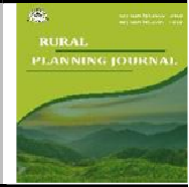




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Effectiveness of Rehabilitation Initiatives in Reducing Recidivism in Tanzania: Evidence from Isanga and Ukonga Central Prisons

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Abstract

Although there have been different rehabilitation activities introduced by Tanzania Prison Services (TPS) since independence to reduce recidivism, the rate of recidivism has remained relatively high with the prevalence of reoffending and stigma on the part of ex-prisoners. Failure to effectively implement rehabilitation activities is said to be among the causes of an increase in recidivism by the ex-prisoners. With support from cognitive behavioural therapy, human capital theory, and labelling theory, this study aimed to explore the effects of rehabilitation activities on reducing recidivism in Tanzania by combining quantitative and qualitative analyses. Data were collected through surveys, interviews, discussions, and observations. Quantitative data were analysed through descriptive statistics and binary logistic regression, while qualitative data were analysed through content analysis. Findings revealed that informal rehabilitation activities were not able to reduce the reoffending behaviour of recidivists. The effective rehabilitation activities were those focused on life skills, psychosocial aspects, and educational programs. Problems such as curriculum design, financial constraints, infrastructure limitations, attendance problems, and varying literacy levels among prisoners pose obstacles to the effective rehabilitation of prisoners. Therefore, rehabilitation initiatives should focus on generating practical skills that contribute to the successful reintegration of prisoners into society. In addition, life skills, spiritual, psychological, and educational programs must be supported by authentic curricula and well-defined delivery modes. Prison management should also be sensitized to the importance of disciplinary science, aftercare services, and startup capital for enhancing reintegration, proper rehabilitation, and reducing recidivism among prisoners.

Keywords: Prison inmates, rehabilitation, reoffending, recidivism, Tanzania

1. Introduction

The Tanzania Prisons Act, No. 34 of 1967, Section 23, defines prison as 'any building enclosure or place or any part thereof, including within the enclosure of the prison and any building belonging or attached to that and used by prisoners or the staff of the prison declared in a legal instrument by the Minister for Home Affairs' (URT, 2017a). The prison system is described as a societal apparatus for social control, involving the physical confinement of individuals found guilty of breaking the law, coupled with a spectrum of correctional initiatives with the goal of punishment, deterrence, and facilitating their

eventual reintegration into the community (Auty and Liebling, 2020; Rothman, 2017). Although designed to serve as a deterrent for criminal behaviour, the prison system has increasingly recognized the importance of rehabilitation as a means to reduce recidivism and successfully reintegrate offenders into society (Garland, 2018).

Prison rehabilitation programs encompass a wide range of structured activities, interventions, and services designed to address inmates' specific needs and challenges to facilitate their personal growth, reduce the likelihood of reoffending, and aid their successful reintegration into society upon release (Bhuller *et al.*, 2020). The literature

shows that a successful prison rehabilitation program should include educational initiatives such as literacy, vocational training, and higher education opportunities; substance abuse treatment and counselling services; mental health services such as counselling, therapy, and psychiatric treatment; cognitive-behavioural therapy for changing criminal thought patterns and behaviours and restorative justice programs to promote accountability, empathy, and reconciliation between offenders and victims (Mears *et al.*, 2016; Van Ness and Strong, 2015; Berghuis, 2018).

The primary goal of rehabilitation programs for inmates is to reduce recidivism. Recidivism is the rearrest, reconviction, or re-incarceration of ex-offenders within a given time frame (Narayanan and Kwen Fee, 2016). The term is often used in conjunction with substance abuse as a synonym for “relapse” but is used explicitly for criminal behaviour (Durose *et al.*, 2014). Forry *et al.* (2019) claimed that recidivism in African countries was at a high rate, with Zambia and Rwanda recording 33% and 36%, respectively, while Kenya and Tanzania recorded 47% each. It has been pointed out that only 32% of inmates released in Uganda would return to prison within a year because the country was reported to have the best rehabilitation program in Africa.

