pressure (Sifuna, 2019). Additionally, the prevailing economic instability and high unemployment rates push some youths into survival-based crime.

One of the central concerns in Zimbabwe's juvenile justice system is the inadequate infrastructure for rehabilitation. Juvenile offenders are often incarcerated alongside adult prisoners due to overcrowding in correctional facilities, which increases their exposure to hardened criminals. According to Chinyoka (2013), this situation exacerbates the vulnerability of young offenders, who may adopt more serious criminal behaviors from their adult counterparts. Furthermore, the lack of specialized rehabilitation programs in juvenile detention centers perpetuates the cycle of crime, as many juveniles leave the system without the skills or emotional support necessary for successful reintegration into society.

Furthermore, cultural factors and family dynamics play an essential role in the prevalence of juvenile delinquency in Zimbabwe. Traditional family structures, which once served as a form of social control, have weakened over time. Inadequate parental supervision, combined with the allure of quick financial gain through criminal activities, has led some juveniles to engage in theft, drug abuse, and other forms of delinquent behavior (Kigotho, 2015). Additionally, the lack of sufficient social services and community-based programs further limits the opportunities available for at-risk youths to desist from criminal activities.

In response to these issues, Zimbabwe's legal framework for handling juvenile offenders includes provisions for diversion programs and rehabilitation. However, significant challenges remain regarding resource allocation and the effective implementation of these programs. The absence of adequate vocational training, counseling, and reintegration initiatives has contributed to high rates of recidivism, with many juveniles returning to crime after release (Chinyoka, 2013). To address these problems, experts recommend improving the capacity of juvenile correctional facilities, developing community-based rehabilitation programs, and strengthening the role of social services in preventing juvenile delinquency.

#### **2.2.4 Legal Framework for Juveniles in Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe's legal system provides a specific framework for the treatment and protection of juveniles in conflict with the law, primarily guided by the Children's Act [Chapter 5:06], the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act, and the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013). The Children's Act defines a juvenile as a person under the age of 18 and emphasizes the best interests of the child as paramount in all decisions affecting them. The Act mandates the use of rehabilitation, education, and reintegration over punitive measures. It also outlines the state's responsibility to protect children from neglect, abuse, and exploitation factors often contributing to youth offending. The Constitution reinforces these protections under Section 81, which enshrines children's rights, including protection from detention except as a measure of last resort and the right to be separated from adults in custody.

In practice, the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act outlines procedures to ensure that juveniles are handled differently from adult offenders. This includes provisions for diversion, closed court sessions for juvenile trials, and the use of pre-sentencing reports to guide appropriate interventions. Zimbabwe is also a signatory to international instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, both of which influence local legislation by promoting child-friendly justice systems. However, despite the existence of a robust legal framework, challenges remain in implementation due to limited resources, lack of specialized juvenile facilities, and gaps in training among law enforcement and correctional officers. These issues often result in the incarceration of juveniles under conditions that may undermine their rights and increase the risk of re-offending.

### **2.2.5 Factors contributing to re-offending among juveniles**

There are various factors contributing to juvenile re-offending globally and these some include peer pressure, economic hardship, and lack of rehabilitation resources in prisons among others explained below.

### **2.2.5.1 Peer Pressure and Substance Abuse**

Peer pressure and substance abuse are significant contributors to juvenile re-offending in Zimbabwean prisons, creating a cycle that many young offenders struggle to escape. According to Chikadzi (2017), peer influence both inside and outside prison often exposes juveniles to criminal networks and deviant behaviors, with substance abuse becoming a coping mechanism or a form of identity among youth. A study by the Zimbabwe Prison and Correctional Services (ZPCS, 2020) found that over 60% of juveniles who re-offended reported being introduced to drugs such as marijuana and crystal meth ("mutoriro") through peers during or shortly after their first incarceration. This finding aligns with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes that behavior is learned through observation and imitation, particularly from peers (Steinberg, 2014). The combination of social pressure, lack of rehabilitation, and easy access to drugs fosters an environment where juveniles are more likely to relapse into crime to sustain their addictions, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions within correctional facilities and community reintegration programs.

### **2.2.5.2 Unemployment and Poverty**

Firstly, unemployment and poverty are significant socio-economic factors contributing to juvenile re-offending globally. Juveniles living in poverty may engage in delinquent activities as a coping mechanism or means of survival, as poverty is characterized by a lack of basic necessities and financial resources. Financial strain often increases family stress, which can exacerbate parent-child conflicts and lead to inadequate supervision, all of which elevate the risk of juvenile criminality (Tiwari & Verma, 2022). Upon release from incarceration, offenders face numerous challenges, such as securing employment and shelter, as well as a lack of family and community support. These difficulties often result in recidivism and subsequent re-incarceration. This suggests that failure to address such challenges impedes the successful reintegration of offenders into society. Recidivism refers to the relapse of an offender into criminal behavior after release, involving reconviction and re-imprisonment for a new offense. It denotes the repetition of undesirable behavior after intervention or treatment aimed at extinguishing criminal habits. According to the World Bank (2021), over 40% of Sub-Saharan Africa's population lives below the international poverty line of \$2.15 per day. In South Africa, juvenile reoffending rates remain

alarmingly high, with recent studies estimating that approximately 55–60% of young offenders relapse into criminal behavior, largely driven by poverty and unemployment (Makhubela & Pillay, 2019).

### **2.2.5.3 Racial disparities in Criminal Justice**

Racial disparities in the criminal justice system remain a significant challenge in North America, disproportionately impacting juveniles from marginalized racial and ethnic groups. These systemic inequalities influence all phases of the justice process from arrest to incarceration and contribute to elevated recidivism rates among minority youth. Brayne and Christin (2020) argue that structural biases embedded in law enforcement and judicial practices perpetuate unequal treatment and outcomes for youth of color. Similarly, Mwale and Sikwila (2018) note that minority juveniles in Southern Africa experience disproportionate contact with the justice system, reflecting global patterns of racial and ethnic inequity in youth sentencing and rehabilitation. Evidence indicates that racial minorities face greater detention likelihoods and longer sentences, which intensify cycles of reoffending and social exclusion

### **2.2.5.4 Economic Hardship**

Economic deprivation is a significant factor contributing to juvenile recidivism in Sub-Saharan Africa. Characterized by widespread poverty, unemployment, and inequality, the region faces immense challenges in addressing the socioeconomic needs of its youth. According to the World Bank (2021), 40% of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa lives below the international poverty line of \$2.15 per day. Juveniles from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are particularly vulnerable, as poverty limits access to education, employment, and rehabilitation opportunities. This essay explores how economic deprivation perpetuates cycles of re-offending among juveniles in Sub-Saharan Africa, supported by statistical evidence, case studies, and scholarly insights.

Sub-Saharan Africa has some of the highest poverty and unemployment rates worldwide. Youth unemployment reached 14.5% in 2022 (International Labor Organization, 2022), forcing many young people to turn to informal or illegal means of survival. Juveniles who have previously been

incarcerated often face even greater barriers to reintegration, further entrenching them in cycles of crime. For example, youth unemployment in Nigeria was estimated at 53.4% in 2021 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021), and many juveniles leaving correctional facilities struggle to find legitimate employment. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has one of the highest poverty rates globally, with over 60% of its population living in extreme poverty (World Bank, 2022). Juveniles from such settings are at heightened risk of re-offending. Furthermore, in 2022, approximately 89 million children of school-going age in Sub-Saharan Africa were out of school (UNESCO, 2022), limiting their future economic prospects and increasing the likelihood of criminal involvement.

#### **2.2.5.5 Shortage of Rehabilitation Resources**

Juvenile re-offending in Zimbabwe is a serious pandemic that tends to increase its rate due to various factors which include weakness of the justice system, poor rehabilitation programs offered to the juveniles by Zimbabwe prisons. Zimbabwe's correctional facilities often lack adequate rehabilitation and reintegration programs for juvenile offenders. A report by the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (2020) highlighted the absence of structured vocational training or psychological support in most juvenile detention centers. Poor rehabilitation programs significantly contribute to juvenile re-offending in Zimbabwe's prisons by failing to address the root causes of criminal behavior or equip offenders with the skills needed for reintegration into society. Most juvenile correctional facilities in the country lack adequate resources for vocational training, counseling, and education, leaving incarcerated youth without the tools to pursue lawful opportunities upon release. According to the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (2020), over 70% of juvenile detainees do not receive structured rehabilitation programs, leading to high recidivism rates as these individuals often return to crime out of necessity or influence.

The prison lacks comprehensive rehabilitation initiatives to address the root causes of juvenile delinquency, such as poverty, lack of education, and psychological trauma. Without vocational training or educational programs, incarcerated juveniles are released with minimal skills or knowledge to pursue lawful opportunities, increasing their likelihood of returning to criminal behavior. A report by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2021) revealed that most remand prisons, including Chinhoyi, prioritize containment over reform, leaving juveniles ill-prepared for



life after incarceration. The shortage of qualified personnel further exacerbates the problem, as many correctional officers lack the expertise to deliver effective counseling or structured rehabilitation.

#### **2.2.5.6 Lack of Community Reintegration**

Furthermore, the lack of community reintegration programs compounds the issue, as such programs are vital for supporting juveniles upon release. Many juveniles discharged from Chinhoyi Remand Prison face stigma and rejection from their communities, which often leads them to return to criminal activities as a means of survival. The absence of post-release monitoring and mentorship leaves juveniles vulnerable to negative peer influences and recurring cycles of crime. According to Mavhinga (2022), successful rehabilitation requires a multifaceted approach that combines in-prison skill development with robust community support systems. Addressing these challenges at Chinhoyi Remand Prison will require investment in rehabilitation infrastructure, recruitment of trained personnel, and partnerships with NGOs to establish reintegration programs focused on mentorship, employment, and community acceptance.

#### **2.2.6 The impact of re-offending on inmate rehabilitation and community safety**

Re-offending has a profound global impact on inmate rehabilitation, undermining efforts to reform offenders and reintegrate them into society. High recidivism rates strain correctional systems, diverting resources away from effective rehabilitation programs toward repeated incarceration. For instance, in the United States, approximately 44% of released prisoners re-offend within one year, making it difficult for prisons to focus on individualized rehabilitation (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2021). Similarly, in South Africa, overcrowded prisons with limited resources prioritize containment over reform, creating a cycle where rehabilitation goals are overshadowed by operational challenges. These systemic inefficiencies result in repeat offenders failing to acquire the skills and support necessary to break free from criminal behavior.

Re-offending also undermines community safety by perpetuating crime and eroding public trust in the justice system. Communities often bear the social and economic costs of repeat offenses, including increased fear, property damage, and economic losses. For example, in the United Kingdom, recidivism is estimated to cost approximately £18 billion annually due to re-offending

crimes (Ministry of Justice, 2020). In developing countries such as Kenya, juvenile re-offending often disrupts community cohesion, as repeat offenders are viewed as persistent threats rather than candidates for rehabilitation. Addressing the global impact of re-offending requires a coordinated effort to improve correctional systems, enhance post-release support, and strengthen community reintegration programs to ensure both public safety and successful rehabilitation outcomes.

In regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, re-offending significantly hinders progress in inmate rehabilitation and community safety. The lack of adequate rehabilitation programs within prisons, compounded by overcrowding and underfunding, results in many offenders failing to reform. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2021), over 80% of juvenile offenders in Sub-Saharan Africa who are incarcerated without proper rehabilitation are likely to re-offend. This cyclical pattern undermines the potential for successful reintegration into society and leads to the continued reliance on imprisonment as the default solution, rather than on alternative measures focused on rehabilitation. Consequently, the system continually recycles offenders, as seen in countries like Uganda, where the juvenile recidivism rate is alarmingly high due to a lack of vocational training and psychological support (UNICEF Uganda, 2021).

Re-offending also poses a direct threat to community safety in these regions, exacerbating the cycle of crime and insecurity. In countries such as South Africa, where youth crime rates are rising, juvenile recidivism directly correlates with the increasing prevalence of gang violence and street crime (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2020). This situation increases the strain on law enforcement and perpetuates a culture of fear and mistrust within communities. Furthermore, the economic costs of re-offending are substantial, with estimates suggesting that youth crime in South Africa alone costs the country billions annually in law enforcement, healthcare, and lost productivity (Stats SA, 2020). Recidivism erodes public confidence in the justice system's ability to rehabilitate offenders, prompting calls for stronger community-based reintegration programs, reforms to reduce prison overcrowding, and investments in preventative measures.

