

Efficacy of Reintegration Prison-Based Vocational Training Initiatives at Harare Prison Workshop in Zimbabwe

Dr. Shadreck P.M. Makombe

Zimbabwe Open University

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.910000311>

Received: 21 August 2025; Accepted: 27 August 2025; Published: 11 November 2025

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the efficacy of vocational training programs at Harare Prison Workshop in Zimbabwe. Guided by extensive literature reviews, the study aimed to unveil the rationale behind initiating such programs, assess their impact on prisons' self-reliance, evaluate their effectiveness, and propose models for their transformation into fully-fledged prison-based industries. The study was qualitative in nature. Through questionnaires and interviews, data were collected from respondents and this showcased a remarkable response rate. Results reveal a consensus among participants on the positive influence of vocational training programs on organizational productivity, despite challenges such as resource limitations and funding shortages. While respondents recognized the benefits of these programs in skills development and organizational growth, some questioned their broader societal impact and the utilization of goods produced. Nonetheless, there was a collective willingness to collaborate and enhance these programs, indicating their perceived importance in fostering self-sufficiency and alleviating budgetary constraints within the prison system.

INTRODUCTION

This is a priority goal in criminal justice in the prospect of the rehabilitation and re-insertion of offenders into the society. In the middle of this mission is the effectiveness of vocation trainings at correction centers. The study will attempt to potentially investigate the effect and success of the vocational training courses in Harare Prison Workshop in Zimbabwe; in a rather distinct perspective of the entity per se as opposed to all the prisoners only. The purpose of such investigation is rooted in the understanding that as much as it is necessary to pay most of the attention to the change of inmates, organizational conditions of correctional institutions also play a significant role. Among other harare prison workshops around the world, harare prison workshop exists in an intricate network of administrative, resource and operational set ups. The study aimed at determining the effectiveness of vocational training programmes at Harare Prisons work shops in terms of the economic and social impact, the effectiveness in improving the productivity of the organizations, barriers and success factors.

Background to the Study

Globally, prisons face challenges in resource allocation and sustainability. Implementing vocational training programs within prisons can lead to self-sufficiency and financial viability. Jackson, (2015) highlights the potential of prison industries in contributing to the overall functioning and budget management of correctional facilities. The United States of America has seen successful examples of vocational training programs in prisons contributing to the development of prison industries. For example, the Federal Prison Industries (UNICOR) program has been recognized for its positive impacts on both prisons and inmates. (Lacity, et al. 2016). Research by Bhuller, et al (2018), highlights the effectiveness of Norway's approach in linking vocational training with the labour market demands, leading to successful reintegration outcomes for ex-convicts. Within the Norwegian prison system, initiatives allow for the establishment of productive workshops where inmates develop skills in various trades while contributing to the financial sustainability of the prisons. The Netherlands has been recognized for its innovative approach to integrating vocational training within its prison system, emphasizing the importance of skill development and employment opportunities. (Liem and Weggemans, 2018).

A study by Ramakers, et al (2017) showcases how the Dutch prison system utilizes vocational programs to not only reduce recidivism rates but also generate revenue through the production and sale of goods and services. The provision of a framework for establishing productive enterprises within prisons, enable inmates to acquire marketable skills and contribute positively to the financial sustainability of the facilities. Japan has a well-developed system of vocational training programs in prisons that are tailored to meet the needs of industries across various sectors. (Johnson, Johnson, 2000). In Africa research has largely focused on prisons and correctional facilities in their attempts to curtail recidivism in prisoners. Focusing on South Africa, (Mabunda 2013) shows that vocational training programs in prisons have contributed to the establishment of sustainable prison industries that benefit both inmates and the prison system. For example, in Gauteng Province, the Leeuwkop Correctional Centre has a furniture manufacturing industry. In the Western Cape Province, Pollsmoor Prison operates a textile production facility. Additionally, in KwaZulu-Natal Province, Durban Westville Correctional Centre has a printing and packaging enterprise. These are just a few examples of how vocational training programs in South African prisons are making a positive impact.

In Zimbabwe, attention has focused solely on how prisons have played important roles in dealing with crime as well as moderating the behaviours of inmates so that they can be re-integrated in society. Other studies have also shown how prisoners in Zimbabwe have been rehabilitated and emerged out of prisons with some skills that are useful for survival. However, these studies have failed to adequately problematize the role of prison workshops as potential industries in Zimbabwe where with the support of the government has the capacity to impart marketable skills to both officers and inmates. These workshops can further enhance the sustainability of prisons and make them self-reliant in the context of poor budget allocations to the prisons. The study looks at the potential of the prison workshops to function as incubators in a number of vocations that can become future industries with the capacity to help the country beyond the four corners of the prison system. Harare Prison Workshop, the largest vocational centre in Zimbabwe, provides a variety of vocational training programs to impart marketable skills to both inmates and officers. By leveraging the workshop to provide training in marketable skills, utilize available labour effectively, and establish viable prison industries, Zimbabwe can potentially transform its prison system into a self-sustaining and economically productive organization. It is against this background that a research is being carried out to investigate the efficacy of vocational training programs in prison as an organization, rather than solely focusing on the inmates.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of the effectiveness of the vocational training programs in prisons is the issue of great concern especially bearing in mind the effect which they have on the prison organization itself rather than just of the individuals in prisons. This study examines a particular institution, Harare Prison Workshops in Zimbabwe to solve the following problem: The world today is faced with a number of challenges that the prisons are facing, and they include overcrowding, low levels of resources and the high levels of recidivism. To deal with this, vocational training programs have been introduced in most of the prison set-ups to provide the inmates with blow skill and knowledge that could help them to become rather employed and enable them to fit back in the society after being released (Anderson, 1995). Harare Prison Workshops in Zimbabwe proposes a variety of vocational training modules like carpentry, metalwork, tailoring and agriculture. In as much as the above Harare Prison Workshop vocational training programs are wide, it remains a mammoth task to implement such that it would address the needs of the prison.