The Tanzania Prisons Service (TPS) was established under Act No. 34 of 1967. This Act tailed the conservative (punitive) philosophy on imprisonment as it did not specify prisoners’ rights. The Act also did not consider the option of rehabilitation or a clear focus on prison education (Pollock, 2014). Following the Kampala declaration that recommended countries to include the standards of the UN and the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the treatment of prisoners in their laws (Penal Reform International, 2008), the TPS Act No. 34 of 1996 mandated provide adequate custodial services, effective rehabilitation programs, remands management, and advice on crime control and prevention. These elements are geared to

enable prisoners to become good citizens and economically productive after the completion of their sentences. TPS, therefore, revised its approach to imprisonment to adopt modern humanistic principles in the treatment of offenders (URT, 2017b). Through the TPS, the government claims to focus more on rehabilitating offenders (URT, 2017c). This claim suggests a move for the TPS from a ‘conservative philosophy’ to a ‘liberal philosophy’ of imprisonment, which encourages rehabilitation approaches, including training for life skills. This move is further in line with the United Nations (UN) emphasis on prisoners’ rehabilitation to prepare inmates for their return to society (The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2012).

TPS hosts an average of 33,000 inmates nationwide who receive food, shelter, clothing, medical treatment, and rehabilitation services. Rehabilitation is run through formal training and life skills programs through agricultural, livestock, and industrial activities such as welding, masonry, soap making, tin smithing, quarrying, lime making, salt works, sugar processing, carpentry, carpet making, handcraft, and others. About 65.3% of convicted inmates are between 18 and 35 years old, economically productive, and must be equipped with the necessary production skills through social case and group work/intervention, recreational activities, educational programs, and skills acquisition programs. Furthermore, TPS has various colleges that support providing skills for prisoners returning to the community by offering skills that could help them be comparable to the community.

Despite all the initiatives taken to address the challenges facing prisoners in Tanzania, the annual rate of recidivism in Tanzania reflects a trend of instability. There were 3,239, 3,384, 3,235, and 4,001 cases of recidivism in 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022, respectively. The fluctuation in these rates indicates some weaknesses in the rehabilitation programs (Mwakaheya, 2019). Although the TPS provides various rehabilitation activities to prison inmates for their sustainable

livelihoods upon release, the recidivism rate persists whereby ex-convicts continue to commit new offenses after incarceration and are rearrested, reconvicted, and re-imprisoned for new offenses. Therefore, this study was intended to investigate the role of rehabilitation programs in reducing recidivism in Tanzania. The intention was to bring attention to the prison rehabilitation process for reducing recidivism among the inmates. To attain this goal, the study had three objectives: to examine the determinants of recidivism in prisoners, to analyse the rehabilitation activities that are effective in rehabilitating prison inmates, and to examine the challenges facing prisons in implementing rehabilitation activities.

The study was guided by three theories: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Labelling Theory of Crime (LTC), and Human Capital Theory (HCT). Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is a counselling strategy aiming to bring about behavioural change by addressing an individual's cognitions, ideas, attitudes, beliefs, and values (Ehlers *et al.*, 2010; Milkman and Wanberg, 2007). The programs based on CBT involve cognitive skills training, cognitive restructuring, social skills training, anger management, life skills training, moral development, and relapse prevention (Lipsey *et al.*, 2007). The Labelling Theory of Crime (LTC) explains that people become criminals when labelled as such and when they accept the label as a personal identity. LTC stresses the idea that deviance is a relative term. Deviant behaviour is any behaviour that violates the cultural norms that guide human behaviour. The contributors to the LTC point out that crime and delinquency are reduced by stymieing secondary involvement in deviance through reintegration efforts, diversion, de-labelling, promoting pro-social identities, and non-intervention (Farrington and Murray, 2014; Walters, 2016; Matsueda, 2017). The Human Capital Theory (HCT) explains that knowledge and skills can be developed through investment in education or training (Hatch and Dyer, 2004; Simpeh, 2011).

2. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Tanzania's Dodoma and Dar es Salaam regions. Specifically, the study was carried out at Tanzania Prison Headquarters (Dodoma), Isanga Prison (Dodoma), and Ukonga Prison (Dar es Salaam). The Tanzania Prisons Headquarters was appropriately selected as it is where prisons' administrative and strategic works, such as acts, policies, and plans, are made. Isanga and Ukonga prisons were selected because they host many more inmates than other prisons in Tanzania (URT, 2017b).

