

**ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC
RELEVANCE OF ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT: A CASE STUDY
OF MBOZI DISTRICT IN TANZANIA**

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2025

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommends for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania a dissertation titled “**Assessment of Community Knowledge on Socio-Economic Relevance of Alternatives to Imprisonment: A Case Study of Mbozi District in Tanzania**”, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Governance and Leadership of the Open University of Tanzania.

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DECLARATION

I, **Mathew Felix Mngochela**, declare that the work presented in this dissertation is original. It has never been presented to any other university or institution. Where other people's works have been used, and references have been provided. It is in this regard that I declare this work as originally mine. It is hereby presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Governance and Leadership of the Open University of Tanzania.

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Signature

.....

Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father, Felix Christian Mngochela, my mother, Ema Matei Uyalo, and my beloved brothers and sisters, John Mngochela, Hendrick Ligomboka, and Gisbetha Mngochela, for giving me the best upbringing, laying the foundation of education and continuing to encourage me to study for my master's degree. Also, I thank my beloved wife, Fester Waikunda Sinkala, and our daughter, Nora Mathew Mngochela, for their prayers, love, encouragement, tolerance, care, and support during my studies.

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ABSTRACT

This study entitled “Assessment of Community Knowledge on Socio-Economic Relevance of Alternatives to Imprisonment: A Case of Mbozi District in Tanzania” is guided by three specific objectives, which seek to explore the knowledge of community service as an alternative to imprisonment among the community members, to inquire on the challenges encountered by responsible authorities in implementing community service sentence, and to identify the sociol-economic impacts of community service sentencing in the study area. The study used social Learning theory. Further, the pragmatic philosophy, which embraces the utilization of descriptive design and mixed approach, was employed in this study, which used 400 sample size. The SPSS was used to analyse quantitative data, while quotas and tables were used to analyse qualitative data. The findings show that 38% of males, as compared to 62%, participated in the study, and 44% of males had knowledge of alternative imprisonment compared to 55% of females. Further, the community members recognize the benefit of community service, and 31%, against 69%, recognize the challenges that community services face. The study concludes by noting the number of challenges and socio-economic benefits to the community, which demands the government to invest more in creating awareness among the community members on the benefits offered by the alternative to imprisonment.

Keywords: *Community Knowledge, Socio-Economic Relevance, Alternatives to Imprisonment, Mbozi District.*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DAS	District Administrative Secretary
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HIV and AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ICJPR	Institute for Crime Justice Policy and Research
NBS	National Board of Statistics
NRC	National Research Council
OUT	Open University of Tanzania
PRI	Penal Reform International
SLT	Social Learning Theory
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USA	United States of America
WPB	World Prison Brief

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter introduces the study titled "Assessment of Community Knowledge on Socio-Economic Relevance of Alternatives to Imprisonment: A Case of Mbozi District in Tanzania." It provides an overview of the background of the study, the statement of the problem, and the research objectives. Additionally, the chapter outlines the research questions and highlights the significance of the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

Throughout history, imprisonment has been conceptualized as an effective form of punishment for criminal behavior in different societies (Roberts et al., 2023). To address the prison overcrowding challenge, global countries have adopted various types of punishments known as alternatives to imprisonment, including probation, house arrest, fines, and community service sentences (WPB, 2022). The study focuses on community service sentences, which have historical roots in various cultures but gained prominence in the 20th century. Community service seems to be a positive way of making an offender perform constructive work rather than destroying the contribution made by the community. Due to social and economic changes around the world, including human rights activist movements and the increased cost of running prisons, community service has been regarded as a desirable alternative to imprisonment (WPB, 2022).

The idea of a community service sentence has been supported by prominent scholars, including Shadd Maruna, who argued for it in his Desistance theory, which was put forward in 2001. Maruna's assumption stresses that people can change and that criminality is not a permanent trait. He insisted on the use of community service punishment rather than imprisonment (Maruna, 2016). From the theory, the community gets knowledge and understanding concerning the use and application of the alternatives to imprisonment. Still, the community does not have enough understanding of community service punishment. Desistance theory is relevant since the offenders come to the community and change their behaviors through the experience of life because the theory explains how people acquire and maintain specific behavioral patterns, providing opportunities for self-monitoring, goal setting, and problem-solving; this enables offenders to come to the community and learn how to work with others without repeating offences.