Re-offending in Zimbabwe presents significant challenges to inmate rehabilitation efforts and community safety. Overcrowded and under-resourced correctional facilities frequently fail to address the underlying causes of criminal behavior, resulting in high recidivism rates. According

to the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services (ZPCS, 2020), the national recidivism rate stands at approximately 65%, with many offenders returning to crime within a year of release. For example, at Chikurubi Maximum Prison in Harare, insufficient vocational training and limited psychological support mean that most inmates leave prison without the skills necessary to reintegrate successfully into society. This lack of meaningful rehabilitation creates a cycle whereby offenders, particularly juveniles, are repeatedly incarcerated, further entrenching criminal behaviors.

The impact of re-offending extends beyond prisons, posing a serious threat to community safety and cohesion. Communities, especially in urban areas such as Harare and Bulawayo, bear the brunt of re-offending through increased crime rates, including theft, drug-related offenses, and violence. A study by Mavhinga (2021) highlights that ex-offenders in high-density suburbs like Mbare often re-offend due to unemployment and societal rejection. These areas report higher incidences of petty and violent crimes attributed to repeat offenders, undermining public trust in the justice system's ability to rehabilitate criminals. Furthermore, rural communities near Mutoko and Gokwe face unique challenges, where re-offending takes the form of cattle rustling and poaching, disrupting local economies and creating tensions among residents.

Economically, the cost of re-offending places additional burdens on both the state and communities. Limited government resources are diverted toward re-incarceration instead of preventive measures, while communities bear indirect costs such as property loss and increased security expenses. For instance, a 2020 study by the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission found that recidivism costs the government billions of Zimbabwean dollars annually, primarily due to extended prison stays and increased law enforcement expenditures. Scholars such as Ndlovu (2022) emphasize the need for stronger post-release reintegration programs, advocating investments in vocational training, community mentorship, and economic support systems for ex-offenders. Addressing re-offending in Zimbabwe requires a holistic approach that prioritizes rehabilitation and community reintegration to ensure both inmate reform and public safety.

Re-offending at Chinhoyi Remand Prison significantly undermines the effectiveness of inmate rehabilitation programs, perpetuating cycles of crime and incarceration. With limited resources, the prison struggles to offer comprehensive rehabilitation initiatives such as vocational training,

psychological counseling, and educational programs. According to a 2021 report by the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, over 60% of inmates at Chinhoyi Remand Prison re-offend within two years of release, largely due to a lack of skills and support necessary for reintegration. In nearby areas such as Gadzema and Chitambo, many juveniles and young offenders return to petty theft and illegal vending upon release, as they face challenges securing legitimate employment. This highlights the urgent need to improve rehabilitation programs at the prison, focusing on equipping inmates with practical skills and addressing root causes of criminal behavior, such as poverty and social exclusion.

Re-offending also poses a significant threat to community safety in regions such as Ruvimbo and its surrounding neighborhoods. These areas frequently experience increased rates of property crime and violence linked to repeat offenders. Local stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and community leaders, emphasize the importance of post-release support to reduce recidivism and enhance public safety. For example, the Zimbabwe Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders (ZICPRO) has advocated for strengthened community reintegration programs that incorporate mentorship, economic empowerment, and public awareness campaigns aimed at reducing stigma against ex-offenders. Scholars such as Mavhunga (2022) argue that involving stakeholders in developing sustainable reintegration initiatives can help break the cycle of re-offending, thereby fostering safer and more cohesive communities. Strengthening partnerships between Chinhoyi Remand Prison and local organizations will be essential to addressing these challenges and promoting long-term rehabilitation and community safety.

### **2.2.7 The available measure to address re-offending**

Re-offending among juveniles is a global concern that undermines the effectiveness of justice systems and community safety. Various measures have been implemented worldwide to address this challenge, focusing on prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration. These strategies are supported by research and statistics demonstrating their effectiveness in reducing juvenile recidivism rates.

One prominent measure in reducing juvenile re-offending is the implementation of restorative justice programs, which seek to address the root causes of offending behavior while repairing harm to victims and communities. For example, New Zealand's Family Group Conferencing (FGC) has been widely recognized for its effectiveness in lowering juvenile recidivism. Maxwell and Morris (2020) found that FGC reduced re-offending rates by 35%, as the program promotes offender accountability and provides juveniles an opportunity to reconcile with their communities. Similarly, Norway's child-centered justice system prioritizes diversion programs over incarceration, emphasizing education and counseling. Statistics Norway (2021) reports that the country's juvenile re-offending rate is among the lowest in Europe at 20%, demonstrating the success of these rehabilitative approaches.

Another critical intervention is the provision of educational and vocational training within correctional facilities. In the United States, the Youth Offender Vocational Training Program has shown significant success in equipping juveniles with marketable skills. According to the Urban Institute (2022), juveniles who participated in such programs were 40% less likely to re-offend within one year of release. Conversely, many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa face high recidivism rates due to underfunded juvenile facilities and a lack of educational opportunities. Therefore, strengthening educational and vocational training in juvenile detention centers is essential to provide offenders with the skills necessary for successful reintegration into society.

Post-release support is essential in addressing juvenile re-offending. Community reintegration programs, including mentorship, housing assistance, and job placement, play a vital role in preventing juveniles from returning to criminal activities. In Canada, the Intensive Support and Supervision Program (ISSP) offers individualized support to high-risk juveniles, significantly reducing recidivism. A report by the Canadian Justice Institute (2022) indicated a 50% reduction in re-offending rates among ISSP participants compared to non-participants. These examples underscore the importance of investing in structured reintegration programs tailored to the specific needs of juveniles.

As a researcher, it is clear that addressing juvenile re-offending requires a multifaceted approach that combines restorative justice, education, and community-based support. Countries with robust juvenile justice systems emphasize prevention and rehabilitation rather than punitive measures,

resulting in significantly lower recidivism rates. However, the success of these measures depends heavily on adequate funding, collaboration among stakeholders, and cultural acceptance of restorative practices. Moving forward, global efforts should focus on sharing best practices and investing in under-resourced regions to ensure that all juveniles have access to the support necessary for successful reintegration and crime-free lives.

Regional measures to address juvenile re-offending have proven effective in various parts of the world by emphasizing rehabilitation, diversion from the justice system, and post-release support. For instance, in Europe, countries such as Finland and the Netherlands have successfully implemented community-based alternatives to incarceration, leading to reduced juvenile recidivism. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2020) found that Finland's juvenile re-offending rate is as low as 15%, primarily due to its focus on individualized rehabilitation and reintegration programs, including mentoring and vocational training. Conversely, Sub-Saharan African countries like Kenya face significant challenges stemming from limited resources and inadequate rehabilitation facilities, contributing to high recidivism rates among juveniles. UNICEF (2021) reported that up to 70% of juveniles in Kenyan prisons re-offend due to a lack of educational opportunities and psychological support. Scholars such as Kibet (2022) contend that a regional approach involving local stakeholder's families, schools, and community organizations can substantially reduce juvenile recidivism by providing preventive interventions and comprehensive support systems. From a research perspective, the success of regional measures depends on tailoring programs to local contexts while ensuring sufficient funding and community involvement to address the root causes of juvenile crime and foster sustainable reintegration pathways.

In Zimbabwe, addressing juvenile re-offending necessitates comprehensive strategies that emphasize rehabilitation, diversion programs, and post-release reintegration. According to the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (2020), the juvenile recidivism rate exceeds 60%, with many offenders returning to criminal activities due to inadequate rehabilitation services in facilities such as Chikurubi Prison and Chinhoyi Remand Prison. Scholars like Mavhinga (2021) contend that rehabilitation efforts are often hampered by prison overcrowding, a shortage of skilled personnel, and limited access to vocational training. Effective interventions in Zimbabwe could draw from successful models such as South Africa's restorative justice and juvenile diversion

programs, which have demonstrated significant reductions in re-offending (Davis & Smith, 2019). Furthermore, post-release support remains critical; community-based reintegration initiatives providing mentorship and vocational training, exemplified by programs in Harare's Mbare Township, have shown promise in facilitating juveniles' successful return to society (Ndlovu, 2022). From a research perspective, a holistic approach involving collaboration among local stakeholders including non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, and families is essential to reducing juvenile recidivism and ensuring sustainable reintegration in Zimbabwe.

Addressing juvenile re-offending at Chinhoyi Remand Prison requires a multifaceted approach that integrates rehabilitation programs, vocational training, and community reintegration initiatives. A critical component is the implementation of tailored educational and vocational programs that equip juveniles with practical skills, thereby reducing their likelihood of re-offending upon release. The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (2021) reports that the absence of such programs contributes to the high recidivism rate of approximately 65% among juveniles in Zimbabwean prisons. Furthermore, the introduction of restorative justice initiatives, such as victim-offender dialogues and family group conferencing, could enhance juveniles' understanding of the consequences of their actions and promote personal accountability. Scholars like Mavhinga (2022) argue that these restorative approaches, proven effective in contexts like New Zealand, have the potential to significantly reduce re-offending by fostering reconciliation and community healing. Upon release, comprehensive community reintegration programs in regions such as Gadzema, Chitambo, and Ruvimbo are essential. These programs provide crucial support through mentorship, housing assistance, and job placement services, facilitating successful reintegration into society. Research conducted by the Zimbabwe Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders (ZICPRO, 2020) underscores the vital role of post-release support in minimizing juvenile recidivism.

### **2.2.8 Model for successful reintegration in Zimbabwe**

Therefore, reducing recidivism, with statistics showing a 40% reduction in re-offending rates when juveniles receive structured reintegration assistance. By improving rehabilitation efforts within Chinhoyi Remand Prison and strengthening community support networks, Zimbabwe can create a more effective system for reducing juvenile recidivism and promoting long-term societal

reintegration. This model consist of seven stages which are from assessment up to the evaluation and this is important for successful reintegration for juveniles into the society.

#### **2.2.8.1 Assessment and Personalization**

The first stage of a successful reintegration model for juvenile offenders, using Chinhoyi Remand Prison as a case study, involves comprehensive assessment and personalization. This stage requires evaluating each juvenile's unique needs, risks, and strengths to formulate individualized reintegration plans. Ncube and Moyo (2018) highlight the importance of tailored assessments that consider local socio-economic and familial contexts to improve rehabilitation outcomes in Zimbabwean juvenile facilities. Complementing this, Khumalo (2017) underscores that identifying personal strengths alongside risks enhances engagement with intervention programs and supports sustained desistance. Effective assessment should include psychological evaluations, educational history, family dynamics, and the availability of social support systems. Such a personalized approach increases the likelihood of successful reintegration and long-term desistance from crime.

#### **2.2.8.2 Vocational and Educational training**

The second stage focuses on vocational and educational training, a critical element in reducing recidivism and promoting social reintegration. Chirisa and Muchini (2019) emphasize that skills development tailored to local economic contexts significantly improves post-release outcomes for juvenile offenders in Zimbabwe. Tailored educational programs and vocational training equip juveniles with practical skills that enhance their employability and financial independence upon release. Similarly, Langa (2017) asserts that access to structured educational and technical training fosters personal growth and reduces the appeal of criminal lifestyles among incarcerated youth. Programs should include literacy enhancement, technical skills development, and entrepreneurship training that align with both labor market demands and individual aspirations.

#### **2.2.8.3 Restorative Justice Practices**



The third stage of a successful reintegration model for juvenile offenders at Chinhoyi Remand Prison involves the implementation of restorative justice practices, which focus on repairing harm and fostering accountability. Restorative justice emphasizes inclusive dialogue, reconciliation, and active community engagement to address the root causes of offending behavior. This approach provides juveniles with structured opportunities to accept responsibility for their actions, make amends to victims, and reintegrate into society with a renewed sense of purpose and dignity. Practices such as victim-offender mediation, community service, and family group conferencing serve as platforms for healing, rebuilding trust, and strengthening community ties. Beckett and Kartman (2016) highlight that restorative approaches are particularly effective with youth when they are designed to foster empathy and social responsibility. Similarly, Lambourne (2020) asserts that integrating restorative justice within juvenile correctional systems not only reduces recidivism but also promotes long-term behavioral change through community involvement and emotional accountability.

#### **2.2.8.4 Family and community involvement**

The fourth stage centers on the critical role of family and community involvement in sustaining long-term rehabilitation and minimizing reoffending. Murray and Farrington (2016) emphasize that strong family ties and regular contact during incarceration significantly reduce the likelihood of juvenile reoffending by providing emotional stability and a sense of belonging. Rebuilding trust through family counseling, parenting workshops, and structured visitation programs is crucial for reintegration. Similarly, Batchelor and McNeill (2019) highlight the importance of community-based initiatives such as mentorship programs and partnerships with non-governmental organizations, which create supportive environments that foster positive behavioral change. Some researchers argue that when young offenders return to environments lacking support or supervision, they are more likely to revert to criminal behavior. Others point out that the absence of coordinated reintegration efforts often leads to social exclusion, further increasing the risk of recidivism. Therefore, effective reintegration strategies must prioritize family engagement and community-based support systems to promote lasting rehabilitation and reduce reoffending.