The study adopted a mixed approach, which enabled the collection of quantitative and qualitative data. To achieve this, the researchers used a cross-sectional explanatory research design. Probability sampling was used to get prisoners involved in the study, while non-probability sampling was adopted to select critical informants and areas for the study. Based on that, the researchers visited Tanzania prison headquarters, prisoners under the guidance of prison officers in charge, and prison officers in the selected prisons.

Primary data were collected directly from the field through administered questionnaires, focus group discussions, and interviews. The researcher selected the most highly populated prisons where different rehabilitation activities are conducted. In addition, primary data were collected from Key Informants (KI), such as prison staff and probation officers. Data collected from the KI were the challenges hindering t rehabilitation programs and the effectiveness of prison rehabilitation activities. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used to collect data from prison officers and prisoners, where two groups were formulated, one from Ukonga prison with 6 participants (prisoners) and another from Isanga prison with 6 participants (prison staff). A checklist was admitted and guides group discussions to gather data on practical rehabilitation activities offered in prisons and challenges facing prisons in conducting rehabilitation.

However, the questions posed for prisoners' FGD differed from those of prison staff's FGD. Observation was used to notice how rehabilitation activities are carried out for inmates. Through this process, researchers managed to grasp categories of prisoners and allocations of prisoners on rehabilitation activities. Secondary data were gathered from the Prisons' Gazette, annual budgetary, and statistical reports. The published books and current journal articles from various websites, including Google Scholar, were equally visited. The secondary data helped capture data concerning rehabilitation programs and their effects on reducing recidivism in the selected prisons and worldwide.

As the population was unknown, the sample size for the questionnaire surveys was derived by computing the minimum sample size required for accuracy in estimating proportions by considering the standard average deviation set at the 95% confidence level (1.96), percentage picking response (50% = 0.5) and the confidence interval (0.05 = ±5). The formula is:

$$n = \frac{z_a^2 * p * q}{e^2}$$

Where n = sample size, e = margin of error (confidence interval), z_a = statistical parameter that depends on the confidence

$$\ln \frac{y}{1-y} = \alpha + \sum \beta_i X_i + \epsilon_i \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where $y=1$ means prisoners will become recidivists, X_i = factors which will determine recidivism by prisoners, and B_i = parameters/coefficients of these factors.

$$\ln \frac{y}{1-y} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \beta_8 X_8 + \beta_9 X_9 + \beta_{10} X_{10} + \epsilon_i \dots \dots (2)$$

Where \ln = dependent variable expressed in natural logarithm of the probability of prisoner to be a recidivist (y) divided by the probability of prisoner not becoming recidivist ($1- y$). This takes values 1 for becoming recidivist and 0 for not becoming. β_0 = Constant parameter, X_1 = Age of prisoner, X_2 = Sex of a prisoner, X_3 = Marital status of a

level, p = numerical probability of success, $q = 1 - p$ the numerical probability of a failure, 90% - Z score = 1.645, 95% - Z score = 1.96, and 99% - Z score = 2.326.

Given: Confidence interval of 92%, Probability of success = 0.30, Margin of error = 0.08;

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 * 0.3(1 - 0.3)}{0.084^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 * 0.3 * 0.7}{0.084^2} = 114.3333$$

$$\approx 114$$

$n = 114$

Therefore, the number of respondents used (sample size) in this research was 114, including prisoners with both recidivist and first-offender status. The proportion ratio used to obtain respondents from two prisons was based on unlock capacity (proportions of inmates) in a specific prison. The sample distribution in the selected prisons was 50 respondents from Ukonga prison and 64 from Isanga prison.