Purpose of the study

This research is aimed at exploring and making evidence-based recommendations and perceptions that would guide the policy formulations and influence the design and delivery of vocational training programs in the prison system. It aimed at making a contribution to the emerging of successful measures and helping to establish a more effective and productive vocational training system in the prisons of Zimbabwe.

Objectives of the Study

The research was guided by the following objectives:

- To investigate the rationale behind starting Vocational Training Programs in Prisons.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of Vocational Training Programs on the self-reliance of prisons.
- To assess challenges and successes of Vocational Training Programs.
- To recommend models for transforming the vocational training programs into fully fledged prison- based industries.

Research Questions

The research answered the following research questions

- What is the rationale of starting vocational training programs at Harare Central Prison?
- How effective are the vocational training programs in enhancing self-sufficiency at Zimbabwe's prisons?
- What are the key challenges faced in the running of the vocational training programs and how can these barriers be addressed?
- What models can be suggested to make vocational training programs fully fledged industries?

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms have been defined in the context of how they are used in the organisation;

Vocational Training Programs: These refer to educational programs offered within the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services (ZPCS) that aim to equip inmates with practical skills and knowledge in specific trades or industries. These programs focus on developing employable skills on inmates.

Efficacy: The effectiveness or success of vocational training programs in achieving their intended outcomes and goals in Prisons.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical Framework is a foundation for research that guides the study by connecting theories, concepts and principles. It helps researchers understand relationships between variables, analyze data, and formulate hypotheses. It contributes to existing knowledge and facilitates interpretation of research findings. (Creswell, 2020). While each of these theories offers unique perspectives that can contribute to understanding different aspects of the research topic, they have also been fused together to create a comprehensive theoretical framework. Through integrating multiple theories, the researcher gained a more holistic understanding of the research topic, capturing the complexities and dynamics of vocational training programs, organizational processes, human interactions and institutional contexts at Harare Prison Workshop.

Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory, as proposed by Becker (1993), emphasizes that investing in vocational training programs leads to the enhancement of individuals' skills and human capital. This, in turn, increases their employability prospects. This theory was of importance during the research on the efficacy of vocational training programs at the Harare Prison Workshop in Zimbabwe. It suggested that vocational training programs equip inmates with marketable skills, thereby improving their chances of securing employment both during their incarceration and upon release into society. By considering human capital theory, the researcher justified the investigation into the efficacy of vocational training programs at the Harare Prison Workshop from a theoretical perspective.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory emphasizes the role of observational learning and modeling in skill acquisition (Bandura, 1977). In the context of vocational training programs in Harare Prison Workshops, providing opportunities for inmates to observe and model skilled trainers or successful participants can indeed have a positive impact on skill development and self-sufficiency. This approach not only benefits individual skill acquisition but can also contribute to positive organizational development within the prison workshops. The practical application of social learning theory in such settings showcases how learning through observation and imitation can lead to real-world outcomes.

Empowerment Theory

Empowerment theory, as highlighted by Zimmerman (2000), underscores the significance of enhancing individuals' sense of personal control, autonomy, and self-efficacy. Upon application to vocational training programs in Harare Prison Workshops, this theory was of importance since it suggested that the programs empower inmates by equipping them with valuable skills. This empowerment leads to increased confidence and a strengthened belief in their own abilities to not only secure employment but also to lead self-sufficient lives in the future. By emphasizing the development of personal agency and self-efficacy through vocational training, Harare Prison Workshop play a pivotal role in empowering inmates for successful reintegration into society.

Organizational Effectiveness Theory

Organizational effectiveness theory, as illuminated by Titus and Hoole (2021), delves into how organizations can reach their goals and objectives. In the context of Harare Prison Workshop and vocational training programs, this theory was helpful in assessing the influence of such programs on the overall functioning and efficiency of the prison organization. By considering aspects such as staff performance, budget allocation, resource management, inmate discipline, and prison governance, organizational effectiveness theory can provide insights into how training programs impact various facets of the prison system. This evaluation contributes to enhancing the effectiveness and success of the vocational training initiatives at Harare Prison Workshop, ultimately leading to better outcomes for both the inmates and the organization as a whole.

Systems Theory

A systems theory, which has been described by Bronfenbrenner (1977), is aimed at studying interrelationships and dynamics of the various elements of a system. This theory was relevant when used to analyze the vocational training programs at Harare Prison Workshop because it explored the intricate relations that existed between inmates, the correctional staff, program administrators and other stakeholders of the correction system outside the prison facility. With this knowledge about the dynamics of the system, Prison authorities, policymakers and stakeholders can learn more about how to implement the vocational training program and the sustainability of the vocational training program in prisons in Zimbabwe. Such a holistic way enables the consideration of the whole picture of the effect and impact of different elements of the system on the success and efficacy of vocational training programs, and eventually increases the level of well-informed decisions and the efficacy of programs.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework, as defined by Antonenko (2015), serves as a set of broad ideas and principles drawn from various fields of inquiry to structure a subsequent presentation. It provides a pictorial representation of the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. When applied to the investigation into the efficacy of vocational training programs at the Harare Prison Workshop as an organization, this conceptual framework helps in exploring the dynamics beyond just the impact on inmates. By examining input factors, process factors, and outcome factors within the framework, the research can assess how vocational training programs influence the self-sufficiency of prisons in Zimbabwe as organizations. This comprehensive approach enables a deeper understanding of the effectiveness, challenges, and potential improvements within vocational training programs and their broader impact on the organizational functioning of the prison facility. By considering the interplay between these factors, the research provides valuable insights into how vocational training programs can contribute to the overall organizational development and self-sustainability of prisons in Zimbabwe.