Prison overcrowding is now a severe problem in the world in which the number of prisoners has exceeded the capacity of the prisons to accommodate them. Imprisonment is used as a form of punishment in every country in the world, mainly from the period of the Second World War 1945. Examples of countries in Africa that have used imprisonment as a punishment are South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. In Europe, Turkey, the U.K., and Poland. Asia Continent China, India and Indonesia. America, USA, Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico (WPB, 2022).

India's capital cities, Delhi, Kerala, and Maharashtra, have been exploring alternative measures for imprisonment as part of their justice systems. These alternatives include

probation, community service, restitution, and diversion programs. In Asia, cities such as Singapore, Thailand, and South Korea have adopted the alternative to imprisonment; the application of measures varies across regions due to differing legal systems, cultural norms, and resource availability (Nelson et al., 2023). Some standard measures include community service programs, probation and suspension sentences, restorative justice practices, and youth diversion programs. However, the application varies in Asia; there is a growing recognition of the importance of community involvement in addressing crime and promoting social development (Nelson, 2023). Community service sentences emerged as an alternative solution to imprisonment in California in the United States of America in 1966, when offenders were required by the municipal courts to perform unpaid work for the community (Magezi, 2021).

In African Countries, the history of community service sentences started in 1992 in Zimbabwe, followed by Uganda in 1996 (PRI, 2004). Sub-Saharan Regions, like Nigeria, have large and growing populations and are experiencing challenges related to prison overcrowding caused by factors like slow legal systems (PRI, 2004). The community service program was officially introduced in Mainland Tanzania in 2002 under the Community Service Act, No.6/2002, as the response to the problem of prison congestion in all regions like Arusha, Dodoma, Dar es Salaam, Kilimanjaro, Mbeya, and Mwanza (Stoian, 2019). A report by Tanzania Prison Reports of March 2022 indicates that the official number of prisoners was 32,671, while prisons can carry 29,760, which equals 109.0% of prisoners. Critical stakeholders in implementing the program are the Judiciary, Prisons, Police, and local government authorities (Roberts

et al., 2023). Despite the government initiatives, people are seemingly unaware of the program of community service sentences as an alternative to imprisonment.

There were several people served with the alternative punishment, such as Elizabeth Michael @Lulu against the Republic having found accused guilty of killing Steven Kanumba; Lulu was sentenced to two years but instead was released after seven months of her sentence with the condition of serving a community sentence. Secondly, issues of former Ministers of Finance Basil Pesambili Mramba and Daniel Aggrey Yona of energy and mineral charged at Kisutu Court against the Republic of Tanzania for abuse of office led to the loss of 11.7 billion, were jailed for three years. In June 2015, Mramba and Yona were released from prison and subjected to community service by cleaning at Sinza Palestine Hospital (Mpoki, 2011).

Through the use of community service sentences, there arise opinions; Omary Hilary, on the official page in February 2016, said that the ministers caused the loss of billions of monies but surprisingly were allowed to serve community service sentences; he recommends as a favor, Johnson Elly Buse said that Mramba and Yona were the famous government official so it was a means of making their case off. From the opinions put forward by citizens, it sounds like people have no knowledge concerning community service as an alternative to imprisonment. Through the establishment of community service as an alternative to imprisonment, when assessing community knowledge, there are several opinions; some communities view it as a more human approach that allows offenders to change their behaviors while remaining in the community (Materu, 2021).