Data on the determinants of recidivism among prisoners were analysed through binary logistic regression (Table 1). The dependent variable (recidivism) was coded as the presence and absence of recidivism with predictors explaining the recidivism determinant.

prisoner, X_4 = Education level of a prisoner, X_5 = Employment status before convicted, X_6 = Aftercare support, X_7 = Nature of crime, X_8 = Sentence length, X_9 = Attendance of inmate in rehabilitation activities, X_{10} = Prisoner conducts in the prison, ϵ_i = Error term

Table 1: Binary regression variables

Variable description and measurement	Units of measure	Expected sign
Age of prisoner (years)	1=Youth, 0=Elder	+/-
Sex of a prisoner	1=Male, 0=Female	+/-
Marital status of a prisoner	1=Married, 0=Not married	+/-
The education level of a prisoner	1=educated, 0=Uneducated	+/-
Employment status before convicted	1=employed, 0=unemployed	+/-
Aftercare support	1=start-up capital, 0=No start-up capital	+/-
Nature of crime	1=Minor offences, 0=Major offences	+/-
Sentence length	1=Short sentences, 0=Long sentences	+/-
Attendance of inmates in rehabilitation activities	1=Engaging in rehabilitation activities, 0=Not engaging in rehabilitation activities	+/-
Prisoner conducts in the prison.	1=Good characters, 0=Bad characters	+/-

Data on the rehabilitation activities that are effective in rehabilitating inmates were analysed by descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation. Likewise, data on challenges facing prisons in implementing rehabilitation activities were analysed by descriptive statistics.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. The relationship between inmates' demographic characteristics with recidivism

The study sample revealed the relationship of demographic variables such as life status, sex, age, level of education, marital status, and occupation history of prisoners with recidivism. The crosstab findings are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of prisoners about conviction (n= 114)

Variables		Frequency	Percent	Convictional Status of Inmate		Variable Coefficient	Significance Level (p<0.05)
				First Offender	Recidivist		
Gender of Respondent	Male	100	88	34	66	2.503	0.003
	Female	14	12	12	2		
	Total	114	100	46	68		
Age of respondent	18 - 60	94	82	33	61	1.321	0.02
	60+	20	18	13	7		
	Total	114	100	46	68		
Marital status of respondent	Single,	85	75	29	56	1.061	0.033
	Divorced,						
	Widow						
	Married	29	25	17	12		
Total		114	100	46	68		
Education status	Un-educated	97	85	35	62	1.011	0.122
	Educated	17	15	11	6		
	Total	114	100	46	68		
Employment status before the last sentence	Employed	30	26	17	13	1.051	0.039
	Unemployed	84	74	29	55		
	Total	114	100	46	68		

Findings on sex showed that 88% of respondents were male and 12% were female. This was associated with the difference in the recidivism rate between females and males. The statistical results reveal that males were more likely recidivists ($\beta = 2.503, p < 0.05$) than their female counterparts. This implies that being a male is highly likely to be a recidivist. This finding corroborates that of Beijersbergen (2016), who highlights that male prisoners are at higher risk of reoffending compared to female prisoners.

Findings on age indicate that 82% of the respondents were aged between 18 and 60 years, which is the working group in a country, and a few of them (only 18%) were 60 years and above. This implies that most respondents were young people in the active working group. It also implies that most of the recidivists are youths. The statistical test also showed that the active youths had a high

chance of being recidivists significantly ($\beta = 1.321, p < 0.05$) compared to the elders. The findings align with Andvig *et al.* (2021), who noted that youths commit more reoffending than elders.

Findings on marital status showed that the single, widowed, and divorced groups (with a total of 75%) had a more likely record of being recidivists ($\beta = 1.061, p < 0.05$) compared to the married ones (with 25%). This indicates that the majority of the incarcerated were single while the minority were married; therefore, reoffending cases in Tanzania were determined by their marital status. Most re-offenders were young and were not married, as they fought to get high life status through illegal activities. This led them to be trapped in different types of arrest. The findings conform to those of McCoy *et al.* (2013), who discovered that single marital status is among the recurring recidivists.

Findings on education level showed that 85% were uneducated while 15% were educated. However, the statistical test for the education level's influence on recidivism was insignificant ($\beta = 1.011$, $p > 0.05$). This indicates that the majority of inmates were illiterate and also fell into recidivism compared to the educated ones. These findings further indicate that those with low levels of education indulge in illegal actions. Most of the recidivists have minimal knowledge; hence, police officers get a chance to fabricate cases against them. These findings align with those of Esther *et al.* (2023), who claimed that education must be funded as it reduces recidivism.