Input Factors

Input factors, as highlighted by Jones et al. (2002), encompass the resources, infrastructure, and policies provided by prison authorities and the government to establish and sustain vocational training programs within the prison setting. Additionally, input factors involve collaborations with external entities like Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and educational institutions to bolster the effectiveness of these programs. In

investigating the efficacy of vocational training programs at the Harare Prison Workshop from an organizational perspective, the researcher finds it crucial to consider these input factors. Understanding the resources, infrastructure, and policies allocated for vocational training, as well as the partnerships established with external organizations, provides insights into the foundational support system that underpins the success of these programs within the prison organization.

Process Factors

Process factors, such as program implementation, play a vital role in evaluating the efficacy of vocational training programs at the Harare Prison Workshop from an organizational perspective. The successful delivery of vocational training programs within the prison setting necessitates attention to details such as selecting competent trainers, employing appropriate teaching methodologies, and providing hands-on training experiences. An in-depth exploration of program implementation within the research framework helps in justifying the investigation beyond the impact on individual inmates to encompass the organizational dynamics at play. By examining how vocational training programs are implemented, including aspects like active participation, skill transfer, and ongoing assessment and feedback mechanisms, the researcher assesses the effectiveness of these programs in contributing to the overall development and self-sufficiency of the prison as an organization.

Benefits of Vocational Training Programs to Prisons

The implementation of vocational training programs in prisons bring several advantages to the correctional facilities. A study by Lawrence, et al (2002) examined the benefits of vocational training programs in terms of reducing inmate idleness and increasing inmate contribution to the prison economy. The results indicated that vocational training programs provided inmates with meaningful employment opportunities within the prison, reducing idleness and promoting a positive prison culture. Additionally, a research study by Dewey, et al (2020) analyzed the potential effects of vocational training programs on the disciplinary climate within the prison environment. Vocational training programs at the Harare Prison Workshop in Zimbabwe offer a range of benefits. These programs equip inmates with practical skills for employability even while still behind prison walls, reducing operational costs through productive engagement. Moreover, vocational training fosters positive behavior by cultivating discipline, respect, and pro-social conduct among inmates and officers. It also plays a significant role in enhancing inmates' psychological well-being, boosting self-esteem, motivation, and a sense of purpose. Collaborative opportunities within these programs facilitate partnerships for enhanced skill development and job placements. By optimizing the utilization of resources and infrastructure, vocational training contributes to effective inmate rehabilitation. Furthermore, the long-term impact of these programs extends beyond the prison walls, creating lasting benefits for inmates, their families, and communities upon their reintegration into society.

Vocational training programs in prisons are cost-effective and help reduce the burden on the national budget. A study by Nur, and Nguyen, (2023) assessed the cost-effectiveness of vocational training programs as a means of reducing the costs associated with incarceration. The findings indicated that the implementation of vocational training programs resulted in long-term cost savings due to reduced re-offending rates and increased employment opportunities for released inmates. Furthermore, a research study by Aos, et al (2001) identified potential financial savings and benefits associated with the implementation of vocational training programs in prisons. The study highlighted reduced costs related to inmate welfare, healthcare, decreasing reliance on correctional facilities and reintegration services. This research has proved that vocational training programs at the Harare Prison Workshop in Zimbabwe play a crucial role in helping cushion the budget allocated to the Zimbabwe Prisons. By offering inmates opportunities to engage in productive skills development activities, these programs contribute to cost savings and operational efficiency within the prison system. As inmates develop marketable skills in various vocational areas such as carpentry, tailoring, agriculture, and more even while still in prison, they are better equipped to secure employment opportunities through hired prison labour. This also helps reduce the financial burden on the prison system by potentially decreasing the need for continued state support. Moreover, the utilization of trained prison labor within the vocational training programs leads to cost savings for the prison administration. When inmates contribute their skills to workshops, manufacturing units, or service-

oriented tasks within the prison facility, it not only enhances their skill set but also provides goods or services that can be used internally or even sold externally. This utilization of inmate labor can help offset operational costs and generate revenue for the prison, ultimately assisting in budget management and resource allocation.

Research Gap Analysis

While there is a significant body of literature examining the effectiveness of vocational training programs on inmates' skills and employability, there is a notable research gap when it comes to investigating the efficacy of vocational training programs in prisons as an organization, focusing on the case of Harare Prison Workshops. Most existing studies primarily focused on the impact of vocational training programs on inmates themselves, neglecting the broader organizational perspective and the potential benefits that prisons can gain from implementing such programs. One research gap lies in the examination of the organizational productivity aspect of vocational training programs. While some studies have explored the impact of vocational training on inmate productivity and workshop functioning (Fentahun, 2020), there is a lack of research specifically examining the contribution of trained inmates to the overall productivity and efficiency of the prison system. Understanding how vocational training programs can enhance the functioning of prison workshops and related activities, such as increased output and improved efficiency, is crucial for prison administrators and policymakers seeking to optimize the organizational benefits of such programs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Kothari (2017), a research design is the blue print by which data is gathered, measured and analyzed and there are a number of types of research designs such as the case study and the descriptive, the interpretive and many more. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study because of its ability to function within a social structure allowing casual life to go on as the study is carried out. This design allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the efficacy of vocational training programs in prisons as an organization, focusing on the case of Harare Prison Workshops. In this study, the researcher embraced interpretivist research philosophy. According to Khosla (2021), a research philosophy pertains to the aspiration to articulate the knowledge acquired from a particular research endeavor. Saunders et al. (2016) elaborate that there exist various research philosophies, with interpretivism being the philosophical approach selected for this study.

