

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



**PATHWAYS TOWARDS COUNTERING FACTORS TRIGGERING WOMEN TO
COMMIT VIOLENT CRIMES IN ZIMBABWE. A CASE STUDY OF CHIKURUBI
FEMALE PRISON.**

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE
EDUCATION, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES, DEPARTMENT
OF SOCIAL WORK, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
BACHELORS OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK**

SUPERVISOR: MS R. MUREGI

2025

DECLARATION

I, Evidence Kavhai B210558B, a candidate for the Honors degree in Social Work at Bindura University of Science Education, hereby declare that this dissertation titled, **Pathways towards countering factors triggering women to commit violent crimes in Zimbabwe. A case study of Chikurubi Female Prison**, is my original work and has been completed under the supervision of Ms R. Muregi.

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

Student Signature..... Date.....

E. Kavhai

APPROVAL FORM

I certify that I have supervised EVIDENCE KAVHAI in undertaking the research titled: **Pathways towards countering factors motivating women to commit violent crimes in Zimbabwe. A case study of Chikurubi Female Prison.** This is in partial fulfilment of the requirements of a Bachelor of Science (Honours) Degree, in Social Work, and I hereby recommend it for acceptance by Bindura University of Science Education.

Signature.....

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MS R. Muregi

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(Supervisor)

Chairperson of the Department Board of Examiners

The Department Board of Examiners is satisfied that this dissertation report meets the examination requirements and therefore recommend Bindura University of Science Education to accept this research project by KAVHAI EVIDENCE titled: **Pathways towards countering factors triggering women to commit violent crimes in Zimbabwe. A case study of Chikurubi Female Prison**, in partial fulfilment of the Bachelor of Science, (Honours) Degree in Social work.

Chairperson

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Year	2025

Title of the Project: Pathways towards Countering Factors Triggering Women to Commit Violent Crimes in Zimbabwe: A Case Study of Chikurubi Female Prison.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Lord for his grace and guidance throughout the program and research process. Acknowledgement is extended to Bindura University of Science Education for the academic support, colleagues and peers for their collaboration and insightful discussions. To my supervisor, Ms Muregi, I'm deeply grateful for your support and expert guidance throughout the research process. I appreciate the time and effort you invested in my growth and development.

Special thanks to my family and friends for their emotional support and encouragement throughout the program and research process. Their belief in me and my work helped me navigate the challenges I faced during my academic journey.

You turned my hardest days into my happiest memories. I'm forever grateful and may the Lord Almighty bless you all.

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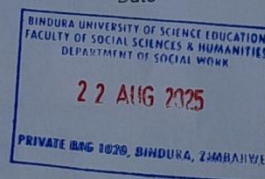
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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my family. They have stood firm in prayer, guidance and financial assistance for me to accomplish my dream of being a social worker.

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MARKING GUIDE: UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PROJECT

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION	Possible Mark	Actual Mark
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	
Weighted Mark	15	

Comments.....
.....

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	
Weighted Mark	20	

Comments.....
.....

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	15	
Data presentation and analysis procedures	10	
Summary	5	
Total	100	
Weighted Mark	25	

Comments.....

Chapter 4 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

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

Comments

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Chapter 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Comments

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SUMMARY:-

	Actual	Total
Chapter 1	_____	
Chapter 2	_____	
Chapter 3	_____	
Chapter 4	_____	
Chapter 5	_____	
Total	_____	_____

ABSTRACT

This research entitled “Pathways towards Countering Factors Influencing Women Committing Violent Crimes: A Case Study of Chikurubi Female Prison” explores the complex and multifaceted issues of women committing violent crimes, with a specific focus on the experiences of inmates at Chikurubi Female Prison. Through a qualitative approach which is guided by the social learning theory, the research sought to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to women's involvement in violent crime. By examining the lived experiences of twelve female inmates and gathering expert insights from two prison officials, including a security personnel, social worker, and a lawyer, this study sheds light on the intricate web of socio-economic and relational factors that drive women to commit violent crimes. The findings of this research show that poverty, unemployment, and the struggle to meet basic needs as noted by Maslow's hierarchy of needs are significant drivers of women's involvement in violent crime. Furthermore, it was noted that relationships can also influence women especially as part gang activities and partner involvement in crimes. The research also highlights the impact of gender- based violence and mental incapacitation on women's likelihood of engaging in violent behavior. The research highlights the need for comprehensive and multifaceted interventions that address the root causes of women's involvement in violent crimes. In response to these findings, the researcher proposes recommendations aimed at empowering women both pre and post incarceration for violent offending. These recommendations focus on providing women with the skills and support necessary to generate honest income, engaging communities in efforts to reduce gender based violence and offering trauma centered psychosocial support for survivors of gender based violence. By prioritizing the needs and experiences of women who have committed violent crimes, this research that contribute to the development of more effective policies and practices that promote effective rehabilitation, reduce recidivism, and support the reintegration of female violent offenders into society.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the study's background, problem statement, research aim, objectives, and research questions investigating the diverse factors that contribute to women's involvement in violent crimes. Although crime has historically, been seen as a male-dominated phenomenon, women's active involvement in a variety of illegal activities had recently come to light. Concern over the rising number of violent crimes committed by women is widespread and Zimbabwe is not an exception. Even while women have been committing crimes just like men, nothing is known about how often they are involved in violent crimes. Understanding the underlying factors that trigger such behaviour is vital for developing effective intervention measures. This research explores the factors behind factors behind women's involvement in violent crimes, concentrating on inmates at Chikurubi Female Prison in Zimbabwe. By exploring the complex elements that influence women's participation in violent criminal activities, the study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and inform interventions.

1.1. Background to the study

Chikurubi Female Prison is one of the biggest women's prisons in Zimbabwe's. It holds women who have been found guilty of a variety of crimes, some of which are serious and referred to as violent crimes. The Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services (2022), reports that recent statistics show a worrying rise of women who are incarcerated for violent crimes. Therefore, the research helps to understand the factors that trigger women to engage in violent crimes in Zimbabwe and proposes recommendations for developing measures to address violent crimes among both women and men.

Data from the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2022) reveals a considerable increase in reported crimes. In the first quarter of 2024, the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZimStat) recorded 221,704 criminal cases, corresponding to a crime rate of 1,460.6 per

100,000 people, a small jump from the previous quarter. This tendency is further highlighted by the 45% spike in crime cases reported in the last quarter of 2022 compared to the first quarter of the same year (Zimstats 2024). The crime rate in Harare Province, for instance, stands at an alarming 2,877.5 per 100,000 inhabitants, nearly double the national average (Zimstats 2024). It is crucial to note that, while ZimStat provides valuable data regarding crime patterns, these figures only represent reported crimes, and the actual number could be significantly higher. Therefore, it is important to understand the diverse dynamics leading to offending.

Comparing violent crime statistics between countries is tricky, as the definitions of violent crimes vary across countries. Depending on the definition, violent crimes may include murder, assault, manslaughter, sexual assault, homicide, robbery, endangerment, kidnapping, extortion, and rape. Different countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Europe, South Africa, and even Zimbabwe have diverse procedures for recording and reporting crimes. By virtue of the diverse systems, so does the classification of crimes. In Zimbabwe, people who have committed violent crimes are classified as dangerous offenders. Therefore, the research focused on incarcerated women, classified as dangerous, in order to have a clear understanding of factors that triggered them to commit violent crimes.

The U.S. federal government's definition of a "crime of violence" as stated in Title 18 of the United States Code Chapter 1 of 16 means,

(a) an offense that has as an element the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another, or

(b) any other offense that is a felony and that, by its nature, involves a substantial risk that physical force against the person or property of another may be used in the course of committing the offense.

It is apparent that the definition of violent crime can relate to property, and in Zimbabwe it is known as malicious damage to property. The study also took into account participants from this category to guarantee that a wide variety of violent crimes are properly understood.

Women are a minority in the criminal justice system, representing about five percent of those held in detention and about 10 percent of those supervised in the community. The causes of offending, types of crimes committed, and methods out of offending can differ between men and women as reported by the Justice Inspectorate (2024). In addition, the Justice Inspectorate (2024) indicates that women commit less violent, serious, or organised crime, but crimes related to acquiring goods and services are likely to have mental health issues and to suffer from drug addictions and more likely to be victims of crime, with histories of violence and abuse. Therefore, it was necessary, through the research, to find out and understand if the same issues affect women in Zimbabwe.

According to Forsythe (2001), a great number of women committing offenses in England and the United States over the past two decades has stirred the interest of researchers into learning more about the characteristics of female offenders, the kind of crimes women are more likely to commit and the circumstances that drive women to offend. In addition, Steffensmeier (2001) concentrates on the elements that affect the risk for repeat offending among women. This clearly illustrates that even in developed countries, there is interest in understanding the motive behind women committing crimes, notably violent crimes.

It is interesting to note that rape was not viewed as a crime that women could commit due to their biological makeup and the different violent crimes perpetrated by women, which include murder, robbery, assault, burglary, auto theft, and larceny (Jones, 2020; Kruttschnitt, 2019). However, one of the factors that encouraged the researcher to research why women commit violent crime was because in Zimbabwe there are incidences of women accused of

rape, and aggravated indecent assault. Therefore, the research explored the different violent crimes that women at Chikurubi Female Prison committed and the unique motivating factors for those crimes, including rape.

1.2. Statement of the problem

There has been an increasing number of crimes committed, with women also committing violent crimes. This is problematic given that women were usually seen as victims of violent crimes and not offenders themselves and generally soft-natured. However, current statistics reveal that women are committing similar violent crimes as men, and these include rape, murder, kidnapping, robbery and assault. Women who have committed violent crimes have been severely penalised and classified as dangerous. This study therefore seeks to understand the factors which are motivating women in Zimbabwe to commit violent crimes.

1.3. Aim of the study

The study aims to document factors that drives women to commit violent crimes and to provide insights and recommendations for future plans and programs aimed at reducing violent crime.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The study sought to achieve the following key objectives.

- I. To identify the socioeconomic and cultural factors that trigger women's involvement in violent crimes.
2. To analyse the role of relationships and its influence in violent crimes among women.
3. To recommend strategies or measures to prevent and reduce women's involvement in violent crimes.