Findings on the respondents' employment status before being convicted for recidivism showed that 26% were employed in any manner, and 74% were not. The statistical test findings further showed a significant positive relationship ($\beta = 1.051$, $p < 0.05$) that being unemployed is likely to contribute to the

recidivism of the prisoners, implying that not having employment can contribute to the one engaging in criminal activities that may lead to imprisonment. This aligns with the findings by Mazorodze (2020), who noted a relationship between crime and unemployed youths in Kenya.

3.2. Determinants of recidivism to prisoners

The relationship between recidivism (dependent variable) and crime-related factors such as minor offenses, major offenses, attendance at rehabilitation activities, sentence length (short sentences, long sentences), prisoner conducts within the prison, and aftercare support (startup capital) as predictors (independent variables) was determined. The statistical results from omnibus tests (Chi-Square) showed that the model is statistically significant ($p < 0.005$); hence, the overall model is good for the data. The findings are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Determinants of recidivism to prisoners (n = 114)

Independent Variables	B	SE.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% CI for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Nature of crime (1)	2.648	1.153	5.273	1	0.022	14.128	1.474	135.446
Attendance on rehabilitation activities (1)	2.361	0.85	7.713	1	0.005	10.6	2.003	56.097
Sentence Length (1)	1.928	0.638	9.141	1	0.002	6.874	1.97	23.985
Disciplinary offence within the prison (1)	1.157	0.471	6.029	1	0.014	3.179	1.263	8.005
Constant	-1.734	0.391	19.641	1	0	0.177		

Findings on the nature of a crime showed that prisoners who committed minor offenses were likelier to recommit a crime and get imprisoned. A statistical test showed that an increase in prisoners who committed minor offenses was associated with an increase in the probability of being a recidivist ($\beta = 2.648$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that those prisoners incarcerated for minor offenses are more likely to re-offend because they are not fully engaged in rehabilitation activities. This finding corroborates that of Morgan and Del Fabbro (2018), who found state patients with

minor crimes to have serious offenses in South Africa.

The findings showed that prisoners who attended rehabilitation activities also had a chance of reoffending. The statistical test results revealed a positive relationship between attendance at rehabilitation activities and reoffending ($\beta = 2.361$, $p < 0.05$). The findings show that as a prisoner engages in rehabilitation activities, the chances of reoffending increase. It is an indication of the weak rehabilitation programs offered to the inmates. This differs from Ngabonziza and

Singh (2012), who argued that offender participation in rehabilitation programs reduces recidivism rates. However, the focus group discussion with prisoners revealed that, to some extent, a lack of startup capital during their reintegration into the community forced some ex-prisoners to commit crimes.

Findings showed that prisoners with short sentences (less than three years) are likelier to re-offend than those with long sentences (above three years). The model reveals significantly short sentences having chances of recidivism ($\beta = 1.928$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that inmates who are serving short sentences are more likely to re-offend and be incarcerated than those who are serving long sentences. The findings are in line with the nature of the crime, as inmates who committed minor crimes like loitering, theft, and grievous harm are the ones convicted with short sentences. The findings are supported by Liu *et al.* (2023), who explained that early releases of offenders do not necessarily provide a lasting solution. The chances of reoffending are high because rehabilitation activities programmed for short-period offenders are not offered.

The researcher assessed whether the prisoner's conduct within the prison

influences recidivism. The results showed a positive relationship between the prisoners with flawed characters and the possibility of reoffending. The model showed that the state of being caught with disciplinary offenses is more likely to be found in re-offenders ($\beta = 1.157$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that the more inmates show bad characteristics, such as violence and peace violations within the prison, the higher the chance of reoffending. These findings align with van Ginneken and Palmen (2023), who associated crime with the social environment so that adult criminals were seen as hardened offenders who were unlikely to change.

3.3. Effective rehabilitation activities for inmates

3.3.1. Life skills programs

The findings on different rehabilitation activities for life skills programs to rehabilitate inmates revealed different mean values, with a composite mean value of 4.15 (Table 4). The combined mean value is higher than the test value, confirming that Tanzania inmates are engaged with life skills acquisition programs. This implies that the prison inmates are engaged in different life skills acquisition programs.