#### **2.2.8.5 Psychological Support and Therapeutic Rehabilitation**

The fifth stage of reintegration involves psychological support and therapeutic rehabilitation, addressing the emotional and behavioral challenges that often underlie juvenile delinquency. Many juveniles entering the correctional system have histories of trauma, abuse, or neglect, which necessitates trauma-informed interventions. Underwood and Washington (2016) emphasize that cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and other therapeutic approaches are essential in helping juveniles develop emotional regulation, critical thinking, and responsible decision-making. Rehabilitation programs should incorporate individualized counseling, group therapy, and peer support networks to build resilience and a positive self-concept. Similarly, Abrams and Snyder (2020) argue that promoting mental well-being through structured psychological support enhances personal accountability and reduces the likelihood of reoffending. A holistic rehabilitative framework that integrates mental health services with family and community reintegration efforts is therefore crucial in reducing recidivism and supporting juveniles' transformation into law-abiding, constructive members of society as stated by scholars above.

#### **2.2.8.6 Evaluation and Feedback as the Final Stage of Reintegration**

Evaluation and feedback constitute the final and essential stage in a comprehensive reintegration model for juvenile offenders, serving as a mechanism for assessing the effectiveness of implemented interventions and guiding ongoing improvements. In the context of juvenile re-offending, this stage plays a crucial role in ensuring that reintegration strategies are responsive to the developmental needs, behavioral patterns, and social contexts of young offenders. It enables practitioners and policymakers to identify what works, refine existing programs, and adapt to emerging challenges. Maphosa and Dube (2020) argue that continuous assessment within rehabilitation programs is critical to aligning interventions with the realities faced by youth offenders in Zimbabwean correctional facilities. Similarly, Pillay (2017) emphasizes that evaluation frameworks must be youth-centered and adaptive to address cognitive, emotional, and social development in justice-involved adolescents. These evaluation processes not only improve the efficacy of rehabilitation efforts but also contribute to a broader understanding of the dynamics of juvenile re-offending.

### **2.2.9 Summary**

Understanding of re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwean prison requires considerations of socio-economic factors, family, community factors, prison conditions, mental health, rehabilitation programs and justice system dynamic. One of the most serious problems in society today is juvenile delinquency and juvenile recidivism. Though juvenile arrests are decreasing, juvenile recidivism continues to increase.



## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter focused on the various aspects of this research in order to understand re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwe prisons where there are different research methods and designs used to be discussed. This chapter presents the research philosophy and the justification for its adoption. The chapter further outlines the research design, the sample and the data collection methods as used in the study. More importantly, the chapter presents the ethical and logistical requirements that were attended to in the study. The data analysis plan is also provided in the chapter. This research used a qualitative approach.

### **3.1 Research Philosophy**

Research philosophy refers to the set of beliefs and assumptions that guide the research process, including the way researchers perceive knowledge, its development, and its acquisition (Saunders et al, 2019). Various scholars have provided definitions and perspectives on research philosophy, focusing on its core components, such as epistemology (nature of knowledge), ontology (nature of reality), and axiology (values in research). This philosophy is important for the research in understanding of re-offending among juvenile in Zimbabwe prisons as it shapes research design and methodology, helps align research objectives with appropriate methods and approaches among other factors.

In the context of understanding re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwe prisons, specifically at Chinhoyi Remand Prison, involves examining the nature of reality regarding juvenile delinquency, recidivism, and the social environment surrounding these phenomena. Ontological considerations help clarify what is assumed to exist and how it operates in the context of juvenile re-offending. There are various ontological perspectives in the case study which includes; realism which assumes that that re-offending among juveniles is an objective phenomenon that exists independently of human perception not involved through institutional factors such as justice system or prison environment but something individually. It also states that factors like socioeconomic conditions, family dynamics, peer pressure, or prison conditions directly influence recidivism and can be measured or observed. Constructivism is another ontological perspective

applied by the researcher in understanding of re-offending among juveniles as it views re-offending as a socially constructed reality shaped by individual experiences, societal labels, and perceptions of the juvenile justice system. Another important is it Focuses on how juveniles perceive their actions, how they are labeled by society, and how these perceptions shape their behavior and identity.

### **3.2 Research Approach**

According to Audi (2015), epistemology is the study of knowledge and justified belief. He emphasizes that it deals with the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge and the sources and scope of knowledge. The researcher applied interpretivism, which focuses on juveniles and their motivations, and social factors contributing to re-offending. This philosophy involves qualitative research methods, which include focus group discussions, interviews, and observations among others.

Creswell (2014), defines a research approach as "plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation." He categorizes approaches into qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. The research utilized the qualitative paradigm in understanding re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwean prisons. Chindanya (2011) defined qualitative research as "a process of systematic inquiry into the meanings which people employ to make sense of their experience and guide their actions." The advantages of qualitative research methodology include understanding experiences, perspectives and attitudes of the people towards a particular behavior or social aspect of life. This made the qualitative methodology appropriate for this study which aims at understanding re-offenders and re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwean prisons.

### **3.3 Research Strategy**

The research strategy for this study was a case study approach, focused on Chinhoyi Remand Prison as the central unit of analysis. This strategy was well-suited for exploring the specific, real-life context of juvenile re-offending within a particular institutional setting. By employing a case study, the research allows for an in-depth examination of the experiences, behaviors, and systemic factors unique to this location. The strategy integrates multiple qualitative data collection methods,

including interviews, focus groups, observations, and document analysis, to triangulate findings and enhance the reliability of the results. According to Yin (2018), the case study approach is particularly effective in situations where the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, allowing researchers to investigate complex social issues holistically. This methodological choice provides the flexibility to explore the issue comprehensively while maintaining a clear focus on the distinctions and difficulties of the prison environment and its influence on juvenile behavior.

### **3.4 Research Design**

Research design refers to the overall strategy or blueprint that outlines how research is to be conducted, including methods for collecting, measuring, and analyzing data in a systematic manner. It ensures that the evidence obtained enables the researcher to effectively address the research problem with as little bias as possible (Saunders et al., 2019). The purpose of this study is to explore and gain a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwean prison, using Chinhoyi Remand Prison as a case study. It also aims to contribute findings that will provide policymakers, prison authorities and rehabilitation programs to develop effective strategies for reducing re-offending rates among juveniles. The researcher applied qualitative approach because it provides detailed, relevant insights into complicated issue of re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwean prison. Various data collection methods also utilized by researcher which includes in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, among others. In-depth interviews are important in acquiring adequate information about experiences of perceptions with having first-hand information attributed to re-offending by juvenile offenders. . This study utilized a case study to understand re-offending among juveniles using Chinhoyi Remand Prison as a case study. The study used the case study method because it was an idiographic case study focusing on prison inmates and prison officers from one prison institution. The researcher took about two weeks to collect information from Chinhoyi Remand Prison where juveniles were admitted for different crimes and he given about two hours per day to communicate with them through interviews, focus group discussions.

### **3.5 Study Setting**

The study focused on the understanding of re-offending among juvenile inmates in Zimbabwe prisons with a case study of Chinhoyi Remand where several juveniles are admitted from court for being in remand and some of them to serve their sentences. Therefore, the researcher targeted about ten juveniles who were re-offenders to collect useful information needed and some of the information were collected from four correctional officers who have knowledge about the justice system and rehabilitation programs offered to the juveniles. The researcher also seek the prison authority a permission to conduct a research at Chinhoyi Remand Prison where he promised to abide all rules and regulations such as keeping of confidential information for the benefit of the institution. This study also, focused on rehabilitation programs offered for the juveniles in order prevent recidivism and for their successful reintegration into society which includes moral, psychosocial, academic education, sports and recreation among others and these provided but correctional officers who are social workers, psychologist, teachers, and nurses among others. It is important to notice that Chinhoyi Remand Prison accommodates both adults and juveniles but they were placed in different cells in order to create conducive environment necessary for them. At some point due to lack of resources and shortage of facilities at Chinhoyi Remand Prison rehabilitation programs offered to the juveniles will not adequate enough for them to overcome their difficulties during their time in custody.

### **3.6 Population**

The research targeted juvenile re-offenders both convicted and non-convicted who are kept at Chinhoyi Remand Prison located in Mashonaland West Province. About 10 juveniles were selected by a researcher for them to provide necessary information needed through purposively sampling. Also, 4 correctional officers were also selected by a researcher to provide some of the detailed information on hoe juveniles are being rehabilitated in prisons and some of the institutional factors that cause recidivism among them. The researcher also, managed to conduct probations officers from Department of Social Development where some of the cases of juveniles who committed crimes are referred to by correctional officers. This population was useful in



helping the researcher to understand and collected detailed information needed for the research to reach its destination.

### **3.7 Sampling and Techniques**

A sample as a group of subjects from which information is obtained and is representative of the entire population under study. In this research, the sample comprised the prison officers and re-offenders who are still in prison at Chinhoyi Remand Prison. Also, some social workers worked as probations officers at Department of Social Development were random selected to provide information needed. The population sample was purposively selected. Participants were selected according to their credibility to generate useful data to this study and that led to the adoption of purposive sampling procedure. Nine juvenile re-offenders and six correctional officers including two from Department of Social Development were selected at Chinhoyi Remand Prison to participate in the study. The researcher used the nominal register (a register kept specifically for re-offenders both adults and juveniles) to identify and pick accessible re-offenders and prison officers. The researcher, however, deliberately picked a small sample of six participants for focus group discussions with re-offenders and other four were involved in in-depth interviews. Another small sample of four prison officers were randomly selected for in-depth interview basing on their availability since others were not on duty. This was purposively done through identifying those participants who had the knowledge needed by the researcher and the objective was not to generalize the results.

### **3.7 Data Collection Methods**

The data collection methods for this study was focusing on qualitative approaches to gain an in-depth understanding of re-offending among juveniles in Chinhoyi Remand Prison. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with juveniles, prison staff, and rehabilitation officers to explore their personal experiences, perceptions, and challenges. Focus group discussions with juveniles were applied to encourage open dialogue and provide diverse insights into shared and unique factors influencing re-offending. Document analysis used to review prison records, rehabilitation plans, and relevant policies to understand systemic factors. Together, these methods will offer a holistic

view of the issue while ensuring data validity through triangulation. This approach emphasizes understanding participants' lived experiences, perspectives, and emotions, which are essential for uncovering the underlying social, psychological, and environmental factors influencing re-offending. By engaging directly with juveniles, prison officials, and rehabilitation officers through interviews and discussions, qualitative methods provide rich, detailed data that quantitative methods might overlook.

Also, another significance of qualitative research is it captures the several of interactions, behaviors, and institutional practices within the prison context, offering a detailed view of the issue. It is specifically, valuable for addressing sensitive topics like juvenile delinquency and re-offending in Zimbabwe prison, as it creates space for participants to express themselves in their own words. This depth of understanding can inform more specialized and effective rehabilitation programs and policies, contributing to reducing recidivism and supporting the juveniles.

### **3.8 Data Collection Techniques**

The researcher used qualitative method to collect data which consists of various techniques which includes; in-depth interviews, document analysis and focus group discussions. Data was presented in a qualitative way and the researcher used the descriptive approach to present data. Data was presented in themes and in line with aspects from the objectives of the study. This study collected data which was presented in themes to fulfil the objectives of the research.

#### **3.8.1 In-depth Interviews**

In-depth Interviews were conducted in the rehabilitation office at Chinhoyi Remand Prison with four prison officers. The interview was two hours long where each prison officer was given thirty minutes to identify the rehabilitation programs offered to juvenile offenders at Chinhoyi Remand Prison. English and Shona language was used during the interviews with prison officers in the prison's rehabilitation office. This was chosen in order to generate in-depth information through follow up questions, which is not possible with questionnaires. These were semi-structured and unstructured. Four inmates who are still in prison also participated in an in-depth interviews to generate data. The former refers to questions that are written down in advance whilst the latter

refers to questions that are open and allows the interviewee to open up freely on the issues posed as the interviewer was carrying out the research. A research guide was provided to make sure the participants are kept focused to the relevant subject. Furthermore, by using in-depth interviewing and focus group discussion, the researcher successfully generated data that was rich on experiences and real life situations than he anticipated.