Research Approach

Qualitative research focuses on collecting non-numerical data, emphasizing detailed, descriptive, and context-specific information. Its aim is to comprehend complexities, meanings, and subjective experiences. Qualitative research employs flexible and open-ended methodologies, such as interviews, observations, and content analysis, to gather data in a natural setting (Hayes et al., 2013). In this study, the researcher employed the qualitative research approaches where he administered questionnaires to 50 respondents at Harare Prison Workshops, who were part of the target population. He also interviewed both the officer In Charge and the second In Charge of Harare Prison Workshops. This approach facilitated the measurement of specific variables concerning the effectiveness of vocational training programs, including changes in productivity and financial impacts on the prison institution.

Population and Sampling

Nachimias, and Nachimias, (1985) suggested that the population refers to the total number of individuals living in a specific area at a particular moment. The population for this study was 200 consisting of inmates, staff members, prison administrators, vocational training instructors and relevant stakeholders at Harare Prison Workshops. The researcher selected 50 participants out of a total of 200 inmates. The sample accounted slightly above 25% of the study population. The selection of 50 participants from the study population was determined by the ratio $K = 200/50 = 4$, thus $K = N/n = \text{Size of population/sample}$. This means that every 4th unit was selected for the sample starting from number between 1 and 4 until the sample of 50 was selected. T

Data Analysis and Presentation Techniques

Gwimbi and Dirwai (2003) highlighted data presentation and analysis as the stage where researchers extract insights from extensive raw data, ultimately providing a clear comprehension of spatial processes - a pivotal aspect of research. Marshall and Rossman (1990) define data analysis as the process of organizing, structuring and giving significance to the gathered data. They portray this process as a complex, time-consuming, creative and captivating endeavor. Spiggle, (1994) emphasizes that after the data collection phase, reading and interpretations serve as the initial steps towards meaningful analysis. In this study, the researcher used descriptive data presentation approach, incorporating detailed narrative descriptions on the efficacy of vocational training programs on Prisons. This methodology facilitates a thorough examination of the research findings. Additionally, graphical representations such as pie charts, bar charts, histograms and tables were utilized to systematically present the gathered data relating to each question in the data collection tool.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were taken into account throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants and their confidentiality and anonymity were ensured. The research also adhered to ethical guidelines and regulations regarding the treatment of human subjects, ensuring that no harm or discomfort was caused during data collection or analysis. Institutional review board approval was obtained to ensure adherence to ethical guidelines throughout the research process.

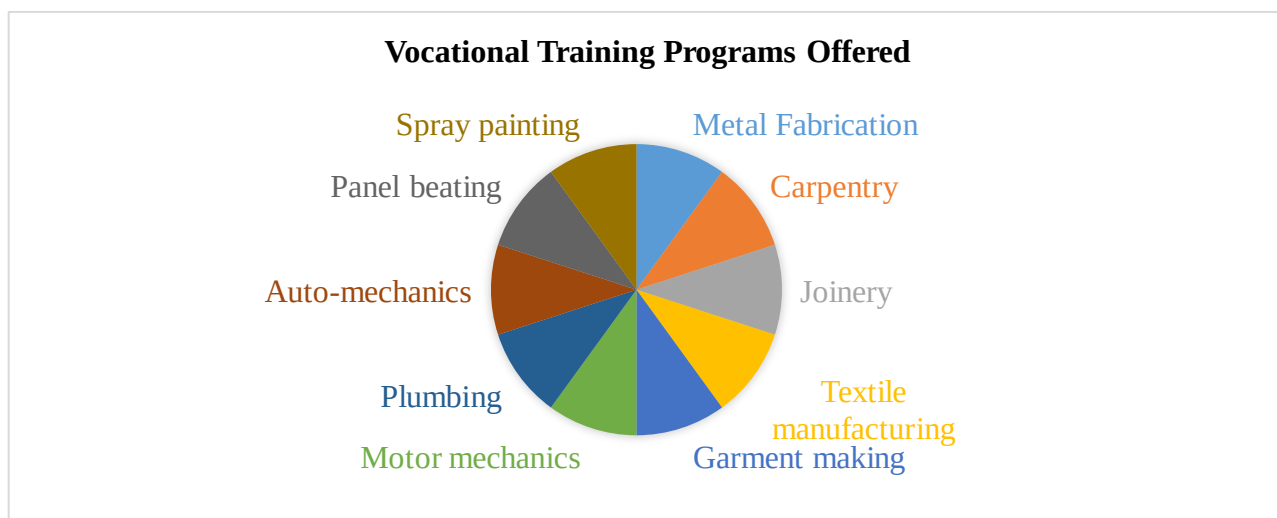
DATA PRESENTATION, AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The researcher employed a descriptive data presentation technique for this research. This involved providing detailed descriptions that examined the effectiveness of vocational training programs in prisons. The approach facilitated a thorough analysis of the research findings, supported by the use of pie charts, bar charts, histograms, and tables to display the data collected for each question. Initially, 50 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, with 48 questionnaires being returned, constituting a response rate of 96% from the study sample as indicated by Table 4.1 below. However, in order to validate the outcomes, the researcher conducted interviews with both the Officer in Charge and the Second in Charge of Harare Prison Workshops.