Table 4: Life skills programs that are effective in rehabilitating inmates in Tanzania

Item	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
Tailoring as capacity building activity available in prisons	114	4.04	0.609	Accepted
Carpentry is offered to inmates in prisons	114	4.17	0.661	Accepted
Craft/art activities are available for inmates in prisons	114	4.25	0.541	Accepted
Agriculture activities are available to inmates in prisons	114	4.38	0.569	Accepted
Civil works are provided as rehabilitation activities in prisons	114	4.10	0.643	Accepted
Mining works are provided as a means of reshaping inmates	114	3.98	0.656	Accepted
Life skills programmes	114	4.15	0.613	Accepted

N = 114 Criterion mean = 2.5

Cronbach's Alpha = 0.821 Number of items = 6

3.3.2. Psychosocial programmes

Findings on different activities for psychosocial programs revealed different mean values. However, the composite mean value was 3.41, higher than the test value,

confirming that inmates were involved in social intervention measures (Table 4). This implies that the inmates were exposed to different social intervention services available in the prisons.

Table 5: Psychosocial programs that are effective in rehabilitating inmates in Tanzania

Item	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
Counselling offered to reshape inmates' behaviours and build on their strength to cope on release is offered	114	3.98	0.610	Accepted
Social case and group work measures are used to assist inmates in crisis	114	4.03	0.650	Accepted
Social advocacy on behalf of inmates promotes inmates' rehabilitation	114	3.69	0.844	Accepted
Aftercare services are offered to ensure inmates' re-formation	114	2.11	0.902	Rejected
Psychosocial programmes	114	3.45	0.751	Accepted

N = 114 Criterion mean = 2.5 Cronbach's Alpha = 0.577 Number of items = 4

3.3.3. Educational programs

Findings on educational programs revealed different mean values. However, the composite mean value was 3.34, which is

higher than the test value, concluding that the inmates were participating in adult and literacy educational programs available in the prisons (Table 6).

Table 6: Educational programs that are effective in rehabilitating inmates in Tanzania

Item	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
Education in prisons is one way of reducing reoffending	114	3.04	0.845	Accepted
Adult and literate education activities are provided to inmates in the prisons	114	3.89	0.612	Accepted
Vocational training Material are accessible to inmates in prisons	114	2.8	0.772	Accepted
Reading and writing capacity that prepares inmates to function better in society are encouraged	114	3.08	0.921	Accepted
Rehabilitation activities influence inmates to become innovative and skilled to become economically productive	114	3.88	0.936	Accepted
Educational programmes	114	3.34	0.817	Accepted

N = 114 Criterion mean = 2.5 Cronbach's Alpha = 0.623 Number of items = 5

3.4. Challenges facing prison in implementing rehabilitation activities

3.4.1. Financial and human resources

Most (65.9%) respondents reported that budget constraints prevented them from conducting practical rehabilitation activities (Table 7). This implies that most of the activities conducted for rehabilitation have cost implications. Respondents said that the budget allocated for prison rehabilitation was unsatisfactory compared to the many

prisoners. They also revealed shortcomings, such as incomplete syllabuses and fewer practical sessions. It was also noted that there was a shortage of human resources with rehabilitation skills. One of the prison officers' focus group discussion participants had this to say:

"Inefficiency in providing rehabilitation activities is influenced by a lack of skilled personnel to offer international inmates rehabilitation standards. Most of us gained only basic knowledge of rehabilitation. For

instance, here only six staff have certificates of correctional science from the Tanzania Correctional Training Academy; the rest, over a hundred, are just using their experiences."

The findings align with Grommon *et al.* (2012), who claimed that pre-release and subsequent community supervision planning is helpful to those most in need.

3.4.2. Illiteracy among Prisoners

About 44.9% of respondents reported that illiteracy among prisoners contributed to weakening rehabilitation activities. Likewise, the demographic findings in this study showed that 39% of the prisoners were not receiving formal education (Table 2), so they needed to provide informal literacy education to let them adapt to the rehabilitation programs. These findings are in line with those of Alvarez *et al.* (2018), who claimed that people in prisons do not believe in themselves and lack confidence because most of them have not received primary education.