### **3.8.2 Focus Group Discussion (FDG)**

Focus group (FGD) is a type of qualitative research whereby a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging (Morgan, 2018). The focus group discussions were conducted at Chinhoyi Remand Prison with the assistance of station officers who were on duty. Six juvenile re-offenders who were admitted at Chinhoyi Remand Prison were the participants in the focus group discussion which was carried inside the prison's yard because some of inmates are not allowed to go out from their premises. The discussion was carried for forty-five minutes three times a week using the Shona language. The focus group discussion was looking for the factors that lead individuals to commit a crime for the second time and also the experience there are gaining from rehabilitation programs. The role of the researcher was that of a moderator who listens, observes, asks questions and keeps the group on track. The researchers choose to use focus group discussion due to the fact that it saves time since inmates are not always available for research purpose as some they are responsible for performing different duties.

### **3.8.3 Document Analysis**

Information on the rehabilitation of offenders was obtained from documents available at Chinhoyi Remand Prison administration offices. Statistics on admission and discharge of inmates as well as other documented information on prisoner rehabilitation and recidivism was consulted looking for the factor that leads individuals to re-offend. One of the advantages of documentary analysis is that it allows the researcher to know what happened in the past regarding re-offending. The researcher also made use of published and unpublished documents. The use of documents, also

known as documentary analysis, provided a source for secondary data. The Prison Policy Document, newspapers and the internet were analyzed to explore their positions on rehabilitation of offenders. There was also Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services Rehabilitation Policy Document of 2005 which helped the researcher to acquire information of juvenile within the prison set up. This helped to the researcher to understand the concept of re-offending and rehabilitation programs in Zimbabwean prisons.

### **3.9 Data Collection Tools**

The researcher utilized various data collection tools for this study which include interview guides, and document review templates. The interview guides will help in the featuring open-ended questions tailored for juveniles, prison officers, and probation officers to capture their experiences and perspectives on re-offending. Document review templates was used in order to facilitate the systematic analysis of prison records, policy documents, and rehabilitation reports to gather relevant data. These tools will ensure a structured approach to collecting comprehensive and credible qualitative research procedure.

### **3.10 Data Analysis Plan**

For data analysis, the study employed thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method involved six key phases: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. Interview transcripts were read multiple times to gain an overall sense of the data. Codes were then assigned to meaningful units of text, and similar codes were grouped into potential themes. These themes were reviewed, refined, and analyzed in relation to the research objectives and the broader socio-political context of juvenile justice in Zimbabwe.

### **3.11 Limitations**

This study encountered several limitations, primarily due to the nature of the research setting. Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services (ZPCS) operates as a para-military institution with

strict security protocols, which significantly constrained data collection efforts. Access to detailed information was limited, and the process of gaining entry was time-consuming and tightly regulated. One of the main challenges was the small sample size. The study focused on a limited number of participants, including 5 to 10 juveniles, 2 to 4 correctional officers, and 2 probation officers. While this sample allowed for in-depth qualitative insights, it is not representative of the broader population, which limits the generalizability of the findings regarding juvenile re-offending in Zimbabwe. The geographic scope of the study was also limited. By focusing solely on Chinhoyi Remand Prison, located in Mashonaland West Province, the study did not capture the experiences of juveniles in rural settings, where environmental, social, and institutional contexts may differ significantly. This urban-centric focus may overlook critical factors influencing re-offending in less-resourced areas. Time constraints imposed by prison regulations further restricted the duration of data collection, potentially affecting the depth and comprehensiveness of the data gathered. Moreover, from a methodological perspective, the use of qualitative research, while valuable for exploring lived experiences and perceptions, does not allow for statistical generalization. The reliance on a small, non-random sample means the findings should be interpreted with caution and considered exploratory in nature.

### **3.12 Ethical Consideration**

Ethics guide what is considered legitimate or morally acceptable in the research process. As Resnik (2020), notes, ethics define the boundaries of acceptable research behavior and emphasize the moral responsibilities of researchers. An ethical researcher must foster a win-win relationship with participants by safeguarding their rights, protecting their identities, and ensuring their anonymity and confidentiality. In this study, participants were fully informed about the purpose and significance of the research prior to its commencement. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable.

Gaining access to the research site, Chinhoyi Remand Prison, presented significant challenges due to stringent security protocols and limited access to inmates for research purposes. To address this,

the researcher obtained an official letter from the Department of Social Work, clarifying that the study was part of a final-year academic project. The researcher then sought permission from the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services, and access was granted by the Commissioner of Prisons under the condition that the study would be monitored by a designated officer-in-charge.

Participants were further assured that all information provided would be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes. The researcher emphasized the importance of maintaining the privacy and security of respondents, especially given their vulnerability and initial mistrust. All prison protocols and ethical principles, including confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent, were strictly adhered to throughout the study.

### **3.13 Chapter Summary**

Therefore, in conclusion of the above research methodology applied during data collection in order to understand re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwe prisons using Chinhoyi Remand as a case study. There are various research methods, tools, techniques, strategies, approaches to mention few that utilized by the researcher in order to come up with more detailed information of recidivism among juveniles. In choosing these, the researcher considered various factors such as geographic, population size, ethical considerations among other issues such that the research will be more detailed and accuracy enough in order understand the philosophy.

## CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter involves the presentation of data and discussing the responses generated from the respondents through focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and also information from the documents obtained at the Chinhoyi Remand Prison. The researcher presented the data according to the findings from inmates and officers who participated during the data collection process at a Remand Prison and the data was presented in themes and in line with aspects from the objectives of the study. All objectives were presented through sub-themes in order to come up with contextual information possible for the research to explore re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwe prisons. Also the research includes 15 participants all together with the breakdown of 9 male juvenile offenders, 3 female correctional officers and 3 male correctional officers with different level of education, types of crime committed by juveniles and different working experiences by correctional officers.

**Table: Demographic Profile of Study Participants**

<b>Participant No.</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Type of Crime</b>	<b>Level of Education</b>
1	Juvenile Offender	Male	12–14	Theft	Primary
2	Juvenile Offender	Male	12–14	Theft	Primary
3	Juvenile Offender	Male	12–14	Theft	Secondary
4	Juvenile Offender	Male	12–14	Assault	Secondary
5	Juvenile Offender	Male	14–17	Assault	Secondary

6	Juvenile Offender	Male	14–17	Assault	Primary
7	Juvenile Offender	Male	14–17	Rape	Secondary
8	Juvenile Offender	Male	14–17	Theft	Secondary
9	Juvenile Offender	Male	14–17	Drug Abuse	N/A
10	Correctional Officer	Male	Adult	N/A	Tertiary
11	Correctional Officer	Male	Adult	N/A	Secondary
12	Correctional Officer	Male	Adult	N/A	Tertiary
13	Correctional Officer	Female	Adult	N/A	Tertiary
14	Correctional Officer	Female	Adult	N/A	Secondary
15	Correctional Officer	Female	Adult	N/A	Secondary

#### 4.1 Demographic Characteristics Analysis

The demographic profile of participants in this study provides crucial insights into the factors contributing to juvenile re-offending in Zimbabwe, specifically at Chinhoyi Remand Prison. The sample consisted of 15 participants, including 9 male juvenile re-offenders and 6 correctional officers (3 male and 3 female). A detailed examination of their age, gender, type of offences committed, and level of education reveals patterns that help explain the recurrence of criminal behavior among young offenders.

One of the most significant aspects of the demographic data is the age distribution of the juvenile participants. Of the 9 offenders, 4 were between the ages of 12 and 14, while 5 were between 14 and 17. This suggests that re-offending is not limited to older adolescents but can begin at a very early age. Juvenile involvement in crime during early adolescence (12–14 years) is particularly concerning, as it implies early exposure to criminogenic influences such as unstable family environments, lack of supervision, poverty, or peer pressure. These young individuals may not



have fully developed the cognitive, emotional, and social skills necessary to avoid criminal behavior, making them highly vulnerable to repeat offending if proper interventions are not introduced promptly.

Another critical factor is the nature of the crimes committed. The most common offences among the juveniles were theft (4), assault (3), followed by single cases of rape and drug abuse. The high occurrence of theft and assault indicates that most of the juvenile offenders are involved in petty crimes or interpersonal violence, which are often symptomatic of underlying socioeconomic hardships and lack of positive role models. These crimes tend to be more opportunistic than premeditated, reflecting an environment of survival rather than strategic criminal planning. The isolated case of rape, however, points to a deeper behavioral and psychological concern that likely requires targeted intervention, including counseling and rehabilitation. The inclusion of a drug-related offence also signals exposure to substance abuse, which is both a contributor to and consequence of juvenile criminal behavior.

The gender composition of the juvenile offenders is also telling. All 9 juvenile participants were male, which is consistent with national and global trends that show higher rates of criminal activity among males. This pattern may be attributed to gendered socialization, where boys are often encouraged to exhibit dominance, risk-taking, and aggression traits that, when left unchecked, can escalate into delinquency. The absence of female juvenile offenders in this sample does not necessarily indicate a lack of criminal behavior among girls but may reflect underreporting or different pathways to crime that are less likely to result in incarceration.

The educational background of the participant's further highlights key drivers of juvenile re-offending. Among all 15 participants, 3 had attained only primary education, 7 had secondary education, 4 had tertiary education, and 1 had an unclassified level of education. The juveniles were primarily within the primary and secondary education categories. Limited educational attainment among the juveniles suggests a lack of engagement with the formal education system, which can lead to feelings of social exclusion, low self-esteem, and lack of future opportunities all of which increase the likelihood of re-offending. Education plays a crucial protective role in youth development; therefore, inadequate schooling often leaves juveniles unequipped to make lawful and constructive life choices.

In contrast, the correctional officers largely possessed secondary and tertiary qualifications, with one officer having an unspecified educational background. Their higher level of education is critical in shaping their understanding of juvenile behavior and implementing appropriate rehabilitation programs. A well-educated correctional workforce is better positioned to engage in behavior change models, offer psychosocial support, and contribute to more effective rehabilitation strategies that could reduce re-offending rates.

Lastly, the presence of both male and female correctional officers provides a balanced institutional perspective. Female officers, in particular, may offer more empathetic or nurturing approaches to rehabilitation, which can be beneficial in addressing the emotional and psychological needs of juvenile offenders. Gender diversity among staff can lead to a more holistic correctional environment that fosters discipline, respect, and personal growth among inmates.

In conclusion, the demographic characteristics of the participants in this study provide meaningful explanations for patterns of juvenile re-offending. The data suggest that young age, male gender, low education levels, and involvement in common crimes like theft and assault are significant factors contributing to recidivism. These findings underscore the need for early interventions, improved access to education, and tailored rehabilitation programs led by qualified correctional personnel. Addressing these root causes is essential for breaking the cycle of re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwean prisons.

#### **4.2 Theme 1: To investigate the factors contributing to juvenile re-offending in Zimbabwe prisons**

The major reason for the study was to find out that why juveniles re-offend in Zimbabwe. The research was conducted at Chinhoyi Remand Prison and the researcher had focus group discussion with them. Responses during the focus group discussion were divided into sub-themes as follows:

##### **4.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Economic Hardship and Survival Crime**

Many juvenile offenders identified poverty, lack of employment opportunities, and economic hardship as key factors contributing to their repeated offenses. After release, the failure of families

to provide for basic necessities often engage pressure to these juveniles to resort to illegal means to survive. Below are various quotations from focus group discussions that outlines economic hardship as a leading factor to recidivism.

*“Chakakonzera kuti ndipare mhosva yangu yepiri inova yakandiunza pano pajeri ndechekuti mushure mekunge ndabuda muno ndakaenda kumba kwedu uko kwandinogara naAmai naBaba vangu avo vasina kwavanoshanda kuti tirame zvinova zvakaita kuti nditange kutengesha zvinodhaka zvandaipiwha kunzvimbo dzavanotengesera vachindipawo mari shoma yandaishandisa kutenga zvikwanisiro inova mhosva yandakasungirwa nemapurisa ndokudzoka zvakare muno”.*

*“The reason why I came here committing a second crime it’s because when I was discharged from this prison I went back to my parents in which there was nothing for us to survive as both them were jobless and as a result I started selling some drugs which I took from people who are involved in the buying and selling of these items so that in return they provided me with small portion of money for survival as a token of appreciation.” (Re-offender 1 said this in a focus group discussion)*

The above extract shows that economic hardship in Zimbabwe is playing a pivotal role in juvenile re-offending, as people are being involved in crimes as their way of survival. According to the World Bank (2021), over 40% of Sub-Saharan Africa’s population lives below the international poverty line of \$2.15 per day. In South Africa, juvenile re-offending rates are alarmingly high, with estimates suggesting that 55–60% of young offenders relapse into crime due to poverty and unemployment (Gallinetti, 2019). Therefore, due to this situation especially in Zimbabwe it is difficult for young people to distance themselves from criminal elements, which means the justice system should consider these factors when dealing with juvenile delinquency.