1.4.1. Research Questions

1. Socioeconomic and cultural influences

What are the underlying circumstances contributing to women's involvement in violent crimes?

2. Influence of relationships

What role do relationships play in triggering women's involvement in violent crimes?

3. Strategies or measures

What strategies can be employed to mitigate the factors that contribute to women's participation in violent crimes?

The research on the complex causes of violent crime among women was guided by the questions outlined above.

1.5. Significance of the study

Despite the growing number of women engaging in violent crimes, there remains a paucity of research focusing on the distinctive factors that drive female criminal behaviour, particularly in the African environment. This study is justified on various grounds. Many studies on female criminality have been conducted in Western environments, which may not be totally applicable to African settings where cultural norms and socio-economic situations differ greatly. Insights from this study can be utilized to inform the development of gender-sensitive policies and rehabilitation programs that targets the special needs of female offenders, contributing to more effective crime prevention efforts (Jones, 2020). By examining the interplay of socio-economic, psychological, and cultural elements, this research could contribute to the theoretical understanding of female criminality, prevailing paradigms that

often disregard women's experiences. In addition, knowing the triggers of violent crimes among women might help in designing targeted interventions that not only rehabilitate offenders but also prevent future crimes, thereby boosting community safety and reducing recidivism rates (Bloom, 2000).

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

Criminal Mental patient: Offenders found to be mentally unstable when they committed crime and as such not sentenced, but instead undergo treatment behind bars and upon recovery are discharged (American Psychological Association, 2020).

Incarceration: The state of being confined in prison.

Mental conditions: Disorders that affect mood, thinking, and behaviour, as defined by established diagnostic criteria DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Rehabilitation: The process of helping a person readapt to society or restore previous abilities.

Recidivism: The tendency of a convicted criminal to reoffend.

Violent Crime: The act of committing a crime that has aggravating consequences on self or other people. This can include rape, murder, armed robbery and human trafficking.

1.7. Dissertation Outline

The layout of the research is presented as follows;

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

The section focuses on providing an introduction and background on women and violent crime, statement of the problem, aims and objectives, justification of the university, key definition of terms as well as the chapter conclusion.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This section focuses on the theoretical framework guiding the research and the main literature on existing research gaps after a review of selected relevant

Chapter 3: Methodologies

The various methods which the researcher used in order to collect, interpret, analyse and package information is shared under this chapter. The research combines both quantitative and qualitative techniques and tools, in order for the two methods to complement each other to ensure the research objectives are achieved.

Chapter 4: Presentation, interpretation, analysis and discussion of findings.

After data collection, presentation of findings, interpretation, analysis and discussion of findings is shared under this chapter. It provides the backbone of the research.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The last chapter provides an overall summary of the whole research. Key conclusions made and respective recommendations will also be made.

References

A full reference list, comprising of all the authors and sources of information for reference is compiled and completed the research. This is to provide a cross-reference point.

1.8. Chapter Summary

The first chapter as outlined above comprises of the introduction of the research, background, statement of the problem and significance of the study. In addition, the purpose and objectives of meeting set objectives are presented. The chapter concluded with the definition

of key terms and layout of the research report in order to provide a guide on interpretation of the key terms and how each section is outlined.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

Various literature has been reviewed including the theoretical background for conducting the research. This is crucial to ensure that a deeper understanding of factors triggering women to commit crime is clearly understood. In addition, it is via analyzing current literature that existing research gaps are found and guarantee that there is no repetition of research and significantly contribute to the body of knowledge.

2.1. Theoretical Perspective

The research is premised on the Social Learning Theory (SLT), developed by Albert Bandura, which proposes that behavior is learned through observation, imitation, and modeling. This theory emphasizes the role of social influence and reinforcement in influencing behavior. In the context of women and violent crime, SLT provides a framework for studying how social interactions and environmental factors lead to violent behaviors among women.

According to Bandura (1977) individuals learn behaviors by observing others, particularly role models. This is crucial in understanding how women may acquire violent behaviors seen in their environments, such as within families or peer groups. For women this may even include their male partners.

Behaviors that are rewarded are likely to be repeated, while those that are punished are less likely to be. For women, the reinforcement of aggressive behaviors in certain social contexts can lead to an increase in violent activities. In this case, the rewards include financial money as many women can attest to committing crimes such as robbery in order to meet their financial needs. The same point helps to explain why recidivism is prevalent among women with violent crimes

In addition, some women feel that they gain emotional pleasures and gratification after committing crimes such as hitting people as they have been victims or viewers of gender-based violence themselves. McCarthy et al. (2007) discovered that women who associate with delinquent peers are more likely to engage in violent crimes. The social rewards from peers can encourage aggressive behaviors, harmonizing with the Social Learning Theory concepts. Therefore, from a different perspective women commit crimes in order to receive emotional pleasures through association.

Moreover, women may identify with particular groups or individuals who demonstrate violent behavior, leading to the internalization of these behaviors as normal or even necessary in certain settings. This is relevant in circumstances where women, with male physical attributes, owing to labeling end up associating with men and committing crimes together with them. Several incidences related to unlawful entry, dangerous substances peddling, and accomplices to rape, murder, and killing of endangered species of animals. Clearly by identifying with such groups, women commit horrific crimes.

The research reveals that women who have been exposed to domestic violence or who have experienced violent behaviors in their upbringing are more likely to engage in violent acts themselves (Farrington, 1993). This confirms SLT's assertion that early exposure to violence can lead to the normalization of such behaviors. In addition, media portrayals of violence, particularly in films and television, can act as models for women, affecting their beliefs of acceptable behavior. Studies have shown that women who consume violent media are more likely to demonstrate aggressive behaviors according to Harrison and Bond (2007). The study therefore seeks to explore if this is also related to motivation of women to commit violent crimes.

While SLT provides a robust framework, it is essential to consider gender-specific factors that may influence women's violent behavior such as traditional gender roles which may discourage women from exhibiting aggression, but in certain contexts, such as gang involvement or self-defense scenarios, women may adopt violent behaviors as a means of empowerment or survival according to Chesney-Lind and Pasko (2004). The implications of mental health and trauma is also explored by the research in order to understand other factors beyond social learning. According to Tjaden and Thoennes, (2000), many women who commit violent crimes have histories of trauma or mental health issues.

Social Learning Theory offers valuable insights into the factors influencing women's involvement in violent crime. By examining the role of observational learning, reinforcement, and social contexts, researchers can better understand the complexities of female aggression. Future research should continue to explore the intersection of gender, social influence, and violence to develop more effective prevention and intervention strategies.

2.2. Literature Review

Different scholars have explored the subject of women and incarceration. Submissions range from why women commit crimes generally to the different factors that can influence women to commit crime. However, the researches consider women in developed countries with limited information available for Zimbabwe or the region in general. In addition, due to different contextual issues such as culture and economic status, there is need to understand if the same factors also trigger women in Zimbabwe to commit violent crime.

2.2.1 Crime Trends

Crime trends in Zimbabwe display a complex and fluctuating pattern. While there have been periods of decline, recent years have seen a resurgence in criminal activity, raising concerns about public safety. Data from the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZimStat) reveals a notable increase in reported crimes. In the first quarter of 2024, ZimStat recorded 221,704

criminal cases, translating to a crime rate of 1,460.6 per 100,000 people, a slight uptick from the previous quarter. This trend is further illustrated by the 45% surge in crime cases reported in the last quarter of 2022 compared to the first quarter of the same year. The crime rate in Harare Province, in particular, stands at a staggering 2,877.5 per 100,000 people, nearly double the national average. The most common offenses reported are crimes against public safety and state security, highlighting the vulnerability of these areas. While ZimStats provides valuable insights into crime trends, it's essential to acknowledge that these statistics only reflect reported crimes, and the actual number could be significantly higher.

2.2.2 Factors triggering women to commit crime

Adler (1977) posits that there is an interaction between women emancipation and female criminality. This was explained in the sense that the rising demand for equality is a triggering factor for women to commit crime. The research would then explore if the same views exist for women in Zimbabwe that as the economic disparity between men and women decrease, so does the capacity of women in committing violent crimes. The research will be guided by the research objective which seeks to explore the socioeconomic and cultural factors influencing women to commit violent crimes.

2.2.3 Pathways to Female Crime

Existing literature highlights several pathways to female crime, often intersecting with experiences of victimization, economic hardship, and substance abuse. For instance, Daly (1994) discusses how women's pathways to crime often diverge from men's, being closely linked to their roles as caregivers and their socio-economic vulnerabilities. Similarly, Chesney-Lind and Pasko (2004) emphasize the role of societal pressures and gender expectations in shaping female criminal behaviour. The research therefore seeks to understand if the same pathways enabled women in Zimbabwe to commit violent crimes.

2.3. Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 provides insights into the theoretical perspective in this case the Social Learning Theory which informs the research. This theory emphasizes the role of observation and imitation in learning, highlighting how people can learn new behaviors by watching others. A review summarizes key aspects of Social Learning Theory as they relate to women's involvement in violent crime, highlighting the importance of social context and learning processes. The chapter also looks at how different authors and literature has explored women and violent crimes including how different contexts can also impact women differently. The different gaps identified are instrumental in defining the research problem and objectives.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the research methodology that was used by the researcher in collecting data for this research. The chapter particularly explains the research design method that was used, the research approach, the target population, the sampling techniques, as well as the sample size that was used in the research. The chapter also explains the data type, data collection tools, data collection procedure, the data analysis technique, as well as the ethical considerations that were adhered to in this study. These tools and techniques proved to be most appropriate to collect and collate information, especially considering the circumstances leading to incarceration, rendering inmates with a label tag, “dangerous criminals”.

3.1 Research Philosophy

When conducting the research, the researcher employed an interpretivist research philosophy. According to Crotty (2016), interpretivism emphasizes understanding the meaning and interpretation of data rather than solely focusing on objective facts. This philosophy is particularly useful for examining the complex experiences and challenges that contribute to women’s involvement in violent crimes.