Vocational training

Figure 4.1 below shows the vocational training programs. n = 48.

Figure 4.1 Vocational training programs offered at Harare Prison Workshops. n = 48.



Source: Primary data 2025

Figure 4.1 above shows that ten vocational training programs are offered at Harare Prison Workshops. This was supported by all the 48 respondents who were part of the population under study.

Table 4.1 Vocational Training Programs and Certifying Boards

Manpower Development In Zimbabwe	Higher Examination Council In Zimbabwe (Hexco)
Metal Fabrication	Textile Manufacturing
Motor Mechanics	Garment Making
Plumbing	
Auto Mechanics	
Spray painting	
Panel Beating	

Source: Primary Data 2025

Table 4.1 above shows the vocational training programs provided at Harare Prison Workshops, along with the certifying boards. All the 48 respondents emphasized that both the Manpower Development Board and the Higher Examination Council in Zimbabwe (HEXCO) serve as the certifying bodies for the vocational training programs available. HEXCO awards certificates and diplomas in various fields to align with the requirements of diverse industries and sectors in Zimbabwe. Conversely, the Manpower Development Board certifies technical courses through awarding journeyman and classes to enhance skill development and workforce preparedness in the country.

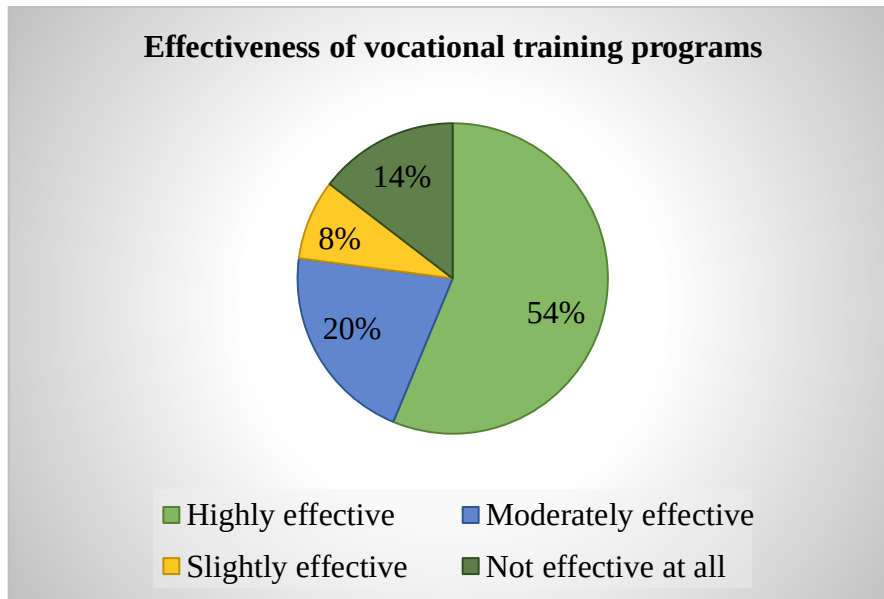
Table 4.2 Duration of vocational training programs

Duration	Certifying Board	Program	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
One year	Manpower Development of Zimbabwe	Metal Fabrication Carpentry, Plumbing, Motor Mechanics Auto Mechanics Panel Beating Spray Painting	22	44%
Six months	Higher Examination Council of Zimbabwe	Garment Making Textile Manufacturing	26	52%
Totals			48	96%

Source: Primary Data 2025

The data presented in Table 4.2 above indicates that 44% of the respondents reported an extension of training duration to one year for vocational training programs accredited by the Manpower Development of Zimbabwe. In contrast, 52% of the respondents mentioned that vocational training programs such as garment making, certified by the Higher Examination Council of Zimbabwe, require a training period of six months. This discrepancy in training duration is attributed to the tiered structure of completion within programs accredited by the Manpower Development of Zimbabwe, ranging from class 4 to class 1, with the highest level being the journeyman classification. Various trade tests are conducted at different levels of training, contributing to the lengthier duration required. On the other hand, participants enrolled in programs certified by the Higher Examination Council of Zimbabwe receive certificates or diplomas upon completion of the hands-on training, which includes both theoretical and practical components within the six-month timeframe. These diplomas and certificates are used to secure employment whilst in prison and upon release. The Prison Fellowship of Zimbabwe has been on record creating employment for vocational training graduands from Harare Prison Workshops and others.