*“Ndakadzokera kumusha ndiri nehope dzekutanga upenyu hutsva, asi hapana rutsigiro rwakandimirira. Hupfumi hwekumusha hwakaoma, pasina basa kana mari yekuzvitsigira. Ndakazopedzisira ndadzokera mukuba nekuti zvaive zviri nani kupfuura kunzwa nzara.”*

*“I returned home with the hope of starting a new life, but there was no support available to help me reintegrate. The economic situation in my community is dire, with no job opportunities or means to sustain myself. Eventually, I resorted to stealing again, as it seemed like a better option than facing starvation.” (Re-offender 2 during focus group discussion)*

#### **4.2.1.1 Analysis**

This quotation further reinforces the finding that structural poverty and lack of post-release economic support are core contributors to recidivism among juveniles in Zimbabwe. It aligns with desistance literature that emphasizes the importance of social capital and opportunity structures in sustaining reform.

Furthermore, the issue of economic deprivation that leads to poverty is a barrier to desistance theory. This is the process of stopping criminal activities in which survival crimes and family pressure in some cases, juveniles re-offend not out of rebellion but out of necessity to provide for themselves or help their families. Financial strain often increases family stress, which can exacerbate parent-child conflicts and lead to inadequate supervision, all of which elevate the risk of juvenile criminality (Tiwari & Verma, 2022). Survival-driven offenses challenge the Desistance Theory, which requires a stable environment and supportive networks to sustain lawful behavior.

Therefore, these factors leading to re-offending among juveniles such as economic hardship are barriers to desistance which shows the weakness of this theory in the application of it in Zimbabwean context where people are living in absolute poverty.

#### **4.2.2 Sub-theme 2: Peer Influence and Criminal Socialization in Prison**

Juveniles reported being influenced by fellow inmates, often forming relationships that led them into more serious criminal behavior, including drug use and theft, after release.

“Chakakonzera kuti ndipare mhosva yangu yepiri yakandidzosa muno mujeri inova yekuba mari nemafoni maviri yandakaita ndechekuti mushure mekugara muno mujeri pamhosva yangu yekutanga inova yekurova munhu kwataita neshamwari dzangu muno mujeri ndakazosangana nevanhu vandazotanga kutamba navo avo vakandifurira kuita zvemadrugs apo patakabuda mujeri tose nePresidential Amnesty zvinova zvakakonzera kuti nditange kubira vanhu zvinhu ndotengesa kuti ndiwane mari yekutenga madrugs ayo anova andainge ndavakunzwa kumada mazuva ose”.

*“The reason I ended up committing my second offense, which brought me back to prison that is, stealing money and two phones after serving time in prison for my first offense, which was assaulting someone with my friends, I ended up meeting people inside prison whom I started hanging out with. They influenced me to get into drugs, and when we were released together under the Presidential Amnesty, that led me to start stealing from people so I could sell the stolen items to get money to buy drugs, which I had now started craving every day.” (Re-offender 3 said this in a focus group discussion).*

The above extracts shows that peer pressure, drug and substance abuse leads to re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwe prisons. . In a study by the Zimbabwe Prison and Correctional Services (ZPCS, 2020), over 60% of juveniles who re-offended reported being introduced to drugs such as marijuana and crystal meth ("mutoriro") through peers during or shortly after their first incarceration. With the support of Bandura's social learning theory (1977), behavior is learned through observation and imitation particularly from peers.

*“When I was first imprisoned, I was young and didn't know much about crime. But inside, I met other inmates who taught me how to steal more effectively and introduced me to drugs. They told me that going back to crime was the only way to survive out there. After my release, I stayed in contact with them, and that's how I ended up committing another offense.” (Re-offender 4 during focus group discussion)*

#### **4.2.1 Analysis**

This quotation strengthens the sub-theme by showing how social dynamics within prison environments can perpetuate criminal behavior, highlighting the importance of rehabilitation strategies that reduce negative peer influence and promote pro-social relationships.

This case highlights a systemic failure in the Zimbabwean juvenile justice system regarding effective rehabilitation and reintegration. Despite being released under the Presidential Amnesty, the absence of structured support mechanisms such as counseling, skills training, or drug rehabilitation left the juvenile vulnerable to re-offending. The lack of post-release supervision and the easy re-establishment of ties with delinquent peers intensified his risk of relapse. Furthermore, the influence of drug addiction as a motivator for theft suggests a need for substance abuse interventions both in prison and post-incarceration. This supports findings by Chikadzi (2017), who emphasized that prison-based peer pressure and substance abuse significantly contribute to high juvenile recidivism rates in Zimbabwe. Recent research supports the idea that many adolescents engage in offending due to contextual factors such as peer influence, identity exploration, and limited impulse control, rather than deep-seated criminal tendencies (Giordano, 2018). Therefore desistance could only happen through tracing of criminal tendencies in order to come up with solutions for juveniles to stay away from delinquency behaviors.

#### **4.2.3 Sub-theme 3: Stigmatization and Negative Labeling by Society**

The stigma attached to ex-offenders, including derogatory labels like “murderer” or “thief,” often leads juveniles to internalize these identities and continue engaging in criminal behavior.<sup>3</sup>

*“Chimwe chinoita kuti tipare mhosva dzinotidzosa muno mujeri inyaya yekuti patinobuda muno mukati mujeri kudzokera kumba tinosangana nedambudziko rekutumidzwa mazita anorwadza sekunzi mhondi, mbavha zvichingodaro. Nokudaro vanhu vazhinji tinopedzisira tava kutoita sekudaro nokuti zvatinenge tichinzi tinoita. Inini kubva pandakatanga kunzi Tsotsi handina kuzorega kuita zvechitsotsi kuzvikira ndazosungwa zvakare”*

*"Another thing that causes us to commit crimes that bring us back to prison is the issue that when we are released from prison and return home, we face the problem of being called hurtful names like 'murderer', 'thief', and so on. As a result, many of us end up behaving in that way because that's what we're being labeled as. For me, ever since people started calling me a 'tsotsi'*

*(criminal), I didn't stop engaging in criminal activities until I was arrested again. ” (Re-offender 5 said this in a focus group discussion)*

*“When I came back from prison, people in my neighborhood didn't see me as someone who had changed. They avoided me and warned others to stay away. I felt like I didn't belong anymore, and it was easier to go back to crime than to fight the rejection.” (Re-offender 4 during focus group discussion)*

*“Even my own relatives would say things like, ‘He's been to jail, and he is not one of us anymore.’ It's painful when the people you expect to support you push you away. Eventually, I just accepted that I would always be seen as a criminal, so I went back to doing what people already accused me of.” (Re-offender 6 during focus group discussion)*

#### **4.1.3.1 Analysis**

The above extracts show that when inmates attached labels by the members of the society they end up committing crimes again due to the fact that some labels contain negative reflection to them so they end up doing what the label says. This aligns with Labeling Theory (Becker, 1963), which posits that being publicly labeled as a deviant can lead individuals to internalize that label and behave accordingly. In this case, the offender began to self-identify with the label of a criminal, leading to repeated offending and eventual re-incarceration. The social rejection he experienced appears to have reinforced a deviant identity, creating a cycle of marginalization and criminal behavior.

The experience shared by Re-offender 3 reinforces the argument that successful reintegration is not only about personal transformation, but also about social acceptance. The failure of society to provide a non-stigmatizing environment leads to rejection, alienation, and behavioral relapse. Similar observations were made in a study by Chikadzi (2017), which noted that societal stigma remains one of the key predictors of juvenile recidivism in Zimbabwe.

#### **4.2.4 Summary of Theme 1:**

This section highlights that juvenile re-offending in Zimbabwe is a multifaceted issue, deeply rooted in economic hardship, peer influence, drug abuse, societal labeling, and institutional gaps in post-incarceration support. These findings demand a holistic, community-based, and psychologically-informed reintegration model to break the cycle of recidivism. Also, these findings highlight a gap in post-release programming namely, the lack of community sensitization and education on supporting ex-offenders. Without interventions to counteract stigma, rehabilitation efforts are significantly undermined.

#### **4.3 Theme 2: To examine impact of re-offending on inmate rehabilitation and community safety.**

The reason for this study is to understand both negative and positive impact of re-offending on inmate rehabilitation and community safety using a case study conducted at Chinhoyi Remand Prison. These are the major to re-offending impacts: these are typical responses from document analysis. The information reviewed from document analysis was presented through sub-themes as follows:

##### **4.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Post-Release Homelessness and Economic Insecurity**

Offenders who lack stable accommodation are at greater risk of re-offending. Homelessness contributes to desperation, which may drive individuals back into crime as a survival mechanism.

*“Offenders who are homeless or living in temporary accommodation prior to their prison sentence are more likely to re-offend on release than those with more stable accommodation. They will end*



*up doing criminal activities trying to earn a living after released from prison”. (From a published document Ministry of Justice Analytical Series 2013)*

*“The absence of a structured reintegration plan, including housing and employment support, creates a situation where former juvenile offenders are released into the same environments that contributed to their initial offending. Without stable income or shelter, recidivism becomes a coping mechanism.” (Zimbabwe National Rehabilitation Framework Review Report, 2020)*

*“Many young offenders return to communities that are not only economically unstable but also socially stigmatizing. Due to lack of support systems, they find themselves isolated, jobless, and labeled as criminals conditions that severely hinder rehabilitation and push them toward re-offending.” (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum Annual Report, 2021)*

#### **4.3.1.1 Analysis**

The documents from various publications highlight that homelessness and economic insecurity not only increase the risk of re-offending but also undermine the progress achieved through in-prison rehabilitation. A lack of transitional support after release exposes juveniles to the same vulnerabilities poverty, stigma, and limited opportunities that contributed to their initial involvement in crime. This ongoing cycle threatens both the rehabilitation of the individual and the safety of the wider community, emphasizing the urgent need for structured, community-based reintegration models.

#### **4.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Weak Family and Social Support Structures**

A lack of family visitation and social support during incarceration contributes significantly to re-offending. Inmates who feel isolated and unloved are more prone to return to criminal activity upon release.

*“Offenders who do not receive visits from their immediate family members and friends are more likely to re-offend. From 2013 to 2018 about twenty-one offenders who did not receive visits from*

*family members or friends at Chinhoyi Remand Prison were convicted once again” (From unpublished prisoners records analysed at Chinhoyi Remand Prison)*

*“Lack of family support during incarceration makes inmates feel emotionally abandoned. Those who go through their sentence without any visits tend to develop bitterness and hopelessness, which influence their return criminal behavior after release” (Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service Internal Assessment Report, 2020)*

*“Juveniles who are released into environments where there is no parental or guardian involvement often relapse into crime. A significant number of re-offenders interviewed indicated that they had no one to return to, which made reintegration almost impossible” (Justice and Welfare in Zimbabwe: An NGO Monitoring Report, 2021)*

#### **4.3.2.1 Analysis**

These sources highlight that the absence of emotional and relational support during incarceration is a strong predictor of recidivism. When young offenders are cut off from meaningful connections such as family visits, encouragement, or community engagement they often internalize feelings of rejection and worthlessness. This emotional void undermines their motivation to rehabilitate. The lack of supportive home environments upon release further weakens reintegration prospects, leaving many juveniles vulnerable to falling back into criminal cycles as a means of belonging or survival.

#### **4.3.3 Sub-theme 3: Institutional Misconduct and Non-Compliance**

Offenders who demonstrate poor discipline and non-compliance with prison rules are statistically more likely to re-offend.

*“Analysis also found that offenders who were less willing to follow prison rules that is, those who received additional punishment while in prison are more likely to re-offend” (from a published document Ministry of Justice Analytical Series 2013)*

*“Inmates who frequently violate institutional rules during incarceration often show resistance to authority and rehabilitation. This pattern of behavior continues after release, making them more susceptible to re-offending.” (Zimbabwe Correctional Behavioral Trends Report, 2020)*

*“Records indicate that juvenile offenders who receive multiple disciplinary warnings or are placed in solitary confinement for misconduct have a higher tendency to return to prison within a year of release.” (Rehabilitation and Reintegration Monitoring Report – Child Rights Coalition, 2021)*

#### **4.3.3.1 Analysis**

The quotations confirm that institutional behavior is a strong indicator of future outcomes for juvenile inmates. Persistent non-compliance with prison rules suggests a lack of engagement with rehabilitative efforts and a resistance to behavioral change. Such inmates often carry this defiance into the community post-release, increasing the risk of re-offending. These findings underscore the importance of early behavioral intervention within correctional facilities to reduce recidivism and promote constructive reform.