Interpretivism recognizes that reality is constructed through social and cultural interactions and that meaning is derived from the perspective of those involved (Guba and Lincoln, 2019). By using this philosophy, the researcher aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that trigger women to commit violent crimes including the impact of relationships, social and cultural factors (Jones, 2020). The approach allowed for a rich and detailed exploration of the lived experiences of women who have committed violent crimes highlighting the importance of context and individual interpretation. Therefore by examining the subjective experiences and challenges faced by women, the researcher can identify potential pathways for prevention and intervention (Walklate, 2020).

3.2 Research Approach

Klenke (2018) is of the view that careful consideration must be taken in choosing an approach which is in line with the objectives and purpose of the research. In this case, the researcher employed qualitative research methodology.

Qualitative research approach involves the collection and analysis of textual or visual data within the research project. The research approach is not only proved to be time-saving, but also cost-effective and aided in reducing participant fatigue. According to Creswell and Plano (2017), qualitative methods can explore complex phenomena, providing context and depth to the findings. Meanwhile, Wilkinson, (2012) expounds that qualitative research is concerned about understanding the conduct of people from the informants' perspective. Qualitative research elements were incorporated in order to understand individuals' experiences, perceptions, and motivations through non-numerical data. Qualitative research seeks to provide deeper insights into the reasons behind women's involvement in violent crimes and the societal contexts surrounding it (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6837167/>).

The research investigated factors that trigger women to commit violent crimes, and to achieve the set objectives, interactions were done with inmates at Chikurubi Female Prison. The researcher applied qualitative research approach because it helps explore the challenges, experiences and perspectives of women involved in violent crimes (Creswell and Creswell, 2014), it allows flexibility in data collection and analysis. The main reason for conducting the study at Chikurubi Female Prison was that it is the main prison specifically set aside for women, including those who are classified as dangerous criminals. This was to ensure that women who are incarcerated for violent crimes would readily be available to conduct the study. The data collected is in the form of words which helps to amplify the voices and perspectives of women involved in violent crimes. Oliver (2013), posits that qualitative

research provides a platform for marginalised voices to be heard. Qualitative research methods of data collection enabled the researcher to gather thoughts, feelings, perceptions and ideas of what exactly triggers women to engage in violent crimes.

3.3 Research Design

According to Bryman and Bell (2019), a research design is a framework for the collection and analysis of the data that will be used to answer the research questions. Creswell and Creswell (2018), postulate that a research design refers to plans and procedures for research that span steps from broad assumptions to detailed method of data collection, analysis and interpretation.

On this research, the researcher used case study, a research design that involves a thorough and systematic analysis of one case or a limited number of cases (Yin, 2018). This is supported by Leedy and Ormrod (2010), who define a case study as a type of qualitative approach in which in-depth data are gathered relative to a single individual, program, or event. Gomm (2017), argues that case study research design is a qualitative research approach that involves the in-depth examination of cases to identify patterns, themes and relationships. The method allows researchers to create a detailed understanding of the intricacies and nuances of the situation, using a variety of data collection strategies, such as interviews, observation, and document analysis (Stake, 1995). A case study is most suited to this study because it enables the researcher to gain a detailed comprehension of the factors that cause women to commit violent crimes, allowing a critical analysis of the complex issues involved.

By focusing on a single prison, the researcher was able to contextualize the findings in the specific setting of Chikurubi Female Prison, taking into account the specific social, cultural, and environmental factors that may influence the behaviour of female prisoners there, specifically those incarcerated for violent crimes and serving their sentences.

In addition, the case study approach is especially suitable for exploratory research, allowing the researcher to find patterns, themes, and relationships that do not necessarily have to have been considered prior. It also allows the researcher to consider the whole person and his or her background, conditions, and so on, and not be confined to only looking at part of their action. This is because women serving sentences for violent crimes have different backgrounds and circumstances leading to them committing violent crimes. Moreover, a case study, enables one to collect more data that can provide richer information and more penetrating insight regarding inmates who committed violent crimes.

3.4 Study Setting

The study setting was Chikurubi Female Prison, which is the only prison with women serving long sentences and those who committed violent crimes in Zimbabwe. Chikurubi Female Prison focuses on female convicts incarcerated for committing violent crimes and this proved to be an ideal place where diverse participants who have committed violent crimes in and outside Zimbabwe are incarcerated, the largest female prison and with the longest serving inmates with sentences spreading between less than a year to ninety years.

3.5 Target Population

Flick (2018) defines a population as a group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. The primary target population consisted of female inmates at Chikurubi Female Prison, whose sentences are based on the violent nature of their crimes. The in-depth and face-to-face individual engagements provided access to information at personal levels, including non-verbal nuances, which were captured during interviews. Secondary informants consisted of two prison correctional officers, and one legal expert as key informants who provided analytical perspectives on women and violent crimes.

3.6 Sampling techniques and sample size

According to Trochim (2006), cited in Sanders (2009), sampling is a process of selecting units (such as people or organisations) from the population of interest so that by studying the sample we may fairly generalize results back to the population from which they are chosen. According to Haralambos and Holborn (2004) a sample is drawn from a population, and it is representative and accurately reflects the description of relevant variables in the target population, and in simple terms, is a part of a population. It is usually selected to be representative of the total population. The researcher used the non-probability sampling method, which is purposive sampling. This method enabled the researcher to get responses only from women incarcerated who had committed violent crimes. The sample size consisted of twelve female inmates, out of the population of forty-five who had been incarcerated for committing violent crimes.

3.6.1 Purposive Sampling

Creswell (2016) posits that purposive sampling is relevant in exploring and appreciating the phenomena under study. Purposive sampling was utilised since the research was targeting women who had been involved in violent crime, and twelve women were selected to provide diversity of opinion, as the nature of crimes, backgrounds, circumstances, and sentence lengths were considered. The researcher used the purposive technique to select the sample as it selects a desirable group of people, as noted by McBurney and White, (2009). For key informants, three people were purposively selected as they were also experts and therefore with access to knowledge and had relevant experience engaging with women involved in violent crime and in conflict with the law. These included a prison correctional officer, a social worker, and a lawyer. These participants' complemented data and provided external insights related to the incarceration of women for violent crimes.

3.7. Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Data collection refers to the process of gathering and measuring data from various sources to provide insights into the research phenomenon, test hypothesis or evaluate outcomes (Creswell, 2018). According to Bryman (2016), data collection is the process of selecting and implementing a data collection method such as surveys, interviews or experiments to collect data that is relevant accurate and reliable. The study made use of in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and informal conversations to collect data.

3.7.1 In-depth interviews with the female inmates convicted of violent crimes

The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with twelve female inmates classified as dangerous criminals who had committed violent crimes and were housed in Chikurubi Female Prison. This was done to get detailed information about the circumstances leading to incarceration. Hence, the in-depth interviews provided a clear picture of various issues leading women to commit violent crimes. Boyce and Neale (2006) illustrated that in-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular situation. In this case, in-depth interviews provided information about some of the women who had committed violent crimes, and why they did so.

3.7.2 Key informant interviews with prison correctional officers

Rubin and Babbie (2009) states that key informants interview is an approach to needs assessment that is based on expert opinions of individuals who are presumed to have special knowledge about a target population's problems and needs. The prison correctional officers consisted of the prison correctional officer (security) and the prison correctional officer (social worker). Both women were based at the Chikurubi Female Prison during the research period and were on duty. The prison correctional officer for security provided security and monitoring of day-to-day activities, while the social worker's responsibilities towards inmates included intake interviews, linking inmates with resources, rehabilitation processes, and

preparation for reintegration into society. Key informants under study proved to be critical information providers for the researcher to get their perceptions and knowledge on women and violent crime from a perspective other than the offender. A designed key informant interview guide was used to direct conversations and make sure the information being collected remained relevant to the research in line with set objectives. This proved essential as the researcher made use of communication skills to control and manage the direction of discussions.

3.7.3 Key Informant interviews with a legal expert (lawyer)

A key informant guide was developed, piloted, and used to gather data from a legal professional who was a lawyer. The initial plan was also to engage a prosecutor, but this failed to materialise as the participant became unavailable due to other pressing commitments. The main reason for including legal professionals was to find out more about the legal perceptions around the issue of women committing violent crimes. It was also meant to understand the possible triggers leading women to commit violent crimes, in their opinions. To understand diversity in sentencing or related violent offending by women in comparison to men, and related trends were discussed. This engagement was conducted to see whether offenders' views and responses matched.

3.8. Research Procedure

The following research procedures were followed as part of the research process. This structure demonstrates the step-by-step process done by the researcher.

Assessment

1. The researcher conducted a literature review to get acquainted with the research issue and identify gaps in existing knowledge.
2. This was followed by the development and refinement of research questions and objectives.

3. A sampling plan for selecting participants was established and utilized.

Strategy

1. The researcher developed a research design, including a selection of appropriate data collection methods suitable for collecting information from a prison environment with high security protocols. In addition, this process included submitting an application which comprised of the research proposal, mini curriculum vitae, a certified national identity document and cleared fingerprints to the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services (ZPCS) to get permission to conduct the research at Chikurubi Female Prison.

2. Research instruments, which were the in-depth interview guide and the key informants' guides were developed. These were refined and submitted to ZPCS to accompany the approval letter. The researcher received a briefing on security protocols, signing of the Official Secrets Act, and getting a signed clearance letter to be able to access Chikurubi Female prison.

3. A data analysis plan was developed, including feeding analysis parameters into Atlas.ti.

Action

1. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 12 inmates who were classified as dangerous and had committed violent crimes

2. In addition, key informant interviews with 3 professionals, a prison correctional officer (security), a social worker, and a lawyer, were also done.

3. Information collected was collated, and data analysis was conducted through content and thematic analysis.

4. Interpretations of results were made, and conclusions were drawn in line with set objectives.

5. Recommendations were made based on research findings.

3.8.1 Ethical Considerations

It was essential to consider ethical issues, especially when working with incarcerated populations. These considerations included getting informed consent, and although women were in a prison setting, their voluntary participation was respected, and informed consent was sought before starting the engagements. In addition, inmates' identities were protected, and personal information will not be disclosed, which may compromise their identity post-prison. It is imperative to note that some inmates would be using fake identities, especially those who are amnesty returnees, and their disclosures in such instances remained anonymous with the researcher.