Access to counselling, job training, and educational programs is frequently necessary for effective rehabilitation (Comer, 2013). However, in Tanzania, there are not many options for these kinds of programs when it comes to community service sentences. This lack of comprehensive rehabilitation programs hurts offenders' long-term chances. Comprehending and tackling this mindset is essential for successful recovery. Considering these difficulties, this research will thoroughly evaluate the barriers to community service sentencing in Tanzania that effectively promote recovery. By identifying these barriers, the researcher hopes to offer suggestions and perspectives to relevant parties, criminal justice professionals, and policy makers to improve the efficacy of community service sentencing as a tool for offenders' rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

There are more than 10.77 million people packed into prisons throughout the world, characterized by overcrowding and unsanitary conditions; statistics of prison overcrowding in Tanzania the capacity of Tanzania to hold prisoners is 29,760 persons, but people who are in prisons are 32,671 more than the capacity of Tanzanian prisons (World Prison Brief report, 2022). Prisoners are suffocating due to inadequate ventilation, lack of access to clean water, and occupying very little space (World Prison Brief report, 2021). Despite the adoption of community service as an alternative to imprisonment, Tanzania courts from all regions, like Mbozi District Court, Kinondoni Court, and Kondo District Court, are over emphasizing the use of the traditional imprisonment mechanism as a key to the rehabilitation method, probably due to insufficient community knowledge about its socio-economic relevance.

The known issue is prison overcrowding, which results in brutality like sexual assault/harassment of prisoners by prison staff, mental health diseases due to isolation, stress disorders due to loneliness and alienation, and infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS. Community service programs aim to address issues like overcrowding, which have negative impacts on the economy. Still, in its implementation, practitioners face challenges of budget shortages to monitor the programs, remoteness of some areas associated with lousy infrastructure, shortage of workforce, and limited resources; all these hinder the success of the programs. Previous reports concentrated on the impact of imprisonment and overlooked assessing community knowledge on alternative imprisonment towards social development; the public and some stakeholders do not understand the use of service in the criminal justice system well. The proposed study, therefore, seeks to assess the public's level of awareness of the use of community service and to come up with an appropriate mechanism to educate the public on community service sentences as an alternative to imprisonment (Magezi, 2021).

1.4 General Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess community knowledge of the socio-economic relevance of alternatives to imprisonment.

1.4.1 Specific Objectives

The following specific objectives will guide the study; -

- i) To explore the community's knowledge of community service as an alternative to imprisonment.

- ii) To assess the socio-economic benefits of community service sentencing in the study area.
- iii) To identify the challenges facing government authorities in implementing community service sentences.

1.5 Research Questions

- i) What is the community's knowledge of community service?
- ii) What is the socio-economic benefit of community service sentencing in the study area?
- iii) What are the challenges facing government authorities in implementing community service sentences?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study is significant because it will offer insights into community knowledge on the economic relevance of community service sentences as an alternative to imprisonment. The findings will be communicated to law enforcers, such as policy makers and social workers, to modify strategies for community service improvements. The study findings will contribute to bringing about awareness for community service improvement.

The study will allow researchers and academicians to develop more research and findings about properly treating prison overcrowding. Participation in community service can provide offenders with valuable skills, work experience, and a sense of purpose, which can facilitate their rehabilitation and successful reintegration into society.

Legislators believed the program was an opportunity to address the problems of prison overcrowding and that it could reduce criminal behavior. This adds advantages to the community members since it offers the community the chance of rehabilitation and reintegration without the social and family disruption caused by imprisonment. Also, the service to the community requires offenders to go into behavior change programs while doing community service work. Offenders also gain different skills and learn to be good people in society.

The study findings will contribute to awareness of the concepts of community service programs among society members. The aim of assisting and mobilizing community service instead of imprisonment for criminal offenders is to reduce criminality and ensure that offenders change their behaviors and become law-abiding citizens.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study assesses community knowledge of the socio-economic relevance of alternatives to imprisonment, focusing on community service sentencing as an alternative to traditional incarceration. The study is confined to Mbozi District, particularly Ilembo Prison, which experiences higher congestion compared to other prisons in the region, such as Ileje and Songwe. It involves key stakeholders, including community members, government officials, and community service officers, to examine awareness, perceptions, and challenges associated with adopting community service sentences. Covering the period from 2020–2024 the study provides an in-depth analysis of trends in alternative sentencing. The research is grounded in Social Learning Theory (SLT), which explains how individuals adopt new behaviors through

observation, reinforcement, and social interactions, making it relevant in understanding how the community perceives and internalizes community service sentencing. Additionally, the study applies a pragmatic research philosophy, employing a descriptive research design and a mixed-method approach. A sample size of 400 respondents was used, with SPSS employed for quantitative analysis, while qualitative data were analyzed using quotations and thematic coding.