Figure 4.2 Effectiveness of vocational training programs

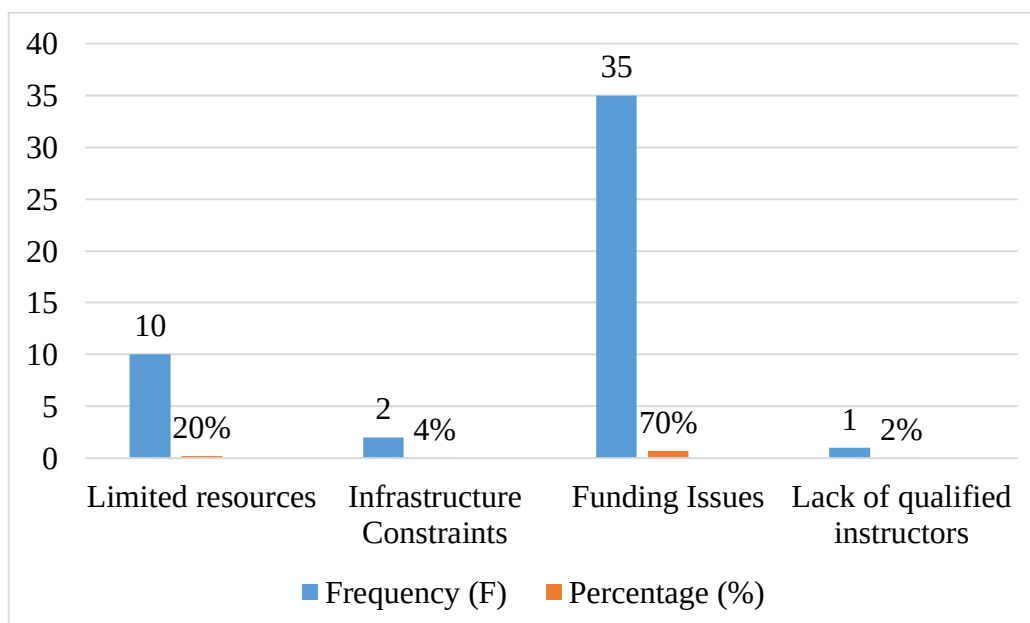


Source: Primary data 2025

The data presented in Figure 4.2 above indicates that the majority of respondents (54%) view the vocational training programs at Harare Prison Workshops as highly effective in promoting self-sufficiency. A notable proportion of respondents (20%) also perceive these programs to be moderately effective. They specifically noted the efficacy of these programs in technical fields such as plumbing, motor mechanics, assembly of motorcycles, carpentry, and joinery, where the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services primarily rely on trained officers and inmates rather than external expertise. Nonetheless, there were smaller groups of respondents who deemed the programs slightly effective (8%) or not effective at all (14%). Notable success stories are show cased in the considerable number of inmates who are placed under hired labour at a fee who are part of building brigades. They offer services which are paid for and benefit both the inmates themselves and Prison. This shows the effectiveness of vocational training programs in Prison.

Challenges and Successes of Vocational Training Programs

Figure 4.3 Challenges of vocational training programs



Source: Primary data 2025.

Figure 4.3 above shows that funding issues emerged as the most significant challenge, with 70% of respondents identifying it as a key obstacle. Limited resources were also cited as a notable challenge by 20% of the respondents. Infrastructure constraints were mentioned by a smaller proportion of respondents, with only 4% identifying them as a challenge. Lack of qualified instructors was cited by just 2% of respondents, indicating that it may be a less prevalent challenge compared to the others.

An inmate at Harare Prison Workshop, (Learnmore Mhlanga) was asked about the challenges affecting operations at the prison workshop, in response he said the following. The machines in sections like carpentry, spray painting, tailoring and motor mechanics are obsolete. Some of them are no-longer functioning thereby negatively impacting on production. Infrastructure constraints include deficiencies in the physical facilities, resources and supporting systems that affect the operations and functioning of Harare Prison workshop. What the workshop used to produce has been declining each time owing to stoppages due to breakdowns and period of repair. If the workshop can acquire machines which meet the volume of work each day, then production will go up. (Respondent; Learnmore Mhlanga - Harare Prison Workshop 2024).

It is worth noting that few vocational training instructors are not qualified to impart new knowledge and skill to learners. There is a knowledge gap which should be bridged by further training for the instructors concerned.

Addressing challenges to improve effectiveness of vocational training programs

Respondents were asked about how the challenges can be addressed to improve the effectiveness of vocational training programs. Table 4.3 below shows the responses elicited from them.

Table 4.3 Addressing challenges to improve effectiveness of vocational training programs

Response	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Diversifying Funding Sources	40	80%
Resource Optimization	02	4%
Infrastructure Improvement	03	6%
Training and Capacity Building	01	2%
Partnerships and Collaboration	02	4%
Totals	48	96%

Source: Primary data 2025

The data presented in Table 4.6 above illustrates various suggestions provided by the respondents regarding strategies for enhancing funding and improving vocational training programs within Prisons. 80% of the respondents proposed that Prisons should consider exploring alternative funding sources, such as grants, partnerships with businesses or Non- governmental organisations and government subsidies which include direct cash payments, tax breaks, reduced interest rates on loans and providing goods and services at below-market prices to supplement limited budgets and ensure sustained funding for vocational programs. This coincides with the sentiments of Brest (2013) who indicated that in-order for strategic plans and projects to flourish, funding sources should be diversified. In contrast, 4% advocated for resource optimization, emphasizing the need to maximize the efficient use of existing resources through prioritizing essential needs, implementing cost-saving measures, and seeking donations or in-kind contributions from the community or industry partners. On the other hand, 6% of the respondents recommended investing in infrastructure upgrades and maintenance to address infrastructure constraints, such as inadequate workshop spaces or outdated equipment. They suggested that renovation projects, equipment upgrades, and facility expansions could be essential to create a conducive environment for vocational training. Additionally, 2% of the respondents highlighted the importance of providing training and professional development opportunities for existing staff or recruiting qualified instructors to tackle the issue of a lack of qualified personnel. They proposed that investing in staff training programs or collaborating with external training institutions could enhance the skills and knowledge of

instructors, thereby ensuring the delivery of quality vocational education. Lastly, the remaining 4% of the respondents suggested that establishing partnerships with vocational training institutions, businesses, or government agencies could facilitate resource-sharing, knowledge exchange, and access to expertise. They emphasized that collaborative efforts could leverage external resources, expertise, and support to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of vocational training programs.