3.9 Validity and Reliability/ Trustworthiness

The study is valid and reliable as it consisted of real participants who committed violent crimes. In addition, although the researcher had limited financial and human resources, this did not prevent the researcher from conducting the research at the Chikurubi Female prison. This was mainly possible as the researcher had to visit one place and yet have access to inmates, correctional officers, as well as an opportunity to interact socially with inmates, as it was during the Prison Family Week. Separate visits and engagements were done with a lawyer, and this was purposefully done through recommendations from the sector, and the willingness of participants. The target population was readily available, including three different key informants, making it feasible. The direct linkages between prisons and legal experts proved an essential choice as their responses showed a clear and yet distinct understanding of women and violent crimes.

3.10 Data Analysis Approach

Content analysis is a technique used to systematically analyse the content of the communication, such as media reports, reports, and legal texts. Primary and secondary information related to crime statistics were referred to in an attempt to analyse trends and

patterns of violent crimes by women at Chikurubi Female Prison. This entailed examination of Zimbabwe Statistical records (ZIMSTATS), and related records that are accessible about sentences of women for violent crimes. These reports helped to lay bare an ominous trend as statistics were increasing with time and intensity of cases.

The study analysed how the female offender is constructed in representations within the media and how it affects public perceptions and policy decisions. This method can uncover prejudice and trends in representation, which contribute to understanding society's attitude towards women and crime. An analysis of literature on women's involvement in violent crimes in Zimbabwe was carried out to complement interviews, which were conducted with key informants and inmates at Chikurubi Female Prison. To complement the content analysis, thematic analysis was done through collating pertinent information gathered using the semi-structured questionnaire and correctional officers' and legal practitioners' responses. This was done to extract prominent themes. Also, an application, Atlas.ti was utilised as a technique to analyse data collected with semi-structured questionnaires. The rationale behind that is that the technique allows analysis of qualitative data and upon findings, the most prominent themes can be constructed and extracted from data collected.

3.11 Limitations

Considering the complexities around definitions of violent crimes, it may be difficult to generalise findings to the region. In addition, due to limited financial, material, and human resources, the collection of data across different prisons was not possible; hence, the choice to select Chikurubi prison, which is the largest and main prison housing women who would have committed violent crimes and are charged with long sentences. Focus group discussions were disregarded as a data collection technique, due to the severity and diversity of cases, and participation would be affected by personal convictions and perceptions, as some inmates maintained that others were not aware of their crimes and were not even sure of their

sentences. Therefore, findings cannot be representative of women in Zimbabwe relating to factors that trigger them to commit violent crime. However, due care was taken to ensure the quality of data is maintained, and accurate findings are shared.

3.12 Chapter Summary

The research approach, design, target population, study setting, as well as the sampling process and techniques, were explored in detail. The chapter recognizes the various research methods, techniques, and tools that were employed as a way to collect, collate, and analyze data. In addition, it looks at the ethical considerations made, delimitations and limitations, validity and reliability of the study.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

4.0 Introduction

The chapter offers the research study's findings on why women commit violent crimes using Chikurubi Female Prison as the case study. The information obtained through interviews, document analysis is presented, interpreted, analysed, and discussed in line with set objectives.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants/Respondents

The study had fifteen participants who comprised twelve female inmates, one female prison security officer, one female social worker, and a male lawyer. The ages of the participants ranged between twenty-one and sixty-nine years, with the majority falling in the 25-35-year age bracket. It is important to note that codes were assigned to participants to protect their identity and maintain confidentiality, as assured during data collection processes and in line with ZPCS guidance. The majority of respondents were married and had completed secondary education. The information can be illustrated as shown below;

<i>Description of Participant</i>	<i>Education Level</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Children</i>
<i>Key Informant 1</i>	Tertiary	42	Married	3
<i>Key Informant 2</i>	Tertiary	27	Married	1
<i>Key Informant 3</i>	Tertiary	32	Married	2
<i>Inmate 1</i>	No Education	23	Widow	4
<i>Inmate 2</i>	Primary	39	Married	4
<i>Inmate 3</i>	Secondary	27	Separated	3
<i>Inmate 4</i>	Secondary	25	Single	2
<i>Inmate 5</i>	Secondary	30	Widow	2
<i>Inmate 6</i>	Primary	37	Widow	6
<i>Inmate 7</i>	Secondary	24	Divorced	3
<i>Inmate 8</i>	Tertiary	45	Divorced	5
<i>Inmate 9</i>	Secondary	69	Widow	4
<i>Inmate 10</i>	Secondary	49	Single	3
<i>Inmate 11</i>	Secondary	23	Separated	2
<i>Inmate 12</i>	Secondary	35	Single	5

Table 1: Demographic description of research participants

4.2 Relationship between demographics and Violent Crime

It was an interesting observation that among offenders interviewed, the majority had attained secondary education, with a few having primary certificates and two who were uneducated. It can be deduced, therefore, that although educational attainment may not be a factor, the implications of lower educational attainment can translate to a lack of financial independence and idleness. In addition, it was also noted that all women who had committed violent crimes had children ranging from one to a maximum of six children. The majority of inmates who participated were not married, with statuses ranging from widowed, single, separated, divorced, and only two were married. It became clear that marital status could be an

influencing factor regarding women's involvement in violent crime, as they try to cater to their "husbands'" responsibilities. However, it has to be understood that having any other relations with male counterparts was not recorded as a marriage, and implications are further explored under the themes below.

4.2.1 Predominant Violent Crimes

In strict confidence, inmates who had committed violent crimes shared their crimes which they had committed and had been sentenced for. It was interesting to note that some of the inmates felt the need for emphasising confidentiality as some were using fake names to protect their original identities and associated crimes, which the researcher assured participants. The table below shows the various crimes that participants had committed.

Participant	Violent Crimes (Committed)
Inmate 1	Murder
Inmate 2	Accomplice to Rape
Inmate 3	Accomplice to Rape, Unlawful Entry, Assault
Inmate 4	Culpable Homicide
Inmate 5	Murder
Inmate 6	Murder
Inmate 7	Robbery
Inmate 8	Armed Robbery, Murder
Inmate 9	Culpable Homicide
Inmate 10	Human Trafficking
Inmate 11	Assault
Inmate 12	Physical Abuse

Table 3: Violent Crimes Committed by Participants

It can be deduced from the information above that women are involved in violent crimes, and these include murder, accomplice to rape, culpable homicide, robbery, armed robbery, human trafficking, assault and physical abuse. Information gathered from key informants showed that the majority of cases were related to the following conditions and circumstances;

Murder - armed robberies, gender based violence, and assault

Culpable Homicide – gender based violence, physical abuse, unlawful entry, and assault

Rape / Accomplice to Rape- armed robberies, religious practices, unlawful entry

This shows that some crimes are interconnected and can escalate from state to the other. A good example can be how due to religious practices, a woman can support their husband in committing rape on a new and younger wife, or it can be a result of association and she watches as male accomplices rape their victims during robberies and unlawful entry. It was also extracted that culpable homicide can be a result of physical abuse, then when the victim dies, it escalates to culpable homicide. Therefore, it becomes imperative to understand that some of the crimes committed by women, would have been a consequence of the action or inaction leading to a more violent crime as defined by law. From a legal perspective, it was indicated that some women would have little knowledge of the law and implications of their actions until they are convicted of those crimes.

4.2.2 Economic Factors

According to Kingsgate (2024), the high levels of poverty and unemployment have also contributed to a rise in organized crime, with criminal groups exploiting vulnerable individuals and exploiting resources for their gain. The research reveals that, indeed, economic circumstances, such as poverty, unemployment, and financial instability, play a large role in driving women into violent crimes. The majority of the female inmates interviewed explained that they resorted to violent crimes, such as armed robbery and

unlawful entry, as a means of acquiring necessities for themselves and their families. In addition, social issues such as drug and substance abuse, can contribute to an increase in violent crime. This is because drugs such as heroine, crystal meth and high grade cocaine are expensive. Two participants shared their viewpoints;

"I didn't have any choice but to steal to look after my children. Lack of employment opportunities and the fact that I couldn't generate enough income through petty trading to support my children, and my ailing mother, made me resort to doing something drastic, such as unlawful entry and theft. But it did not end there, as I soon realised through association, I became involved in more organised crime with higher returns." **(Participant 3)**

"Kana pamba pasina chekubata, vana vachikutarisa nechiso chinenzara, unoita zvese zvese, kunyange zvaunoona wega kuti izvi hazviiti kuti mhuri irarame, kunyange kuponda munhu uchimubira". This is translated as *"when there's no money and your family is in crisis, you will do anything to survive, even if it means using violence."* **(Participant 8)**

The analysis of such statements suggests that women's socioeconomic status, particularly of poor and single women, can contribute to making them resort to violence as a survival strategy at their most vulnerable time. It can also be deduced from Participant 8 that sometimes the initial intention will be for survival, but association with other criminals leads to an increase in violent crimes until there is no turning back. Some of the participants had been involved in armed robbery and resulting in casualties and deaths among their victims. Once the law catches up with them, "there is no justification for their action, even though some situations may be considered as pleas such as dependents' conditions, which is why some sentences vary for similar crimes," the lawyer indicated. The lawyer added that in some instances, women become too emotional and fail to defend themselves when allowed to express themselves, which can have a bearing on their judgments.

4.2.3 Domestic Violence and Abuse

The data collected from the research reveals that a large number of the female inmates had been exposed to some form of domestic violence or abuse before committing their violent crimes. The majority of the subjects reported that they had been abused physically, emotionally, or sexually in their family lives or their intimate relationships. According to participants during interviews, abuse and violence weaken an individual to a certain extent, but when a woman gains courage, she can explode “like a bomb”.

"My husband would beat me every other day. I could not endure it anymore, so I stood up for myself, and things went out of control. One day, while we were having our usual fights in the kitchen, I managed to manoeuvre and reach the pushing tray. I grabbed a knife in an attempt to defend myself and stabbed my husband in the thigh. He screamed in pain and released me, and I immediately regretted what I had done. I tried to assist him and called our church leaders for assistance, but due to our beliefs, he did not want to seek medical help. We tried all we could until we realised he was getting weak and we could not stop the blood flowing. He died at the local clinic, and I have to bear this punishment for a crime I committed."