#### **4.3.4 Sub-theme 2.4: Destabilization of Rehabilitation Efforts**

Re-offending disrupts the continuity and effectiveness of rehabilitation programs. Inmates become demotivated to fully engage in reformatory efforts when they perceive little to no reward post-incarceration, particularly in terms of employment prospects

*“The Zimbabwean government does not allow any member of the society who had been sentenced for any type of crime. The Public Service Regulation Part Two of section 6(8,d.iii) states that a candidate shall not be appointed to the Public Service if the candidate has been convicted of a criminal offense for which he or she has been sentenced to and served a term of imprisonment. The word proves that the Public Service shall not employ any member of the society who has been imprisoned. This is causing the rehabilitation programs not to be useful to inmates since they know*

*that they will not get a job after serving the sentences” (from a document revealed at the prison administration).*

*Many inmates have expressed frustration during counseling sessions, stating that regardless of the skills or personal transformation they achieve in prison, they are still viewed as criminals by employers and the community. This discourages them from taking rehabilitation seriously.” (Correctional Psychosocial Support Report, Chinhoyi Remand Prison, 2021)*

#### **4.3.4.1 Analysis**

The added quotation reinforces the view that structural and societal barriers significantly undermine the impact of rehabilitation programs. When inmates perceive that their efforts to reform will not translate into employment or societal acceptance, they lose motivation to fully participate in rehabilitative activities. The policy restrictions highlighted, such as exclusion from public service jobs, serve as systemic obstacles that devalue rehabilitation. As a result, re-offending becomes a rational response to a society that denies second chances, weakening both inmate transformation and broader efforts at reducing crime.

#### **4.3.5 Theme 2 Summary**

The analysis reveals that juvenile re-offending has profound and interconnected impacts on both individual rehabilitation and societal safety. These include information analysed from documents which highlights weakness of rehabilitation efforts, institutional misconduct, post release homeless and economic insecurity among others. According to the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services (ZPCS, 2020), the national recidivism rate stands at approximately 65%, with many offenders returning to crime within a year of release. For example, at Chikurubi Maximum Prison in Harare, insufficient vocational training and limited psychological support mean that most inmates leave prison without the skills necessary to reintegrate successfully into society.

#### **4.43 Theme 3: To analyse the available measure to address re-offending**

This study is important in focusing on the utility of rehabilitation activities offered at Chinhoyi Remand Prison as a measure to address re-offending. Therefore, both officers and inmates provided the researcher with the following response from in-depth interviews.

##### **4.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Vocational Skills Training as a Tool for Reintegration**

*“Rehabilitation programs that are offered for juveniles at Chinhoyi Remand Prison are really useful to the inmates in the sense that prisoners are getting skills especially those who are involved in vocational programs such as carpentry. Some are having the opportunity to work in industries or even starting to employ other people in the society after finishing their sentences which is useful to them and society at large” (Officer A said this in an in-depth interview)*

*Ini pachezvangu ndiri kuwana ruzivo nehunyanzvi kuburikidza nekuita mavocational programs. Tiri kudzidziswa kurima fodya kubva ichiri diki kusvika yava kutengeswa, izvo zviri kundibatsira nokuti kana ndabuda mujeri ndinoda kushandisa ruzivo rwandiri kuwana kubatsira vamwe varimi vanodakurima fodya “*

*I am personally getting knowledge and skills through participating in vocational rehabilitation programs. We are educated on how to grow tobacco from the nursery up to the time of selling it. This is really helping me because when I come out of prison I want to use the knowledge and skills I am getting here to help other farmers who are interested in growing tobacco.” (Re-offender 1 said this in an in depth interview)*

The above extracts from correctional officer and two inmates during in-depth interviews shows that vocational rehabilitation is not just symbolic but it has tangible outcomes that align with established desistance pathways. The officer’s remarks suggest that vocational programs are helping juveniles to see themselves differently not as offenders, but as skilled workers and potential entrepreneurs. This reflects a shift in identity, a core element of desistance. The inmate has started to reframe his self-concept from a repeat offender to a future agricultural mentor. This internal transformation is foundational to long-term behavioral change. Learning farming or

engaging in productive labor supports a positive self-concept and offers a legitimate path forward. This is also supported by Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission report (2021), the lack of such programs contribute s to the high recidivism rate of approximately 65% among juveniles in the country's prisons.

*Pamusoro pemaprogram edu, pane vakomana vari kudzidza kugadzira zvipfeko zvekuchikoro nezvimwe zvemumba. Vakomana ivavo vakatotanga kuronga kuti pavabude mujeri vachavhura workshop pamwe chete. Zvinoratidza kuti vane chironywa chehupenyu chitsva chisingabatanidzi mhosva."*

*"Among our programs, there juveniles learning to sew school uniforms and household items, some of them are already planning to open a workshop together once they are released. This shows that they have a vision for a new life that does not involve crime" (Officer B, in an indepth interview)*

*"Before I came here, I had no skills or future plans. Now, through the welding course, I can actually make gates, doors and furniture. I feel like I am worth something now. If I keep learning, I will not need to steal again to survive." (Re-offender 2, in an in-depth interview).*

#### **4.4.1.1 Analysis**

These additional responses further illustrate how vocational skills training fosters a sense of purpose and practical competence among incarcerated juveniles. Officer B highlights the forward-planning mindset being developed through collaborative enterprise ideas, signaling an emerging prosocial identity. Likewise, Re-offender 4's reflection indicates a shift in self-worth and recognition of alternative, lawful livelihoods. These narratives affirm the role of vocational training in cultivating self-efficacy an essential ingredient in reducing recidivism and enhancing prospects for sustainable reintegration.

#### **4.4.2 Sub-theme 2: Spiritual and Personal Development Programs**

Spiritual development, especially through Bible study, was cited as a major turning point for some inmates. Participation in faith-based activities helped juveniles find purpose, forgiveness, and a renewed sense of identity beyond their criminal past.

"Zvirongwa zvekuvandudza zvatiri kupihwa muchitokisi zvinobatsira chaizvo, nekuti zvinotidzidzisa zvinhu zvakasiyana-siyana muupenyu. Pandakatongerwa kuendeswa kujeri kechipiri, ndakafunga kuti hupenyu hwangu hwapera. Asi ndakatanga kudzidza Bhaibheri ndiri mujeri ndokuzobata kuti Mwari anondida, uye kuva mujeri hazvirevi kuti hupenyu hwako hwapera. Parizvino ndava kunzwisisa kuti chero mamiriro aunasangana nawo muupenyu, kazhinji inguva yaMwari, uye dzimwe nguva unotanga kusazvinzwisisa. Parizvino ndava kuda kupedza zvidzidzo zvangu zvekuti ndive muparidzi weShoko raMwari, izvo zvandisingaifungire ndichiri munharaunda."

*These rehabilitation programs are actually useful to us prisoners because they teach on various aspects of life. When I was sentenced for the second time I thought my life was over but after starting bible study here I managed to see that God loves me and to be in prison is not the end of life. Right now I understand that every situation you encounter it is God's plan and you cannot understand it at first sometimes. I am actually finishing my course to be an evangelist which was not in my mind when I was still in the society" (Re offender 3 said this in an in-depth interview"*

*"Ini ndakatanga kutora chikamu mupeer counseling group mujeri, uye vakandibatsira kudzidza kukumbira ruregerero, kubvuma zvivi zvangu uye kutanga kutsvaga nzira itsva. Ndakadzidza kukushosa hupenyu, kukosha kwekuregerera vamwe uye kugadzirisa hukama hwangu nevamwe nevamwe vabereki vangu. Ndave munhu anoziva kuzvidzora uye ndiri kufara kuti ndichabuda.*

*"I started participating in the peer counseling group in prison, and it helped me learn to ask for forgiveness, accept my past mistakes, and start seeking a new path. I've learned to value life, the importance of forgiving others, and to rebuild my relationships with people and my parents. I've become someone who understands self-control, and I'm happy I'll be leaving prison as a changed person." (Re-offender 4, in an in-depth interview).*

#### **4.4.2.1 Analysis**

This testimony highlights how spiritual and personal development programs not only promote faith but also foster emotional healing, accountability, and interpersonal restoration. The re-offender's experience of transformation through peer counseling and self-reflection—demonstrates the

profound role these interventions play in identity reconstruction. As with Bible study, these programs instill core values such as forgiveness, self-control, and reconciliation, which are essential in supporting desistance and reducing the likelihood of re-offending. They also bridge the emotional and social gaps often left unaddressed by vocational training alone.

#### **4.4.3 Sub-theme 3: Rehabilitation as a Pathway to Desistance**

*"Before I came to prison, I didn't know anything about changing my life. I just thought it was normal to survive through stealing. But after going through the rehabilitation sessions and talking to the counselors, I started to realize that I have choices. Now I want to go back and do something positive with my life, maybe become a mechanic or help other young boys who are lost like I was."* (Re-offender 5, in an in-depth interview)

*"Tese tinoita zvikanganiso asi ndakaona kuti hurongwa hwe rehabilitation hunovhura maziso kuti munhu azvione sezvaari uye ave nehope itsva. Ndakadzidza kusarudza zvakanaka uye kusafunga kuti ndakakundikana. Ndichibuda pano, ndoda kutanga zvekutengesa zvihwitsi nemiriwo kuti nditangehupenyuhutsva."*

*"We all make mistakes, but I've come to see that the rehabilitation process opens your eyes to see yourself differently and to have new hope. I've learned to make better choices and not to see myself as a failure. When I leave here, I plan to start a small business selling sweets and vegetables so I can begin a new life."* (Re-offender 6, in an in-depth interview).

##### **4.4.3.1 Analysis**

These narratives illustrate how rehabilitation plays a pivotal role in shifting juvenile offenders' perspectives and fostering desistance. Re-offender 5 acknowledges a transformation in thinking from criminal normalization to agency and goal setting. Similarly, Re-offender 6 highlights how rehabilitation nurtures self-worth and hope, which are central to the desistance journey. Both quotations reflect key elements of the desistance process: developing a pro-social identity, making intentional life changes, and engaging in future-oriented planning. These insights affirm that rehabilitation, when meaningfully implemented, serves as a powerful tool for breaking cycles of



re-offending. This is supported by Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (2020), the juvenile recidivism rate exceeds 60%, with many offenders returning to criminal activities due to inadequate rehabilitation services in facilities such as Chikurubi Prison and Chinhoyi Remand Prison. Scholars like Mavhinga (2021) contend that rehabilitation efforts are often hampered by prison overcrowding, a shortage of skilled personnel, and limited access to vocational training.

#### **4.4.4 Theme 3 Summary**

The rehabilitation measures at Chinhoyi Remand Prison are particularly vocational training and faith-based initiatives play a critical role in addressing juvenile re-offending. These interventions includes; foster personal transformation and future-focused thinking, equip inmates with practical skills for post-release employment, promote psychological healing and spiritual growth and encourage desistance by reshaping identity and self-worth. However, for these efforts to be more effective, they must be supported by systemic reforms including employment opportunities post-release and stronger community support systems and this can be done through collaboration of prison with other stakeholders.

#### **4.5 Theme 4: To develop a model for successful reintegration in Zimbabwe**

This section highlights the importance of successful reintegration of juvenile inmates into society after serving their sentences. It presents responses from correctional officers and juvenile inmates who participated in in-depth interviews conducted at Chinhoyi Remand Prison. This theme explores the effectiveness of rehabilitation initiatives available at Chinhoyi Remand Prison in reducing juvenile recidivism. Drawing from in-depth interviews with both correctional officers and juvenile inmates, several key strategies and their impacts are discussed.

##### **4.5.1 Sub-theme 1: Multi-Sectoral Support and Post-Release Monitoring**

One of the key insights from correctional officers was the critical need for coordinated support from government agencies, NGOs, and community-based organizations to assist juveniles after release. Reintegration efforts cannot rest solely on the prison system.

*"We need more support from outside institutions such as NGOs and government departments should assist with training and follow-up when inmates are released from prison to see how they are doing" (Officer C from in-depth interviews).*

The above extracts shows that for the successful reintegration of juveniles into the society Prisons itself could not sustain but there is need for other institutions to offer help in order to avoid recidivism through pre-release and post monitoring support. These two pillars are crucial in addressing recidivism, especially among juvenile offenders, who are particularly vulnerable upon reentry into society.