Infrastructure Improvement

The recommendation to invest in infrastructure upgrades and maintenance directly addresses the challenges posed by inadequate workshop spaces and outdated equipment. These constraints can hinder the effective delivery of vocational education within prison facilities. Therefore, infrastructure improvements are essential to create a conducive environment that supports the successful implementation of vocational training programs.

Training and Capacity Building

The emphasis on providing training and professional development opportunities for existing staff or recruiting qualified instructors directly addresses the challenge of a lack of qualified personnel. By investing in staff training programs and collaborating with external training institutions, the aim is to enhance the skills and knowledge of instructors, ultimately contributing to the delivery of quality vocational education within the prison setting.

Partnerships and Collaboration

Partnerships and collaborations in vocational training programs can bring several benefits, including overcoming resource limitations and enhancing program effectiveness. By establishing relationships with vocational training institutions, businesses, and government agencies, correctional facilities or prison systems can access external resources, knowledge exchange, and support. This helps address the challenges of isolation and limited access to specialized expertise. Osgood et al. (2010) provide evidence supporting the importance and advantages of partnerships and collaborations in the context of vocational training programs.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The primary objective of the study was to compile dependable insights to assist the Zimbabwe Prison and Correctional Service in formulating policies and procedures that will bolster the effectiveness and success of vocational training programs within correctional facilities.

Summary of the study findings

The study investigated the efficacy of vocational training programs at Harare Prison Workshop. The researcher was guided by several literature reviews across the globe. The study objectives were; to investigate the economic and social impact of vocational training programs in Prisons, to evaluate the effectiveness of vocational training programs in enhancing organizational productivity and to identify barriers and success factors in implementing vocational training programs. They were investigated in tandem with the research questions and hypotheses. Data collection involved the administration of questionnaires and conducting interviews. A sample size of 50 respondents from the study population was selected through simple random sampling. This sample size was deemed sufficient to be representative of the larger study population of 200. An outstanding response rate of 96%, exceeding the recommended benchmarks was achieved.

The majority of participants agreed on the positive impact of vocational training programs on organizational productivity, while acknowledging the challenges faced by Harare Prison Workshops in relation to limited resources, infrastructure constraints, and funding shortages when attempting to implement vocational training programs. This high response on challenges indicates a widespread acknowledgment among respondents of the difficulties and hindrances experienced by the prison workshops in delivering effective vocational training programs. Furthermore, respondents also believed that vocational training programs could help alleviate

budgetary constraints and acknowledged the benefits of goods produced during these programs. However, a minority indicated that they did not understand how prisons benefit from these vocational training programs since it is limited to training inmates who are equipped and released into society. In addition, how the produced goods benefit Prisons was not known.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study regarding the effectiveness of vocational training programs in correctional facilities, it can be concluded that the vocational training programs implemented at Harare Prison Workshops have proven to be effective and successful. However, the presence of challenges such as limited resources, infrastructure constraints, and funding issues poses a significant obstacle. This indicates that Harare Prison Workshops are not fully equipped with modern machinery and necessary equipment, as they rely on outdated machinery that require frequent repairs, thereby impeding the full implementation of vocational training programs. Noteworthy accomplishments at Harare Prison Workshops include the creation of employment opportunities, skill development initiatives, increased productivity, revenue generation, personal growth and rehabilitation efforts. Thus, The Harare Prison Workshops has successfully provided meaningful employment opportunities for inmates within the prison system. By offering work programs and vocational training, inmates have the chance to develop valuable skills and gain work experience that can help them secure employment upon release.

The products and services created by the Harare Prison Workshops contribute to revenue generation for the prison system. By selling goods produced by inmates to the public or other organizations, the workshops generate income that could be reinvested back into the program or used to support other prison initiatives. Beyond the practical skills acquired, engaging in meaningful work can have a profound impact on the personal growth and rehabilitation of inmates. It can instill a sense of responsibility, discipline, and a positive work ethic, all of which are essential for successful reintegration into society post-incarceration. The workshops at Harare Prison Workshop has effectively provided inmates with employment opportunities, allowing them to earn income while serving their sentences. This not only helps inmates maintain a sense of dignity and purpose but also enables them to support themselves financially and potentially contribute to their families outside the prison. The opportunity to earn income can also instill a sense of responsibility and self-worth among the inmate. The prison benefits significantly from the labor of trained inmates in various fields such as carpentry, motor mechanics, tailoring, plumbing, and others.

The skills and expertise of these inmates can be utilized to carry out necessary maintenance and repair work within the prison premises, reducing the need for external contractors and potentially saving costs. Additionally, the productivity of these trained inmates can contribute to the overall efficiency and functioning of the prison operations. The vocational training programs offered at the workshops have showcased notable productivity, resulting in the creation of high-quality goods and services. Inmates who have received training in carpentry, motor mechanics, tailoring, plumbing and other fields are able to produce goods that meet industry standards and are in demand both within and outside the prison premises. The ability to deliver quality products and services adds value to the workshop initiatives and can potentially generate revenue for the prison through sales to external markets. The high-quality goods and services produced by trained inmates are not only valued within the prison but also have market demand outside the premises.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings and the conclusions drawn, the study puts forward the following recommendations.

- To ensure long-term financial sustainability and maximize societal impact, vocational training programs should prioritize commercialization over sole reliance on government funds. By marketing products and services created by inmates to external markets, new revenue streams can be established, enabling reinvestment for program growth and development. This approach not only safeguards the initiatives' continuity but also addresses market demands, enhances revenue potential, and fosters entrepreneurial skills among participants. Furthermore, forming partnerships with external entities can provide valuable resources and expertise to support commercial ventures and expand outreach.