(Participant 4)

"Hapana chandaishaya kana kushuvira muwanano yangu. Mari, mota chero hembe nechikafu aiva madiro. Asi pane chinhu chimwe chandaiva ndisina, rugare. Murume wangu aiita chipfambi, nemadzimai akawanda asi kungobvunza kana kupopota kuti ndaita zvirwere zvebonde ndairohwa, nekushungurudzwa, apedza ondinyengerera nemagifts anodhura. Ndakaedza kuudza hama neshamwari hapana chakabatsira. Musi umwe ndakanyatsofunga kuti kusvika rinhi ndichishungurudzwa. Ndakawana mukana pandakaona arara usiku, ndakangonotora demo ndikamutema mumusoro. Hna yangu haina kurova, ndikatorara, ndakatozoudza vanhu zvandaiva ndaita kwaedza." This is translated to “I had every comfort I wished for, cars, money, and a good lifestyle. But I lacked one thing, peace. My husband

was an abusive womaniser, and he would comfort me after the abuse with expensive gifts. For years, that was my marriage, and I tried seeking help from friends and family, but nothing helped. One day, I told myself I had had enough. I waited until he had slept, then I took an axe and struck him. I did not feel any guilty conscience, and I slept until morning when I told other people what I had done" (Participant 5).

These study participants reveal that exposure to domestic abuse and violence is a primary reason for the motivation of women into violent crimes because they may apply violence as retaliation or defence. Emotional build-up can lead to violent tendencies, and this can have negative consequences such as murder, as it may be premeditated or culpable homicide. This is a clear indication of how some women who have no history of violence can be on the wrong side of the law after committing violent crimes. This clearly shows alignment with the Social Learning Theory which the research is premised on. Women learn through the behaviour of partners to respond to violent action with violence.

Information from inmates was supported by key informants who indicated that some women engage in violent crimes because of how their personal experiences may harden their emotions. This was noted to common especially in women who would have committed violent crimes while as part of groups such as robbery, malicious damage to property, accomplice to rape, and assault. This can be translated to mean when they become exposed to violence as victims themselves or as witnesses can become perpetrators themselves too.

It was also established that once caught on the wrong side of the law, that's when women realized the impact of their actions. However, it was noted that some women, especially those affected as victims of GBV, find it very difficult to reverse the psychological impact of those actions affecting them. The social worker indicated their behaviors. It was also noted that for

women who committed murder of partners, nurtured pain and suffering and reversing those impacts is very difficult and in some cases leading to recidivism.

Women who had been exposed to violence, especially from a tender age were more resilient to violence and more susceptible to committing violent act themselves as they felt that violence was the only way out either as self-defence or to gain what they wanted. Inciting emotions of remorse in victims of gender based violence were complicated as indicated by the social worker. “It feels like teaching an old new tricks”, and usually when released such people return again for another crime. It was also interesting to note that usually women charged for murder of a partner or spouse, but naturally were not violent in nature were very remorseful as compared to those who had committed the crime intentionally or after careful planning. Such women required continuous monitoring and support through counselling for them to come to terms to what they had done and for them to stop blaming themselves. Therefore, after committing violent crimes some women experienced psychological problems.

It is clear from the above findings that domestic violence is a triggering factor to women committing violent crimes. This can be for retaliation, and when planned it becomes an intentional crime and therefore attracting longer sentences. While for some women it may not be planned, but may be accidental leading to the injury or death of another individual. It therefore becomes imperative to enhance gender based violence awareness and provision of support at the community level as a pathway to reduce the number of women who commit violent crimes effectively. Gender based violence on its own is costly, and the additional costs which will be associated with women committing violent crimes are higher. The reproductive and productive responsibilities of women will be affected, and dependents will bear the brunt of the incarceration of women. Therefore, there is a need for investing more in ending gender based violence and provision of affordable and accessible community-based

interventions to support survivors and rehabilitate perpetrators of violence. This aligns well with social learning theory, in that socialization can teach and unlearn behaviour.

4.2.4 Mental Health Challenges

The study also established that issues of mental illness, such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), may contribute to women's involvement in violent crime. Some of the participants stated that they had experienced mental health issues, which influenced their decision-making and behaviour. This was revealed as some of the women who had committed dangerous crimes and violent, likely return to prison for similar offences.

"I was under a lot of stress and depression. I just could not deal with my emotions, and I ended up doing something I regret." **(Participant 6)**

"I was taking cocaine and crystal meth, with my friends and boyfriend. These drugs are expensive, and to keep the habit going, we started stealing from our relatives' houses until we turned to armed robbery. I was mentally disturbed and would destroy property when they tried to limit my interactions with my friends. The drugs left me on edge all the time, and that is how I am here." **(Participant 3)**

The meaning of these results is that the presence of mental disorders, particularly in combination with other risk factors, such as drug and substance abuse, or untreated mental conditions such as post-natal stress disorder and psychosis, can augment the potential for women to commit violent crime as a coping or responding strategy to distress. It was also indicated that some women, like Inmate 6, were affected by the temporal lobe psychosis, leading to her killing her two-month-old baby. It was clear during cross-examination that at the time she was not aware of what she was doing, and yet there was a clear history of psychosis which had been defined in her mother as well as her father's sister, who was always wondering, and her whereabouts were often unknown. Although no clear signs had

been identified before, and as a married mother of two other children, her violent actions were a direct result of mental health challenges.

4.2.5 Peer Influence and Negative Relationships

The information collected from the research shows that the influence of peers and negative relationships may lead to women engaging in violent crimes. Several participants explained that they had been coerced or persuaded by their boyfriends or friends to engage in violent offenses.

"My boyfriend at the time asked me to help him with a robbery. I did not want to, but I was afraid of what he would do to me if I did not because I knew what he was involved with."

(Participant 8)

"My friends were all involved in gang activity. I felt like I needed to prove myself, so I found myself having a violent fight with a victim." **(Participant 7)**

The analysis of these findings suggests that peer pressure and the presence of negative relationships may affect women's decision-making and increase their likelihood of engaging in violent offenses, particularly when they are socially pressured or threatened. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs shows that people need love and belonging as one of the pillars to self-satisfaction, and it was established during research that women prioritised love and belonging to the extent of committing crimes in support or fear of neglect from their partners. It was also established that women engaged in gang activities had male partners within those gangs. Not only were they participating willingly, but in some cases trying to paint a picture of a perfect family, outside their gang activities.

One participant indicated that her mother fainted during court procedures when she confessed to some of the crimes that she had committed. This truly shows that the psychodynamic theory also reflects on how women can show different characters. For many women, social

circles can exert significant pressure to conform to certain norms or behaviours. This influence may come from friends, partners, or even broader social groups, where the desire for acceptance or fear of rejection can drive individuals to act in ways they might not typically consider. In environments where aggression or delinquency is normalized, women may feel compelled to engage in violent acts as a means of gaining respect or validating their position within the group. Therefore, it becomes apparent that negative relations sometimes push women to participate in violent crimes due to succumbing to peer pressure and the need to gain love and belong to certain social groups. Moreover, the impact of societal norms cannot be overlooked. Traditionally, female aggression has been downplayed or mischaracterized, leading to an underestimation of the factors that drive women to commit violent crimes. As societal views evolve and more women are empowered to express themselves, there may be an increased readiness to retaliate against perceived offenses. This shift can blur the lines between self-defence and aggression, prompting women to engage in violent behaviour in response to their experiences within negative peer contexts.

It is important to recognize that this trend is not merely a reflection of women's propensity for violence but rather a complex interplay of societal, relational, and psychological factors. Pathways towards addressing these influences require a nuanced approach, involving education and support systems that empower women to resist negative peer pressure and cultivate healthier relationships. By fostering environments that promote positive social interactions and conflict resolution, we can work towards reducing the likelihood of violence among women and create pathways for healthier decision-making.

In addition, the study also supported that women's involvement in violent offending can be the outcome of the absence of positive role models and supportive social groups. Women who are in toxic or abusive relationships may find themselves surrounded by ongoing hostility, manipulation, or coercion, which can alter their decision-making processes. In such

circumstances, the need to assert themselves or retaliate against perceived threats can lead to involvement in violence. The complex interplay between maintaining a relationship and individual autonomy often results in women making choices that align with the expectations of their social environment rather than their values. The majority of participants experienced feelings of isolation and disconnection from exposure to healthy relationships and support systems that would have provided guidance and alternative means of violence.

"I never had anyone in my life who could teach me a better way. I did not have any guidance on the law, and I inherited the gift of traditional healing from my mother. What I did on that day was something that I had done in more than twenty situations, but nothing like death had happened. I had helped so many babies on the brink of death, so what was my mistake? It was fate." **(Participant 9)**

"My family did not understand what I was dealing with. I felt alone and like I did not have anyone to turn to for assistance." **(Participant 5)**

The analysis of the findings reveals that the lack of positive role models and supportive social networks could make women vulnerable to turning to violent crimes as a way of coping with their issues or seeking belongingness. This also aligns with the Social Learning Theory, which emphasises the role of socialisation in shaping human behaviour. Therefore, it becomes critical for women to receive adequate post-prison support so that they do not go back to the same influencing systems that drive them into violent offending.

For many of the women in this study, their early lives were marked by neglect, abuse, abandonment, or exposure to crime in their surroundings. The absence of nurturing parental figures, especially mothers or fathers, meant they were deprived of essential prosocial values, such as empathy, emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and lawful problem-solving. Growing up in environments where violence and survival-based decisions were the norm led

to a troubling reality as aggressive behaviour became an internalized strategy for self-protection or asserting power, especially in the absence of adult figures who could model restraint, compassion, or resilience. This was a common factor picked among women raised in extended, street, or dysfunctional families, clearly showing how behaviour can be shaped by upbringing as indicated by the Social Learning Theory.

Without positive mentors or community leaders to offer guidance, affirmation, and moral direction, these women often sought identity, acceptance, and belonging in peer groups that engaged in or endorsed violence and criminal activities. In this context, involvement in violent crime often transcends individual beliefs, but rather, it becomes a socially conditioned reaction to exclusion, marginalisation, and a lack of viable alternatives. Group dynamics, even within gangs or destructive relationships, can perpetuate cycles of violence through coercion, manipulation, or a misguided sense of loyalty.