1.8 Organization of the Study

According to Berkenkotter (2016), the organization of a study serves as a roadmap, guiding readers through its structure and findings. This research is structured as follows: Chapter One introduces the study by presenting the background, statement of the problem, research objectives and questions, scope, significance, and organization of the study. Chapter Two provides definitions of key terms and reviews the relevant literature, including theoretical and empirical perspectives, as well as the conceptual framework guiding the study. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology, detailing the research philosophy, design and approaches, study area, target population, sample size, sampling procedures, data collection methods, validity and reliability considerations, data management and analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. Chapter Four presents the study findings and analysis, covering the demographic characteristics of respondents, levels of community knowledge on alternatives to imprisonment, socio-economic benefits of community service sentencing, and the challenges faced in implementation. The data is analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Chapter Five discusses the summary, conclusion, and recommendations based on the study findings. It also provides

implications for policy, practice, and future research. If an abstract is included, it provides a concise summary of the study's objectives, methodology, key findings, and conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the literature reviewed. It covers conceptualization of terms, theoretical review, relevance of the theory, empirical review of the study comprising three research objectives, research gap, and conceptual framework.

2.2 Conceptualization of Terms

Some key terms in the study, such as community knowledge and alternatives to imprisonment, must be understood well to convey the study's accurate meaning.

2.2.1 Community Knowledge

Community knowledge is the collective understanding, information, and expertise a specific community holds (Berkenkotter, 2016). It encompasses community members' shared experiences, skills, and insights. In the study's context, community members should be aware of the adoption of new programs established by the authorities.

2.2.2 Alternatives to Imprisonment

In this study, the concept of alternatives to imprisonment refers to a form of punishment aimed at keeping the convicted person free while imposing a punishment that will prevent the convicted person from committing another crime. The alternatives to imprisonment are opposite to imprisonment: probation, electronic monitoring,

restorative justice programs, fines, house arrest, and community service (Radulovic, 2019).

2.2.3 Socio-Economic

Socio-economics is the socio science that studies how economic activity affects and is shaped by social processes (Berkenkotter, (2016). It analyses how modern societies progress because of their local, regional, or global economy. It is the way of describing people based on their education, income, and type of job. People with a lower social and economic status usually have less access to financial, educational, social, and health resources than those with a higher social and economic aspect. From the study's view, offenders in societies engage in socio-economic activities such as gardening, farming, and industry to be socially and economically viable when released from prison.

2.3 A Review of Theoretical Literature

For the study to be meaningful, it should be accompanied by a theory that checks its interlink age with other scholars' writing. The Social Learning Theory will guide the current study.

2.3.1 Theory Guiding the Study

The theory guiding the study is Social Learning Theory (SLT), developed in 1977 by Canadian psychologist Albert Bandura. The community service sentence is the most relevant to integrating community members and legal authorities by assessing community knowledge of alternatives to imprisonment. The primary focus of Bandura

is that nearly all behaviours are learned. (Bandura, 1977). He expanded that all experiences by people occur by observing other people's behaviors relating to the study, people seem to be unaware of the community service sentence as an alternative to imprisonment despite its existence for 20 years in Tanzania from its adoption.

Bandura explores that learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment, and behavior. The unique feature of SLT is its emphasis on social influence and external and internal social reinforcement in which individuals acquire, maintain, and perform behavior. The theory considers a person's experiences, which factor into whether behavior action will occur (Bandura, 1986).