*"Rehabilitation does not end at the prison gate. Without coordinated support from social services, NGOs, and local communities, most juveniles relapse. As probation officers, we struggle to monitor them effectively due to limited resources and lack of inter-agency collaboration." (Probation Officer A – In-depth interview)*

This quotation reinforces the idea that successful reintegration requires a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach. It highlights the challenges probation officers face in supporting juveniles post-release and underscores the need for coordinated frameworks that include all relevant stakeholders.

#### **4.5.2 Sub-theme 4.2: Transitional Support and Access to Opportunities**

Juvenile inmates interviewed expressed significant concern about the lack of tangible resources to sustain themselves upon release. The availability of tools, capital, and mentorship is essential for leveraging vocational training into sustainable livelihoods.

*"When I leave here, I don't know where to start. If I had someone to guide me or a place to go, it would help me not to re-offend." (Re-offender 3 said this in an in-depth interviews).*

The above extracts shows that, inmates emphasized the need for structured guidance after release mentorship programs, halfway homes, or reintegration centers could provide a safety net. Scholars such as Andrews and Bonta (2010) emphasize the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model, which underscores the importance of assessing criminogenic needs and tailoring interventions accordingly. Therefore, in Zimbabwe prisons it is difficult to come up with successful reintegration of inmates into the society because they lack resources for conducting these needs assessment

activities. Sometimes people are being released in prison but due to lack of resources from correctional centers such as money to start business and shelters to stay could ended up seeing juveniles loitering in the town streets looking for survival for example in the City of Harare several young people stayed in the streets.

"Ndinoda kushandisa hunyanzvi hwandakadzidza, asi ndinoda maturusi kana mari yekutanga bhizinesi. Kana zvisina kudaro, ndinogona kudzokera kuhupenyu hwekubira vanhu izvo zvinozokonzero uti ndirambe ndichipara mhosva ndodzoka mutorongo"

*"I want to use the skills I have learned, but I need tools or money to start a business. If I don't get that, I might go back to a life of stealing from people." (Re-offender 4 during in-depth interview).*

The above extracts from re-offender during in-depth interviews illustrates a transitional point in re-entry: the individual has made progress (acquired skills) and shows readiness to reintegrate, but lacks enabling conditions (like access to capital or tools). This highlights a critical gap in reintegration programs post-training support. According to Ward and Maruna (2007), effective reintegration frameworks must include iterative feedback loops that consider the developmental stages and social environments of juveniles. Therefore, there is need to assess in order to understand resources needed by those who are likely to be discharged through what is called pre-exit counseling so that correctional services could have grantee that all offenders who pass through rehabilitation activities may not involve in criminal behaviors again.

Social reintegration is not only about economic support it also involves rebuilding relationships and identity. Correctional officers highlighted the importance of reconnecting juveniles with family or safe support systems, facilitated by trained social workers.

*"Many juveniles lack family support. Reintegration needs to involve social workers who can help reconnect them with families or safe communities." (Officer D said this in an in-depth interview).*

*Most of the juveniles we deal with come from broken families or have no proper guardianship. Reintegration becomes difficult if there is no stable home to return to. Our role should include*

*working with families before release to prepare them for the child's return.”*  
(Probation Officer – In-depth interview)

This quotation underscores the crucial role of probation officers in bridging the gap between correctional facilities and families. It highlights the need for pre-release family counseling and community preparation to ensure that reintegration efforts are sustainable and meaningful for juvenile offenders.

**The table below shows all themes discussed by inmates and correction officers during in-depth interviews as a model of successful reintegration.**

Theme	Insight
<b>Multi-stakeholder involvement</b>	Emphasizes the need for collaboration between prisons, NGOs and government sectors
<b>Skill development</b>	Suggests vocational training as a foundation for employability post –release
<b>Continuity of Care</b>	Post-release follow-ups is seen as essential to track progress and intervene early.
<b>Youth Focus</b>	Implies particular concern for juvenile inmates, who may lack support systems

#### **4.5.3 Theme 4 Summary**

This theme demonstrates that successful reintegration is not merely about releasing a juvenile from prison it involves a strategic, well-resourced, and collaborative approach that ensures continuity of care, economic inclusion, and psycho-social support. Without this holistic model, juveniles remain trapped in cycles of re-offending, institutionalization, and social exclusion. Therefore, policy reform, resource allocation, and capacity-building across sectors are urgently required to transform reintegration from an abstract goal into a lived reality in Zimbabwe.

## **4.6 Chapter Summary**

In conclusion this chapter highlights various factors which are important in exploring re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwe prisons using Chinhoyi Remand as a case study. This also shows analysis and presentation of the data which was collected by the researcher from correctional officers, re-offenders and social workers in order to come up with suitable information derived from the results of findings. Also, it is important to understand that findings from various themes of this research shows factors leading to re-offending, possible solutions, model of successful reintegration among others which leaves the gap for researcher to come up with suitable recommendations so that the problem of recidivism in Zimbabwe will be reduced.



## **CHAPTER: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a synthesis of the research findings from the study titled *Exploring Re-offending among Juvenile Offenders in Zimbabwe Prisons: A Case Study of Chinhoyi Remand Prison*. The study investigated the factors influencing juvenile recidivism, assessed the role of the correctional system in rehabilitation, and explored reintegration challenges. The findings are summarized in relation to each research objective, followed by conclusions drawn from the data. The chapter then highlights the implications of these findings for social work practice and concludes with specific, actionable recommendations based on the Education 5.0 model. Finally, it outlines potential areas for future research.

### **5.2 Summary of Findings**

This section summarizes all research objectives derived from the findings according to the subthemes above.

#### **5.2.1 Objective 1: To investigate factors contributing to re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwe prisons**

The research found that multiple interconnected factors increase the likelihood of juvenile re-offending. These include family instability, economic hardship, peer influence, poverty, and previous trauma. Many of the juveniles came from backgrounds where parental supervision was minimal or entirely absent which may ended up affected their behaviors as a result they involved in the criminal activities. I addition, some were exposed to criminal behavior in their communities or even during incarceration due to the mixing of juveniles with adult offenders where they failed to resist pressure from other offenders where maladaptive behaviors become their only way for survival and interaction. In Zimbabwe prisons, the absence of rehabilitation programs tailored to the developmental needs of minors further worsened their vulnerability to re-offending. The research shows that many juveniles due to stigmatization and labelling from the community members are some of the major causes of recidivism which built bad character among young people leading them in prison.

### **5.2.2 Objective 2: To examine impact of re-offending on inmate rehabilitation and community safety**

It is crucial to recognize that when juvenile offenders re-offend, it weakens the rehabilitative purpose of correctional institutions. Overcrowded prisons struggle to provide personalized care and education to the offenders that made it difficult to fight against recidivism due environmental contribution. Communities also suffer, as repeated offenses increase insecurity and reduce public confidence in the justice system as it become so difficult for people to accept ex-offenders after their time in prison. These challenges hinder the successful reintegration of young offenders into society and intensify the stigma they face, which in turn discourages support from both the community and relevant institutions. This simply shows that without community awareness to understand that sometimes these people were changed through rehabilitation programs offered at correctional centers during the period of serving their sentences, recidivism will inevitable.

### **5.2.3 Objective 3: To analyze measures to address re-offending**

There are several measures to address re-offending highlighted by the researcher through presentation and analysis of data which was collected from inmates, correctional officers and social workers in order to explore re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwe prisons. The study revealed that most existing interventions for reducing re-offending are either under-resourced or inconsistently applied. While there are basic support services such as general counseling, there is a lack of specialized psychological support, vocational training, or structured rehabilitation programs specifically for juveniles. Correctional staff reported having insufficient resources and training to manage youth offenders effectively. There is also a noticeable gap in the continuity of care following release, leaving juveniles without guidance during reintegration.

### **5.2.4 Objective 4: To develop a model for successful reintegration in Zimbabwe**

Drawing from data collected, a potential model for reintegrating juvenile offenders was proposed. This model centers on early intervention, the use of diversion programs, in-custody education and skills training, and robust post-release support. The model requires coordinated efforts among government departments, local authorities, schools, faith-based organizations, and social workers.



Its goal is to ensure that juveniles not only complete their sentences but also have pathways to productive and law-abiding lives post-incarceration.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The research established that juvenile re-offending in Zimbabwe is a complex issue shaped by personal, social, and institutional factors. Chinhoyi Remand Prison, like many others, lacks sufficient resources and systems to rehabilitate young offenders effectively. Additionally, societal attitudes and a lack of structured reintegration support contribute to a cycle of re-offending. Sustainable solutions must therefore involve both systemic reforms within the justice and correctional sectors and stronger community-based interventions. Reintegration should be understood not as an endpoint, but as a process requiring active involvement from multiple actors.

### **5.4 Implications for Social Work**

The study highlights several critical areas where the social work profession must respond to this research. Therefore it is important to include implications of social work in order to shed light on the steps that should be taken by social workers in correctional centers such as prisons to help in ending juvenile delinquency that causing recidivism.

#### **5.4.1 Practice Methods**

Social workers should adopt holistic approaches that include mental health screening, family therapy, and individualized reintegration plans. Social workers use various methods to support juvenile offenders, including strengths-based approaches, restorative justice, family-centered interventions, case management, and cognitive-behavioral therapy. These methods help build skills, repair harm, strengthen family support, coordinate services, and improve decision-making, all aimed at reducing re-offending and promoting rehabilitation.

#### **5.4.2 Work Settings**

Social workers supporting juvenile offenders operate in diverse settings, including correctional facilities such as remand and juvenile detention centers, where they provide counseling and rehabilitation services. They also work in community-based organizations that focus on

reintegration, offering support through mentorship, education, and vocational training programs. Schools and youth centers are important settings where social workers engage in prevention and early intervention efforts. Additionally, social workers collaborate with the justice system, probation offices, and child protection agencies to coordinate services and advocate for juveniles' rights. These varied environments allow social workers to address the complex needs of juveniles at multiple stages of the justice process.

#### **5.4.3 Capacity Building**

Improving the abilities and resources of social workers and professionals who work with juvenile offenders is crucial. Training should emphasize practical skills in rehabilitation, understanding trauma, and respecting cultural backgrounds. Encouraging stronger teamwork between social workers, justice officials, and community groups helps create better support networks for young offenders. Providing sufficient tools, ongoing training, and supervision also strengthens their ability to deliver effective services. By developing these capacities, social workers can more effectively meet the complex needs of juveniles and help reduce repeat offending.

Ongoing professional development is required for social workers to handle juvenile cases sensitively, with emphasis on trauma-informed care and restorative justice.

#### **5.4.4 Ethical Responsibility**

Social workers must champion the rights of young offenders, ensuring they are treated with respect and fairness throughout their rehabilitation. It is important to avoid labeling or language that could further marginalize them. Regular review and assessment of rehabilitation programs help identify problems early and improve their effectiveness, ultimately working to lower the chances of juveniles re-offending in Zimbabwe's prison system.

### **5.5 Recommendations**

There are various recommendations derived from this project which seeks to explore re-offending among juvenile in Zimbabwe prisons. It is important to understand that some of these includes; visitation of policies, stakeholder partnership, community participation for successful reintegration among others.

### **5.5.1 Policy and Program Recommendations**

Introduce a Juvenile Recidivism Management Framework by early 2026, involving collaboration between the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Welfare, and Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services (ZPCS). This should include mandatory psychological assessments, vocational training, and release preparation programs.

Implement youth-specific prison rehabilitation programs by mid-2026, with age-appropriate educational and psychosocial support services in all remand facilities.

### **5.5.2 Stakeholder and Partner Recommendations**

Civil society groups, churches, and NGOs should develop mentorship and re-entry programs for youth returning from prison, starting pilot projects in Makonde District by January 2026.

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, in collaboration with social workers and schools, should adopt a juvenile re-admission policy for expelled or suspended youth, to be rolled out by July 2026.

### **5.5.3 Community and Participant-Based Recommendations**

Establish community juvenile support teams in high-risk areas like Chinhoyi by November 2025. These should consist of parents, teachers, local leaders, and trained peer counselors, non-governmental Organizations to guide young offender's reintegration.

Former juvenile offenders who have successfully reintegrated should be involved in youth engagement programs, using their experience to help others navigate post-prison life.

Establish community awareness campaign by ZPCS to educate them to accept ex-offenders in Chinhoyi by end of 2026. This should consist of parents, correctional officers, non-governmental organizations to mention few.