Moreover, the absence of supportive social structures like stable families, faith-based communities, or community organisations further limits access to emotional outlets, economic help, and preventive services. Without these vital supports, psychological distress goes unaddressed, heightening the risk of impulsive or reactive behaviour, including violence. For some of these women, engaging in acts of violence may be seen as an outlet for suppressed trauma, unresolved anger, or a desperate bid to regain control in situations where they feel utterly powerless.

For women who have experienced domestic or gender-based violence, the lack of protective networks poses an even greater risk. In these circumstances, violent retaliation or pre-emptive aggression might tragically be viewed as necessary self-defence, retribution, or a form of resistance. Unfortunately, the criminal justice system often fails to acknowledge these

complex realities, leading to further victimization and the criminalization of behaviours rooted in survival instincts.

In essence, the absence of positive role models and supportive social networks significantly hampers the psychosocial development of women, skewing their understanding of acceptable behaviour and weakening their capacity to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence. To effectively prevent female violence, interventions must focus on mentorship programs, community engagement, trauma-informed care, and the reinforcement of familial and peer support systems. These strategies can serve as both preventative measures and vital tools for rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

4.2.6 Integrated Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programs

Research conclusions draw on the inference that combined rehabilitation and reintegration programs are central to responding to the root causes of women's involvement in violent crimes. The participants emphasized the necessity of responding not only to criminal behaviour but also the psychological, social, and economic root causes.

"We require programs that will enable us to confront the causes of our crimes and not just punish us. Counselling, vocational training, and assistance to our families would be a great help." (Participant 11)

"Transitional housing, employment, and mentorship programs would help us a lot in reintegrating into society and not getting back into crime." (Participant 9)

This clearly shows that a lack of adequate support in the integration of ex-convicts is a factor that promotes recidivism among females especially those involved in violent crime. Several women were serving sentences exceeding five years, and while it was meant to rehabilitate them, it also provided them an opportunity to engage and form bonds with other like-minded women or who would have committed related crimes. Some inmates felt that the

classification of inmates with labels such as dangerous criminals not only brought stigma within the prison cells, but it also makes association within that category easier. In addition, it shows that the lack of proper support during the ex-convicts' integration is a factor that promotes female recidivism, specifically those committing violent crimes. Like the adage "idle minds are the most dangerous", was exposed as the living testament of the majority of women who committed violent crimes but had no previous criminal background.

This research indicates that an integrated, responsive reintegration and rehabilitation strategy addressing the complex needs of women is most likely to meet the target of minimizing the risk of women offending through violent means. When an individual is sentenced to multiple years especially for violent crimes there is limited external support as relatives will start distancing themselves from inmates. One inmate indicated that she had only received visits during her court trials and first two months of sentencing, but after that people were no longer visiting her.

The social worker indicated that as part of their responsibilities support is extended to such inmates included reuniting them with their relatives starting from seeking forgiveness as well as preparing them for re-integration. This has seen a lot of families reconsidering their actions especially through inmates' participation in programs such as **Prison Journey** or **Second Chance**. However, the participation of women in such is high optional and those not willing to go public about their stories would not be forced to participate. From a legal perspective it was highlighted that sometimes visual appearances on an offender may reflect survival in gender based violent acts but it may also reflect their violent nature and therefore the presents of scars or other marks are not necessarily used to make decisions on an individual case but presented facts and arguments impact judgment outcome. It became apparent that one of the most critical pathways is to enhance development which entails availing employment

opportunities or investing in women's productive roles that enhance their ability to sustainably support their families.

4.2.7 Strengthening Community-Based Interventions

The study also highlights the importance of strengthening community-based interventions to meet the determinants that push women into violent offenses. The participants emphasized the importance of community-based initiatives providing support, resources, and opportunities to vulnerable women.

"We need more programs in our communities that can help women like us before we end up going to prison. Employment, job training, mental health services, and domestic violence support could make a big difference." **(Participant 2)**

"The government and community groups need to work together to come up with more options and avenues for women to build better lives for themselves and their families, especially for people who have been to prison." **(Participant 3)**

The results imply that community-based intervention programs that are targeted at treating women's socioeconomic, psychological, and relational problems can have an effect in preventing and reducing women's involvement in violent crime. Sometimes women lack community support, especially when confronted by socio-economic and psychological challenges. Social safety nets are poor, especially in urban and peri-urban settings. Communities have limited social spaces that are safe and can help women in tough and complex situations. In rural areas, social safety nets help women to cope and this is experienced while doing community roles and household activities such as collecting firewood and water and those interactions can help improve the lives of women. In contrast the urban set-up leaves room for limited social interaction and people live secluded lives.

Some inmates would have long term sentences that even a slight opportunity may be a risk to their escaping although they are very few recorded cases. Therefore, it becomes apparent that while incarcerated their participation to community interventions is limited by financial sponsorship and security reasons, but it remains critical to enhance awareness especially in areas where cases of gender based violence are high. According to the social worker several life skills trainings are done while inmates are incarcerated but again, financial limitations can affect the ability of an individual to start up their own initiatives or successfully continue these post-prison without donor support.

4.3 Discussion

The findings of this study are by the literature that has unearthed and described common violent crimes. In addition, the common causes for women's involvement in violent crime were explored. The economic circumstances, such as poverty and financial instability, are a duplication of previous research results that have proven the link between socioeconomic status and women's participation in violent offenses, and this was discussed at length by Chesney-Lind and Pasko (2013) and Steffensmeier and Allan (1996). The role of domestic violence and abuse in instigating women's violence is also consistent with the literature, which has established the powerful influence of victimisation, self-defence and trauma on women's offending trajectories as supported by Salisbury and Van Voorhis (2009).

The empirical research into mental health issues concurs with that which has ascertained the prevalence of mental health disorders in female offenders and how these may contribute to criminal behaviour. Also, the empirical evidence of the research findings on relationships and positive social network influence is supported by Alarid et al. (2000) who emphasized the significance of interpersonal influence on women's offending patterns. This shows that the influence of mental health can trigger women to commit violent crimes, and that adequate response mechanisms are required to promote optimal mental health.

The suggestions provided in this research, such as overall rehabilitation and reintegration programs and community-based interventions, align with the Education 5.0 framework principle of giving precedence to overall and collaborative approaches to addressing societal issues (Ndofirepi and Ndofirepi, 2013). The focus laid on dealing with the underlying causes leading to women's involvement in violent offenses, as opposed to punitive action alone, is in accordance with social work values of empowerment, social justice, and strengths-based (NASW, 2021). Many of the women studied had early life experiences marked by neglect, abuse, abandonment, or exposure to criminal behaviour in their surroundings (Taylor, 2018). The absence of nurturing parental figures, particularly mothers or fathers, meant they were deprived of essential prosocial values such as empathy, emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and lawful problem-solving. Growing up in environments where violence and survival-based decisions were the norm can lead to a troubling reality and this is supported by Wilson (2022), who notes that aggressive behavior became an internalized strategy for self-protection or asserting power, particularly when there were no adult figures modelling restraint, compassion, or resilience. Research findings therefore show the interconnectedness between role modelling and how behaviour is shaped.

Without positive mentors or community leaders to offer guidance, affirmation, and moral direction, these women often sought identity, acceptance, and belonging in peer groups that endorsed or engaged in violent and criminal activities. In this context, the participation in violent crime often exceeds individual perceptions, and it becomes a socially conditioned response to exclusion, marginalization, and a lack of viable alternatives. Group dynamics, especially in gangs increase cycles of violence for members through coercion, manipulation, or a misguided sense of loyalty and this is supported by Thomas (2021).

Furthermore, the absence of supportive social structures, such as stable families, faith-based communities, or community organizations, limits individual access to emotional outlets,

economic assistance, and early intervention services. Without these vital supports, psychological stress remains unresolved, thereby increasing the likelihood of impulsive or reactive behaviour, including violence, as supported by Chen (2020). Some inmates indicated that when they committed acts of violence, they were expressing suppressed emotions such as pain, anger, or a desperate effort to regain control in situations where they felt powerless. One inmate indicated that most of her life, violence from family was a part of her life, either to instil discipline from brothers or father, and when she got married, the cycle continued until one day she retaliated, but with dire consequences, the death of her husband.

Women who have experienced domestic or gender-based violence often lack protective networks, which increases their vulnerability. In such cases, violent retaliation or pre-emptive aggression may be tragically viewed as necessary self-defence, retribution, or a form of resistance. According to the lawyer, due to lack of adequate training around mental health and psychological issues, the criminal justice system frequently fails to recognise these complex realities, leading to further victimisation and the criminalisation of survival behaviours as only the law is applied with no favour.

In summary, the lack of positive role models and supportive social networks significantly hinders the psychosocial development of women, distorting their understanding of acceptable behaviour and diminishing their ability to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence. To effectively prevent female violence, interventions must prioritize mentorship programs, community engagement, trauma-informed care, and the strengthening of familial and peer support systems. These strategies can serve as both preventive measures and vital tools for rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This study has provided a comprehensive examination of the reasons that trigger women to commit violent offenses, and the Chikurubi Female Prison in Zimbabwe has been their

example. Its findings unveil the complex interplay of economic, relational, and psychological reasons that drive women to become involved in violent crime. The study's recommendations emphasize the importance of a strategy that combines rehabilitation, reintegration, and community interventions to address the root causes of women's offending and reduce recidivism. In a comprehensive and integrated way, as envisaged by the Education 5.0 model, the study aims to make contributions and provide guidance to the development of more efficient measures to put an end to women's involvement in violent crime.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the key findings of the study on the pathways towards socioeconomic and cultural factors that trigger women's involvement in violent crimes, the role of relationships in violent crimes among women, and recommends strategies to prevent and reduce women's involvement in violent crimes. It includes a summary of the results as well as the conclusion drawn from the research findings. It also shows proposed recommendations for consideration when dealing with women and violent crimes.

5.2 Summary

The study identified several pathways towards socioeconomic and cultural factors that contribute to women's involvement in violent crimes. These include poverty and economic marginalisation, cultural and social expectations, and limited access to education and employment. In addition, the influence of relationships on women committing violent crime. The study found that relationships play a significant role in women's involvement in violent crimes, including partner abuse and domestic violence, family dynamics and conflict, as well as peer influence and social networks. These are discussed in summary as follows.