- Maximizing resources entails effectively utilizing current facilities, equipment and staff to enhance the effectiveness of vocational training programs. Strategies may involve establishing inventory tracking and management systems, scheduling training sessions to minimize idle time, and regularly maintaining equipment to extend its operational lifespan. Through resource optimization, the workshops can enhance productivity and efficiency while managing costs effectively.
- Ensuring continuous training and capacity building opportunities for instructors and staff is essential for upholding the high standards of vocational training programs. This may involve organizing workshops and seminars focusing on teaching methodologies, keeping abreast of industry trends and standards, and offering avenues for professional development. By dedicating resources to the training and growth of staff members, the workshops can guarantee that they possess the requisite skills and expertise to deliver training effectively to inmates.
- Collaborating with external organizations, such as vocational schools, businesses, and non-profit agencies, can enrich the vocational training programs at Harare Prison Workshops. Partnerships can offer access to specialized knowledge, internship prospects for inmates, and employment placement services after their release. Through establishing strategic partnerships, the workshops can expand their network, access additional resources, and improve the overall effectiveness of their programs.

REFERENCES

1. Abdullah, N.H.L., Husin, S.N.M., Paimin, A.N., Mohamed, M. and Mahat, H., (2021). Inmates' perceptions of the effectiveness of technical and vocational training (Tvet) and entrepreneurship training program. *Journal of Technical Education and Training*, 13(1), pp.112-118.
2. Anderson, S. V. (1995). *Evaluation of the impact of participation in Ohio penal industries on recidivism*. Columbus, OH: Department of Rehabilitation and Correction.
3. Babbie, E. (1990) *Survey Research Method*, Wads-Worth Publishing, Belmont.
4. Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
5. Becker, G. S. (1993). *Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
6. Best, J., & Khan, J. (1995). *Research in Education*. Pearson.
7. Boahin, P. and Hofman, W.A., (2014). Perceived effects of competency-based training on the acquisition of professional skills. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 36, pp.81-89.
8. Chakamba, J., (2019). *Towards re-visioning the technical and vocational curriculum of a selected Zimbabwean juvenile correctional training centre: A program evaluation (Doctoral dissertation)*.
9. Courtney, J.A., (2019). *The relationship between prison education programs and misconduct*. *Journal of Correctional Education* (1974), 70(3), pp.43-59.
10. Fentahun, D., (2020). *Non-Formal Technical Vocational Education and Training in Prison: Exploring the Practice, Contributions, and Challenges (The Case of Bahir Dar City Administration Prison) (Doctoral dissertation)*.
11. Gaes, G.G., (2008). *The impact of prison education programs on post-release outcomes*. Reentry Roundtable on Education, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, March, 31.
12. Hayes, B., Bonner, A. & Douglas, C. (2013). An introduction to mixed methods research for nephrology nurses. *Renal Society of Australasia Journal*, 9, 8-14.
13. Hughes, M. (1994). *Research Methods in Education: An Introduction*. SAGE Publications.
14. International Publishers, New Delhi.
15. Jackson, B.A., (2015). *Fostering innovation in community and institutional corrections: Identifying high-priority technology and other needs for the US corrections sector*. Rand Corporation.
16. Johnson, E.H. and Johnson, C.H., (2000). *Linking community and corrections in Japan*. SIU Press.
17. Kothari, C.R. (2019). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. 4th Edition, New Age
18. Kusada, J.R., (2014). *The perceptions and experiences of male offenders regarding social and rehabilitation services at Chikurubi Farm Prison in Zimbabwe*.
19. Lacity, M.C., Rottman, J.W. and Carmel, E., (2016). *Impact sourcing: Employing prison inmates to perform digitally enabled business services*. *Socially Responsible Outsourcing: Global Sourcing with Social Impact*, pp.138-163.

20. Lawrence, S., Mears, D.P., Dubin, G. and Travis, J., (2002). The Practice and Promise of Prison Programming. Research Report.
21. Leedy, P. (1980). Practical Research: Planning and Design. Pearson.
22. Mathews, B.W., (2015). Corrections, implementation, and organizational ecology: an introduction to the Purveyor Core-Skills Model. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 28(4), pp.464-483.
23. Pompoco, A., Wooldredge, J., Lugo, M., Sullivan, C. and Latessa, E.J., (2017). Reducing inmate misconduct and prison returns with facility education programs. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 16(2), pp.515-547.
24. Porter, N.D., (2005). Encouraging Microenterprise as a Workforce Development Strategy.
25. Sanyal, B.C. and Martin, M., (2007). Quality assurance and the role of accreditation: An overview. Report: Higher Education in the World 2007: Accreditation for Quality Assurance: What is at Stake?.
26. Wambugu, M.P (2019). Factors Influencing Implementation Of Inmates' Vocational Training Projects In Kenya Prisons Service In Eastern Region. A Survey Of Prisons In Eastern Region.
27. Williams, P., & Goodwin, R. (2017). Challenges and opportunities in vocational training programs in Zimbabwean prisons. *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry*, 4(1), 45-62.
28. Wilson, D.B., Gallagher, C.A. and MacKenzie, D.L., (2000). A meta-analysis of corrections-based education, vocation, and work programs for adult offenders. *Journal of research in crime and delinquency*, 37(4), pp.347-368.
29. Zimmerman, M.A., 2000. Empowerment theory: Psychological, organizational and community levels of analysis. In *Handbook of community psychology* (pp. 43-63). Boston, MA: Springer US.
30. Zishiri, H., & Mupedziswa, R. (2016). The influence of vocational training on inmates' self-efficacy beliefs: A case study of Zimbabwean prisons. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 60(6), 655-673.