### **5.5.4 Social Work-Specific Recommendations**

Zimbabwean universities should incorporate juvenile justice systems, correctional social work, and reintegration strategies into the social work curriculum by 2027, in line with Education 5.0.

Professional social work bodies must develop and enforce practice guidelines for correctional social workers, ensuring all graduates working in justice-related fields receive targeted in-service training by end of 2026.

Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services should employ experienced social workers who have deep understanding with issues of children in contact with the law by end of 2027.

## **5.6 Areas for Future Study**

This study focused on exploring re-offending among juvenile in Zimbabwe prisons using Chinhoyi Remand as a case study where it looked at various factors contributing, possible measures among other issues. However, this research contains various limitations which are important area for future research. These areas include; sample size, limited time frame, non-involvement of justice system as key informants among others.

### **5.6.1 Sample Size**

Future research should consider using a larger and more diverse sample to improve the reliability and generalizability of the findings. Including juveniles from multiple prisons across Zimbabwe would provide a broader perspective on re-offending patterns. A more representative sample can capture variations related to region, age, gender, and offense type. This would help identify common and unique factors influencing juvenile recidivism. Additionally, it would allow for more robust statistical analysis and stronger conclusions. Expanding the sample size is essential to better inform policy and program development nationwide.

### **5.6.2 Involvement of Justice System Actors**

Future research should actively involve key actors within the justice system, such as judges, probation officers, social workers, and policymakers. Their insights can provide a deeper understanding of systemic challenges and decision-making processes that influence juvenile re-offending. Including these stakeholders would shed light on how policies are implemented and where gaps exist between theory and practice. Their perspectives are crucial for designing more

effective rehabilitation and reintegration programs. Engaging justice system actors can also help identify opportunities for collaboration between institutions and communities.

### **5.6.3 Gender Specific**

Future studies should explore the unique experiences and needs of female juvenile offenders, as their pathways to offending and re-offending may differ from males. Understanding gender-specific factors can help in developing tailored interventions that address issues such as trauma, abuse, and social stigma more effectively. Research focusing on girls and young women in the justice system is currently limited, especially in Zimbabwe, creating a critical knowledge gap. By examining how gender influences rehabilitation outcomes, programs can be better designed to support female juveniles' reintegration. Additionally, this focus can inform policies that promote gender-responsive approaches within juvenile justice.

### **5.6.4 Longitudinal Studies on Juvenile Recidivism**

Longitudinal studies are needed to track juvenile offenders over extended periods after their release to better understand the factors influencing re-offending or successful desistance. Such research can reveal how changes in personal circumstances, social environments, and support systems impact long-term outcomes. By following juveniles across different stages of their lives, researchers can identify critical intervention points that promote lasting rehabilitation. This approach helps to capture the dynamic nature of re-offending, which cross-sectional studies may miss. Longitudinal data would provide valuable evidence for designing more effective, sustainable juvenile justice policies and programs. Overall, these studies are essential for improving the long-term well-being of youth involved in the justice system.

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Appendix A: University introductory letter

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

P. Bag 1020  
BINDURA, Zimbabwe  
Tel: 263 - 71 - 7531-6, 7621-4  
Fax: 263 - 71 - 7534



BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: REQUEST TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH PROJECT IN YOUR ORGANISATION

This serves to introduce the bearer, \_\_\_\_\_, Student  
Registration Number \_\_\_\_\_, who is a BSc Social Work student at  
Bindura University of Science Education and is carrying out a research project in  
your area/institution.

May you please assist the student to access data relevant to the study, and where  
possible, conduct interviews as part of a data collection process.

Yours faithfully



E.E. CHIGONDO  
CHAIRPERSON


BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK  
CHAIRPERSON  
11 APR 2025  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES  
PRIVATE BAG 1020, BINDURA, ZIMBABWE



## Appendix B: Approval letter

**ZIMBABWE PRISONS AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICE**

Telephone: (626721)



REF: A/A/1  
OFFICE OF THE OFFICER COMMANDING  
MASHONALAND WEST PROVINCE  
P.O Box 28  
CHINHOMI  
ZIMBABWE

12 February 2025

FARAI MUTYANDA

**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**


**APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH PROJECT**

1. The above subject refers

You are hereby informed that your application for conducting a research of Bachelor's Degree in Social Work titled **"Exploring re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwe prisons. A case study of Chinhoyi Remand Prison"** from 14 February to 16 February 2025 at Chinhoyi Remand Prison was approved.

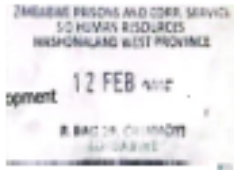
2. You can now make special arrangements for research with Officer in Charge Chinhoyi Remand Prison at your convenient time during working hours at your own expense. During the period of your research, you are required to observe all the necessary rules and regulations including the ethics pertaining to your research project and you shall not allowed to divulge to any unauthorized person(s) information regarding the operations of ZPCS. You should avail yourself to the security Section for orientation before commencement of your research project.

3. By copy of this letter Officer Commanding Mashonaland West Province and the O.I.C Chinhoyi Remand Prison are advised of this approval.



L. Madzudzo (PCO)

Strategic Planning, Research and Development  
To the Officer Commanding  
MASHONALAND WEST PROVINCE  
Ct SO Rehabilitation Mashonaland West Province  
Ct SO Security Mashonaland West Province  
Ct O.I.C Chinhoyi Remand Prison



## **Appendix C: Interview Guide: Correctional Officers**

My name is Farai Mutyanda I am a fourth year at Bindura University of Sciences Education study Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Social Work. As part of my degree programme, students are required to conduct individual research. Therefore, I am conducting a research on topic **“Exploring re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwe prisons. A case study of Chinhoyi Remand Prison”** The research focuses on understanding factors causing re-offending at Chinhoyi Remand Prison in order to come with possible solutions. You are requested to be one of key informants in this research study. You are being reminded that your responses will kept confidential and anonymous and will used strictly for academic purposes. Also, your participation is voluntary. I am engage you to participate in interview which is 45 minutes longer as a part of interview and you are allowed to excuse yourself from interview at any time.

### **Section 1: Demographic Information**

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

Years of service at Chinhoyi Remand Prison: \_\_\_\_\_

Experience working with juveniles: Yes / No

Educational qualification: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section 2: Research Questions**

#### **Objective 1: Factors Contributing to Re-offending**

What are the most common offenses committed by repeat juvenile offenders?

.....  
What are the main reasons why juveniles re-offend after release?

.....  
How do family background and community conditions influence re-offending?

.....  
What role does peer pressure play in re-offending?

.....  
**Objective 2: Impact on Rehabilitation and Community Safety**

How does re-offending affect rehabilitation efforts in this facility?

.....  
What is the impact of repeat offending on prison management?

.....  
How does re-offending affect community safety?

.....  
**Objective 3: Measures to Address Re-offending**

What rehabilitation programs are currently in place for juveniles?

.....  
Do these programs effectively prevent re-offending? Why or why not?

.....  
What kind of external support would enhance rehabilitation efforts?

.....

**Objective 4: Developing a Reintegration Model**

What should a model for juvenile reintegration include?

.....

What role should families and communities play?

.....

What post-release support structures are needed?

## **Appendix D: Interview Guide – Juvenile Inmates**

My name is Farai Mutyanda I am a fourth year at Bindura University of Sciences Education study Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Social Work. As part of my degree programme, students are required to conduct individual research. Therefore, I am conducting a research on topic **“Exploring re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwe prisons. A case study of Chinhoyi Remand Prison”** The research focuses on understanding factors causing re-offending at Chinhoyi Remand Prison in order to come with possible solutions. You are requested to be one of key informants in this research study. You are being reminded that your responses will kept confidential and anonymous and will used strictly for academic purposes. Also, your participation is voluntary. I am engage you to participate in interview which is 45 minutes longer as a part of interview and you are allowed to excuse yourself from interview at any time.

### **Section 1: Demographic Information**

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of times incarcerated: \_\_\_\_\_

Offense committed: \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of current sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

Educational background: \_\_\_\_\_

Family situation (e.g., single parent, orphan, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section 2: Research Questions**

#### **Objective 1: Factors Contributing to Re-offending**

Why do you think some juveniles re-offend after being released?

.....

What challenges did you face after your previous release?

.....

How did your community or family respond to your return?

.....

Were you influenced by peers or friends?

.....

## **Objective 2: Impact on Rehabilitation and Community Safety**

How has being back in prison affected you?

.....

How do people in your community see you?

.....

Do you feel safe and supported in your community?

.....

## **Objective 3: Measures to Address Re-offending**

What programs or activities have you participated in here?

.....

Do you think they help in stopping crime? Why or why not?

.....

What support do you wish to have after release?

.....

**Objective 4: Developing a Reintegration Model**

What kind of help would you need after prison?

.....

Who do you expect to support you (family, community, government)?

.....

What would make it easier for you not to return to prison?

.....

## **Appendix E: Focus Group Discussion Guide – Juvenile Inmate**

My name is Farai Mutyanda I am a fourth year at Bindura University of Sciences Education study Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Social Work. As part of my degree programme, students are required to conduct individual research. Therefore, I am conducting a research on topic **“Exploring re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwe prisons. A case study of Chinhoyi Remand Prison”** The research focuses on understanding factors causing re-offending at Chinhoyi Remand Prison in order to come with possible solutions. You are requested to be one of key informants in this research study. You are being reminded that your responses will kept confidential and anonymous and will used strictly for academic purposes. Also, your participation is voluntary. I am engage you to participate in interview which is 45 minutes longer as a part of interview and you are allowed to excuse yourself from interview at any time.

### **Section 1: Demographic Snapshot (Group Summary)**

Total participants: 6

Age range: \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_

Number of repeat offenders: \_\_\_\_

Education level (majority): \_\_\_\_\_

Family background (general pattern): \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section 2: FGD Discussion Topics**

#### **Topic 1: Life after First Release**

What was your life like after being released the first time?

.....

What made it hard to stay out of trouble?



.....

**Topic 2: Influence of Environment**

How do your home and neighborhood affect your decisions?

.....

What role do your friends play in your choices?

.....

**Topic 3: Rehabilitation Programs**

What programs have you done here? Were they helpful?

.....

What is missing in the current programs?

.....

**Topic 4: Future Hopes and Fears**

What do you hope for after leaving prison?

.....

What do you fear the most about returning to the community?

.....

**Topic 5: Suggestions for Change**

What support do you think juveniles like you need?

.....

How can prison programs be improved to stop re-offending?

.....

## **Appendix F: Consent form**

### **Introduction**

My name is Farai Mutyanda I am a fourth year at Bindura University of Sciences Education study Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Social Work. As part of my degree programme, students are required to conduct individual research. Therefore, I am conducting a research on topic **“Exploring re-offending among juveniles in Zimbabwe prisons. A case study of Chinhoyi Remand Prison”** The research focuses on understanding factors causing re-offending at Chinhoyi Remand Prison in order to come with possible solutions. You are requested to be one of key informants in this research study. You are being reminded that your responses will kept confidential and anonymous and will used strictly for academic purposes. Also, your participation is voluntary. I am engage you to participate in interview which is 45 minutes longer as a part of interview and you are allowed to excuse yourself from interview at any time.

### **Dear Participant,**

You are being invited to participate in a research study that seeks to explore the causes and nature of juvenile re-offending in Zimbabwe, with a focus on Chinhoyi Remand Prison. This study is being conducted as part of my academic requirements for a dissertation.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The aim of the study is to understand the factors that lead juveniles to re-offend, assess the rehabilitation measures in place, and evaluate the roles of correctional officers and institutions in addressing juvenile crime.

### **Participation**

Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you agree to take part, you will be asked to participate in an interview that may last approximately 30–45 minutes. You are free to refuse to answer any question and may withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

### **Confidentiality**

All information you provide will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. Your name and any identifying details will not be included in the final report. Data will be stored securely and used solely for academic purposes.

### **Risks and Benefits**

There are minimal risks associated with participation. You may experience emotional discomfort when discussing sensitive issues, but you are free to decline any questions. There are no direct benefits, but your participation will contribute to improving juvenile justice policies and practices in Zimbabwe.

### **Consent**

By signing below, you acknowledge that:

You have read and understood the information above.

You voluntarily agree to participate in this research.

You understand your rights to confidentiality and withdrawal.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me on the following details

Phone number; +263775186549

Email; [fmutyanda66@gmail.com](mailto:fmutyanda66@gmail.com)

If you are willing to partake and contribute to and in the study, you can kindly fill your details in space below.

**Participant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your Participation

Farai Mutyanda