First and foremost, it's essential to recognize the complexities that often lead women to engage in violent behaviours. By addressing the root causes, such as socio-economic challenges, lack of access to education, and diminished opportunities for personal growth, we can foster an environment that reduces the likelihood of women resorting to violence.

Poverty and economic marginalisation affect women and their choice to commit violent crime. The economic circumstances, such as poverty and financial instability, are evidence of previous research results that have proven the link between socioeconomic status and women's participation in violent offenses, and as highlighted in the literature review.

Participants highlighted the struggle to meet basic needs, leading to desperation and involvement in violent crimes. The research highlighted that when confronted with day-to-day financial needs, committing violent acts to generate income becomes an easier way out .

In addition, cultural and societal expectations can trigger women to commit violent crimes. Women are often expected to conform to traditional roles, and deviation from these expectations can lead to conflict and violence. This included failure to submit even in gender based violence circumstances. The moment women try to fight back, they either face deeper confrontations which affect them socially and emotionally, and can lead them to commit violent crimes in retaliation or as a break-out of stifled emotions. The role of domestic violence and abuse in instigating women's violence is also consistent with the literature, which has established the powerful influence of victimisation, self-defence, and trauma on women's offending trajectories.

Limited access to education and employment can encourage women to engage in violent crime, as revealed by the research findings. Participants noted that limited opportunities for education and employment can lead to frustration and desperation. The failure to be gainfully employed increases women's chances of participating in violent crime as a way to gain financial freedom. Partner abuse and domestic violence: Moreover, participants reported experiencing partner abuse and domestic violence, which can lead to feelings of desperation and anger. Once women reach the tipping point, it increases their chances of participating in violent crimes. To achieve this, comprehensive educational initiatives are proposed that not only impart knowledge but also instil crucial life skills that align with specific context and market demands. Programs that focus on conflict resolution, self-defence, and emotional intelligence can equip women with the tools they need to navigate difficult situations peacefully.

Furthermore, family dynamics and conflict can also trigger women to commit violent crimes. Family conflicts and dysfunctional relationships can contribute to women's involvement in violent crimes. When confronted with conflicting situations, women struggle to maintain positive behaviour, and some situations trigger women to engage in violent crimes as a way to defend themselves and their families. Moreover, peer influence and social networks influence women in committing violent crime. Participants noted the influence of peer groups and social networks in shaping behaviour and involvement in violent crimes. The need to belong and be loved can push women to engage in violent crime .

Moreover, community support plays an invaluable role in this process. By building strong networks of support among women, safe spaces can be created where women can share experiences, seek assistance, and find mentorship. Collaborating with local organizations, mental health professionals, and law enforcement can further strengthen these efforts, ensuring that women have access to the resources they need. Ultimately, the goal is to cultivate a society in which women recognize their potential, feel empowered to make positive choices, and are supported in their endeavours to contribute positively to their communities. Through education and strong community ties, a future in which women are less likely to engage in violent crimes and more likely to thrive as leaders and positive role models can be paved.

5.3. Conclusion.

Women commit violent crimes due to socio-economic and cultural factors, as well as a lack of supportive systems post-incarceration. This clearly shows the importance of recognising different pathways towards factors influencing women to commit violent crimes. Therefore, it becomes apparent to enhance support to women before they commit violent crimes and after they have committed the crimes, so that they do not commit the same crimes again. In conclusion, the research on pathways towards factors triggering women to commit violent

crimes, specifically within the context of Chikurubi Female Prison, underscores the intricate interplay between socio-economic and cultural determinants and the justice system. The findings illustrate that women often find themselves in circumstances ripe for criminal behaviour due to marginalisation, economic hardships, and societal pressures, which exacerbate their vulnerability.

Recognising these factors allows for a comprehensive understanding of the motivations behind violent crimes committed by women. This understanding is crucial for developing targeted intervention strategies that address not only the immediate triggers for violent behaviour but also the underlying structural issues that contribute to these choices. Moreover, the research highlights the critical need for supportive systems that span both pre- and post-incarceration phases. By enhancing support services, including mental health resources, vocational training, and community integration programs, we can work to reduce recidivism among women who have experienced incarceration. Such systems should also emphasize empowerment, providing women with the tools and skills necessary to navigate societal challenges effectively

Ultimately, establishing a holistic approach that addresses the root causes of violence and supports women's rehabilitation can lead to more effective crime prevention strategies. By promoting a deeper understanding of the unique pathways that lead women to commit violent crimes, stakeholders can foster safer communities and facilitate meaningful change in the lives of women affected by violence. This research advocates for a paradigm shift in how society and policymakers perceive and respond to female criminality, emphasising the importance of empathy, understanding, and proactive support in fostering pathways to recovery and reintegration .

5.4. Implications for Social Work

The application of empowerment practice to inform women about their rights and options can assist in reducing exposure to violent crime. For social workers, it is imperative to inform empowerment practices for women and recognise their diversity and specialised needs. The research also implies that social workers must be provided with training to recognise the impact of trauma on behaviour so that vulnerable women can be served more effectively. In addition, social work practice should be adjusted to meet the cultural context of the women involved to ensure interventions are effective and culturally sensitive.

In social work settings, there is a need to open education, vocational training, and counselling-related programs to support women in crisis, which are community-based. This enhances accessibility and promotes sustainable support mechanisms which can deter women from committing violent crimes. In addition, the research findings also indicate the need to implement educational programs and workshops for young girls to foster a better awareness regarding the consequences of violence and healthy relationships.

In social work training, there is a need to acquaint social workers with gender-sensitive skills to address gender-based issues in violent crime. Moreover, practical training is needed for conflict resolution training in skills for non-violent conflict resolution. There is a need to provide training to assist social workers in good collaboration with the police and community organizations. Social workers should advocate for policies that target systemic issues leading to women's involvement in violent crimes.

It is also critical to enable women to make well-informed choices, making them stakeholders in their rehabilitation process. This will enhance their ability to make informed decisions, which recognises their inherent right to autonomy. These issues are aimed at having a long-

term impact towards discouraging women's involvement in violent crimes and empowering them through education and community support.

5.5. Recommendations

The research identified factors triggering women to commit violent crimes and pathways towards reducing those factors. Ultimately, confronting the roots of violent behaviour in women necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the roles that peer pressure and negative relationships play, emphasizing the importance of supportive social networks and personal empowerment in shaping positive outcomes. Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made:

5.5.1 Policy and Programmatic Recommendations

There is a need to advocate for policy reforms that address the root causes of women's involvement in violent crimes, including poverty, inequality, and lack of access to education and employment. There is a need to develop holistic support programs, and these can be government-sponsored programs focusing on mental well-being, vocational training, and legal assistance for women. This will reduce over-reliance on non-governmental organisations, which may not be sustainable and are only offered in specific localities. In addition, there is a need to form multi-agency partnerships and collaborate with NGOs, law enforcement agencies, and local leaders to create a comprehensive support system that deals with problems .

5.5.2 Community and Research Participants-Based Recommendations

To understand pathways towards factors triggering women to commit violent crime, it is essential to adopt a community-based approach. This encompasses conducting in-depth needs assessments, in partnership with stakeholders to investigate the sociocultural, economic, and psychological factors that predispose women to violent crime. This will help inform context-

based strategies that can empower communities to support women facing challenges and deter them from committing violent crimes, and for successful reintegration post-prison.

It is critical to engage women with lived experience, community leaders, local agencies, and other stakeholders as co-researchers in the research process. The utilization of qualitative and quantitative methods, such as focus groups, narrative interviews, and population surveys, to identify context-specific variables pertaining to women's involvement in violent crime is essential as this will translate findings into policy, intervention design, and research agendas.

Establish multi-faceted economic empowerment and livelihood programs aimed at poverty, unemployment, and economic dependency, and other key structural drivers of violent crime as established by the research. This includes the provision of vocational and entrepreneurial training opportunities, which are responsive to local market needs and the interests of women. This can also encompass offering access to microfinance and lending systems, including small loans and financial literacy education to enable women to establish businesses post-prison. Partner with local businesses and NGOs in the development of job placement and apprenticeship programs with a special emphasis on women at risk or with a history of justice system involvement. This will reduce recidivism among women, especially those involved in violent crimes such as robbery.

There is a need to offer targeted education and awareness campaigns to address underlying causes such as interpersonal violence, inadequate conflict resolution skills, and unfamiliarity with rights. This includes developing and disseminating culturally relevant curricula on gender equity, nonviolent communication, and rights awareness through schools, community centers, and media. Workshops can be done on trauma-informed care, emotional regulation, and peaceful conflict resolution, and through collaborating with local media and influencers

to create community dialogues and radio programs that challenge harmful gender norms and offer alternatives to violence.

In addition, it is important to strengthen the availability, accessibility, and responsiveness of support services for women experiencing or at risk of interpersonal and structural violence. It is also imperative to expand access to trauma-informed counseling, mental health services, and peer support groups, as well as fundraise for shelter services that offer haven, transitional housing, and reintegration support. Moreover, legal aid and advocacy services should be made available to enable women to engage with the criminal justice system or access protection orders. Collaborating with law enforcement and justice departments in adopting gender-responsive and restorative justice practices is also critical to ensure a wholesome package towards reducing women committing violent crimes .

5.5.3 Peer Mentorship and Leadership Development

It is important to create women-led mentorship and leadership initiatives with women who have been successful despite facing adversity, particularly those with a lived experience of violence or justice system involvement. The establishment of peer mentorship networks is essential, where trained mentors provide guidance, emotional support, and resource navigation for women at risk of violent crime involvement. This can be done through the delivery of capacity-building workshops to enhance the leadership, advocacy, and facilitation skills of mentors. Peer mentors can act as bridges between vulnerable women and community services, establishing trust and service use. This can be achieved through documentation and evaluation of the impact of mentorship programs on recidivism, mental health, and community integration.