3.4.3 Attendance on rehabilitation activities

About 42.8% of the respondents reported that weak attendance at rehabilitation activities for some prisoners hindered the rehabilitation programs. Inmates are not motivated to rejoin the programs due to many problems, such as a lack of teaching and learning Material, a shortage of skilled teachers, a shortage of classes, time constraints for learning, and a lack of follow-up machinery. The respondents insisted that agricultural skills in most prisons were informal, and prisoners used average experience in horticulture and livestock keeping. Apart from that, only a few days were devoted to the training, hence not enough for a prisoner to get agricultural skills. In connection to Bloom (2016) and Liu *et al.* (2023), most experts agree that a large proportion of former prisoners have low levels of education and work experience, health problems, and other personal characteristics that make them hard to employ, particularly in a labour market that

offers fewer well-paying opportunities for individuals who lack post-secondary education.

3.4.4. Rehabilitation curriculum and correctional sciences

Findings indicated that 63% of respondents mentioned the curriculum as a problem for practical rehabilitation activities. In the focus group discussion with prison staff, one of the participants had this to say:

"Rehabilitation activities conducted in most prisons follow the service provider's experience on the field. Every prison has its way of conducting its rehabilitation activities."

Most of the prison officers claimed that there is an absence of a clearly stated policy and sentencing plan for the admission of prisoners. Respondents mentioned that the technology used to rehabilitate prisoners was insufficient to transform prisoners through various programs offered in prisons. This is in line with Moore and Eikenberry (2021) and Berghuis (2018), who claimed that unrealistic offenders' preparedness accelerates reoffending. Rehabilitation activities do not focus on tackling life challenges and the nature of crimes. The respondents further claimed that neither formal nor informal civic education was provided to prepare prisoners and labelled recidivists to reintegrate into the community. According to them, rehabilitation programs were in the form of punishment; as a result, most of the labelled recidivists had plans to sabotage them or retaliate.

3.4.5. Prison infrastructure

Findings showed that 71% of respondents reported that the prison's infrastructure did not support practical rehabilitation activities. Some trainings require exposure to external environments that the rules and guidelines do not support. They also argued that the closed system made it difficult for outsiders to work in Tanzanian prisons. This is an indication that Tanzanian prison policy does not fully involve stakeholders who would be willing to participate in prisoners' rehabilitation.

Table 7: Challenges facing prisons in implementing rehabilitation activities* n=114

Challenges	Frequency	Percent (%)
Financial and human resources are problems when implementing rehabilitation for prisoners	91	65.9
Illiteracy among prisoners is the cause of the ineffectiveness of rehabilitation for inmates	62	44.9
Prisoners' attendance in rehabilitation activities is weak, hindering rehabilitation activities in prisons.	59	42.8
Rehabilitation curriculum and correctional science are problems when offering rehabilitation activities to prisoners.	87	63.0
Prison infrastructures are not supportive of implementing rehabilitation activities	98	71.0

*Multiple responses

4. Conclusions

This study analysed the effects of rehabilitation initiatives on reducing the rate of recidivism in Tanzania prisons. The findings on determinants of recidivism to prisoners showed that prisoners who committed minor offenses were more likely to recommit a crime; prisoners who attended rehabilitation activities also had a chance of reoffending; prisoners with short sentences were more likely to re-offend compared to those with long sentences, and prisoners with flawed characters in prison had a possibility of reoffending. Findings on the effectiveness of rehabilitation activities showed that inmates in Tanzania prisons were engaged in different life skills acquisition programs, exposed to different social intervention services, and participated in adult and literate educational programs. Findings further showed that the prisoner rehabilitation program in Tanzania is constrained by financial and skilled human resources, illiteracy among prisoners, prisoners with short sentences not attending the program, inefficiency of the rehabilitation curriculum, and poor infrastructure to support rehabilitation activities. It is recommended that rehabilitation and reintegration interventions be informed by relevant and appropriate frameworks and supported by institutional prison arrangements. Prison staff should be trained to understand their role and duties within the rehabilitation perspective, and the

government and civil society in Tanzania should join hands in developing an effective and sustainable solution to reoffending. Additionally, there is a need for substantial improvement in aftercare services, facilitating ex-prisoners' reintegration into society by supporting them in starting businesses.

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