5.5.4 Policy Advocacy and Institutional Reform

Advancing systemic policy and institutional practice changes that address root causes and prevent criminalization of vulnerable women is essential. The research established that limited knowledge around law and legal processes sometimes affects the ability of women without adequate legal representation to defend their cases effectively. Sometimes there is a need for emotional support throughout the legal process, which can help women to compose themselves. This can be achieved through working with policymakers to pass and put into effect laws that protect against gender-based violence, grant access to economic rights, and favor rehabilitation over incarceration. In addition, this can also be done through promoting evidence-based criminal justice reform that reduces sentencing disparities and offers alternatives to incarceration for women with non-violent offenses, and incorporates community-based research findings into national and regional strategic plans for crime prevention, gender equity, and social protection.

These recommendations emphasize the need for a multifaceted, community-rooted, and policy-linked approach that is appropriate for academic inquiry and practical application.

This will not only lead to a reduction in women committing violent crimes but also creates room for nurturing positive behaviors for future generations .

5.6. Areas for Future Study

There is a need to mobilize resources and conduct a similar research, possibly covering several countries that have diverse contexts. This will enable the generalization of research findings as a larger population and participants would have been engaged, thereby making it reliable. Moreover, there is a need to conduct research focusing on post-incarceration to understand the ability of inmates who were once convicted of violent crimes to reintegrate successfully in society. This will also provide knowledge on the effectiveness of

rehabilitation and reintegration programs of inmates in society and how best this knowledge can be used to strengthen existing programs.

5.7. Chapter Summary

The study points out the complex role of socioeconomic and cultural interactions and dynamics that result in the engagement of women in violent crimes. The proposed recommendations aim at countering the cause of this phenomenon and strengthening prevention and reduction efforts. Through the adoption of the recommendations, women's involvement in violent crimes can be reduced, as well as promote rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: In-depth Interview Guide for the Female Inmates

Introduction

My name is Evidence Kavhai. I am undertaking my research entitled “**Pathways Towards Countering Factors Triggering Women to Commit Violent Crimes in Zimbabwe: A Case Study of Chikurubi Female Prison**”. This research is part of fulfilment of the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work, which I am doing with Bindura University of Science Education. The main purpose of the interview is to understand perspectives on factors that influence women to commit violent crimes.

Overview:

The purpose of this research is to learn more about the potential contributing factors to your involvement in violent crimes. Your answers will be kept private and will be used to better understand the root causes of violent behaviour in women. We appreciate your cooperation.

Section A: Background

1. Age: _____
2. Marital Status: - None - Married -Separated -Widow
3. Do you have any children and or dependents.
4. Educational Level: - None - Primary - Secondary -Tertiary

Section B: Socio-economic and cultural factors that trigger women’s involvement in violent crimes.

5. What type of crime did you commit?

6. What are the circumstances that led to your involvement in violent crimes?

7. Were you aware of the legal implications of your actions?

8. What was your reaction/ how did you feel after the arrest?

Section C: Influence of relations on committing violent crime

9. Do you think your family contributed to you committing the crime?

10. Did you have any support networks (family, friends or community) before committing the crime?

11. Did you know of any resources that could have helped you prior to committing the crime?

Section D: Strategies and Recommendations to reduce women involvement in violent crimes

12. Do you think your circumstances may have been different if you had received support?

13. Is the rehabilitation process shaping you as an individual?

14. What advice would you give other women, who may be in similar situations like yourself before the incarceration?

15. What do you think can help women reduce committing of violent crimes in the future?

16. Do you have anything else to share?

Conclusion

We appreciate your time spent participating in this interview. Your opinions are important and will advance the knowledge on the causes of violent crime committed by women.

Appendix B: Key Informant Interview Guide with Social Worker

Introduction

My name is Evidence Kavhai. I am undertaking my research entitled “**Pathways Towards Countering Factors Triggering Women to Commit Violent Crimes in Zimbabwe: A Case Study of Chikurubi Female Prison**”. This research is part of fulfilment of the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work, which I am doing with Bindura University of Science Education. The sole purpose of the interview is to understand the Social Worker’s perspective on factors that lead women to commit violent crimes.

Confidentiality Assurance: Please note that this research is sensitive and therefore, all replies are kept confidential and utilised only for academic purposes.

Section A: Background Information

1. Can you explain your duties and duration you have been assisting female prisoners?

Section B: socio-economic and cultural factors that trigger women’s involvement in violent crimes

2. What are the factors leading women to commit violent crimes?

Section C: Influence of relations on violent criminal behavior

3. What effects do personal and interpersonal relationships such as those with partners, family, and friends, have on women's actions and choices that result in violence?

4. What role does the prison environment play in shaping the behaviour of female inmates who have committed violent crimes?

Section D: Strategies and Recommendations to reduce women involvement in violent crimes

5. What support systems for effective rehabilitation are in place for women who have committed violent crimes?

6. What preventive measures do you think could be implemented to reduce the likelihood of women committing violent crimes?

7. Are there specific interventions that have proven effective in helping women change their behaviour towards committing violent crimes?

8. Do you have anything else to say?

Conclusion

Thank you for your valuable time and opinions. Your contributions to this research are appreciated.

Appendix C: Key Informant Interview Guide: Prison Officer at Chikurubi Female Prison

Introduction

My name is Evidence Kavhai. I am undertaking my research entitled “**Factors Triggering Women to Commit Violent Crimes in Zimbabwe: A Case Study of Chikurubi Female Prison**”. This research is part of fulfilment of the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work, which I am doing with Bindura University of Science Education. The sole purpose of the interview is to understand prison officers' viewpoints on reasons that lead women to commit violent crimes.

Confidentiality Assurance: Please note that this research is sensitive and therefore, all replies are kept confidential and utilised only for purely for academic purposes.

Section A: Background Information

1. Years of Experience in the Prison System

2. What are your roles in the prison system?

Section B: Socio-economic and cultural factors that trigger women’s involvement in violent crimes

3. What are the most common types of violent crimes committed by women?

4. In your experience, what are the circumstances that lead to women’s involvement in violent crimes?

Section C: Influence of relations on committing violent crimes

5. What effects do personal and interpersonal relationships such as those with partners, family, and friends, have on women's actions and choices that result in violence?

6. What role does the prison environment play in shaping the behaviour of female inmates who have committed violent crimes?

Section D: strategies and recommendations to reduce women's involvement in violent crimes

7. What programs or support networks do you think could lessen the chance that women commit violent crimes?

8. How can we better comprehend and manage female prisoners? What changes would you recommend?

9. Do you have anything else to share?

Conclusion

Thank you for your time and insights. These are important contributions towards knowledge of the factors that trigger women to commit violent crime.

Appendix D: Key Informant Interview Guide: Legal Expert

Introduction

My name is Evidence Kavhai. I am undertaking my research entitled “**Pathways Towards Countering Factors Triggering Women to Commit Violent Crimes in Zimbabwe: A Case Study of Chikurubi Female Prison**”. This research is part of fulfillment of the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work, which I am doing with Bindura University of Science Education. The main purpose of the interview is to understand the Legal perspective on factors that influence women to commit violent crimes.

Section A: Background Information

1. May you briefly describe your designation in Zimbabwe's judicial system?

2. How long have you worked at Chikurubi Female Prison?

Section B: Socio-economic factors leading to Violent Crimes

3. Based on your experience, what are the key factors that lead to women commit violent crimes?

4. What are the most common types of violent crimes committed by women in Zimbabwe?

5. What leads to conviction for violent crimes committed by women?

6. How does the judicial system treat female offenders?

7. In recent years, have you noticed any patterns in the kinds of violent crimes that women have committed?

Section C: Role of Relationships in influencing women to commit violent crime.

8. Within the context of violent crimes committed by women, how important are relations?

9. Are there legal measures for addressing issues leading women to commit violent crimes?

10. What legal support networks are available to women who have committed violent crimes?

Section C: Strategies and Recommendations

11. Which legislative or policy adjustments, in your opinion, could contribute to a decrease in the number of violent crimes committed by women?

12. What strategies and recommendations would you propose that can reduce females from committing violent crime?


13. Do you have anything else to say on women and violent crimes?

Conclusion

Thank you very much for your time and valuable contributions. These will inform our knowledge around women and factors that trigger them to commit violent crime and possible solutions to the growing concerns?

Appendix E: Research Letter

Tel: 263 - 71 - 7531-6, 7621-4
Fax: 263 - 71 - 7534


BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

Date: 11 April 2025

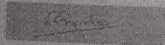
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

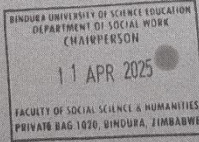
RE: REQUEST TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH PROJECT IN YOUR ORGANISATION

This serves to introduce the bearer, Karhai Evidence, Student Registration Number B210558B, 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



Appendix F: Approval Letter

ZIMBABWE PRISONS AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICE



Reference: J/3/3

Telephone : (0242) 799756/7, 704958, 701962
Fax : (0242) 701962
Email : hararemetroprov@zpcs.gov.zw

**OFFICE OF THE OFFICER COMMANDING
HARARE METROPOLITAN PROVINCE
Private Bag 7766
CAUSEWAY
HARARE**

P. BAG 7766, CAUSEWAY
HARARE, ZIMBABWE

28 April 2025

Evidence kavhai
B.U.S.E

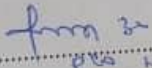
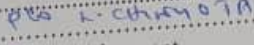
Research: "Factors triggering women to commit violent crimes in Zimbabwe". A case study of Chikurubi female Prison


INDUSTRIAL ATTACHMENT OFFER

1. You are hereby informed that your application for attachment at Chikurubi Female Prison from 29-04-25 to 30-04-25 was approved.

2. You can now make arrangements for attachment with the Officer In-Charge – Chikurubi Female Prison at your convenient time during working hours and at your own expense. During the period of your attachment you are required to observe all necessary rules and regulations including ethics pertaining to your study and you shall not be allowed to divulge to any unauthorized person(s) information regarding to the operations of the ZPCS. You shall avail yourself to the security section for field orientation before commencement of your attachment.

3. By copy of this letter the Officers In-Charge – Chikurubi Female Prison are advised of this approval.

Signed 
Name and Rank 
Staff Officer-Research and Development
to the OFFICER COMMANDING
HARARE METROPOLITAN PROVINCE



Ct SO – Research and Development – PNHQ
Ct Research and Development – Harare Metro Province
Ct OIC – Chikurubi Female Prison
Ct J/3/3 file
Ct Master file