The theory states that when people observe a model performing behavior and its consequences, they remember the sequence of events. Bandura expanded on the idea of how behavior is acquired. He claimed that social learning theory directly correlates a person's perceived social relation based on sources such as performance accomplishments, experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological states for all behavior change. People learn from the consequences of their behavior, which also affects the environment in which they live (Bandura, 1977).

The theory has some constructs, like behavioral capability, which is the person's ability to perform a behavior through essential knowledge and skills. To successfully perform a behavior, a person must know what to do and how to do it. People learn from the consequences of their behavior, which also affects the environment in which they live (Bottoms, A. et al. 2004). The application of the theory explains how people acquire

and maintain specific behavior patterns; the theory has the concepts that shape people's life behavior through the opportunities available. Attitudes of one's persons can be corrected by promoting a healthier outlook; skills and behaviors can be learned through training, and the results of change must be meaningful for the person.

2.3.1.1 Relevance of the Theory

The relevance of the theory to the study is that it is one of the behaviorist theories; it postulates that humans acquire knowledge not only through first-hand experience but also by observing others by replicating their behaviors. It focuses on preparing incarcerated persons for successful re-entry into society since work release programs need to offer more than skills-based training. Social learning theory is highly relevant in understanding alternatives to imprisonment because it emphasizes how individuals learn from observing others and the social environment around them. Regarding alternatives to imprisonment, such as community service sentences, social learning theory suggests that these approaches can effectively promote positive behavior change by allowing individuals to observe and learn from others in a supportive community setting.

Additionally, social learning theory highlights the importance of reinforcement and modelling in shaping behavior, which can be applied in designing and implementing effective alternative sentencing programs. Many theories of behavior do not consider the maintenance of behavior and not just the initiator of behavior, but the goal of SLT is to explain how people regulate their behavior through control and reinforcement to achieve goal-directed behavior that can be maintained over time (Bandura, 1977).

Moreover, the theory considers many levels of social issues when addressing the individual's behavior change. SLT has been widely used in matters concerning human development. People learn not only through their own experiences but also through observing the actions of others and the results of those actions. This is seen in the study when criminals are supposed to pay for their crimes (Bandura, 1977).

On the other hand, the theory has critics in that social cognitive theory focuses much on a person's inner traits and places too much emphasis on cognitive aspects and abilities that ignore biological influences. It must fully explain how social cognition, behavior, environment, and personality are related. Another limitation is that not all social learning can be directly observed. The theory assumes that changes in the environment will automatically lead to changes in the person, although this may not always be true.

Also, the theory is loosely organized and based solely on the dynamic interplay between person, behavior, and environment (Flamand, 2009). The theory fits in the study since the study focuses on assessing the public's knowledge of alternatives to imprisonment, which tries to measure the level of how the community can acquire a behavioral change in their community through other established activities to come together with the offenders who are not supposed to be imprisoned.

2.4 Empirical Literature Review

An empirical literature review is a comprehensive summary and critical analysis of existing research studies and scholarly articles based on empirical evidence. It

explicitly examines studies that involve data collection and analysis to synthesize relevant findings and identify knowledge gaps.

2.4.1 Community's Knowledge on Community Service

Materu (2021) conducted a study to examine public perceptions of community service as an alternative to imprisonment. Using a qualitative approach, the study analyzed public opinions on the effectiveness of community service in rehabilitating offenders. The findings indicated that while some individuals viewed community service as a humane and rehabilitative measure, others perceived it as a lenient form of punishment, particularly for severe crimes such as economic offenses and violent acts. The study recommended that public awareness campaigns be intensified to educate communities on the objectives and benefits of community service as an alternative to imprisonment.

Ahmad (2024) explored the level of awareness regarding alternative sentencing in different communities, using a mixed-method approach to assess factors influencing knowledge and acceptance of community service. The study found that cultural attitudes toward punishment, crime severity, and the effectiveness of community service programs significantly shaped community perceptions. A lack of awareness was attributed to limited government efforts in public education, entrenched punitive ideologies, and insufficient media coverage. The study recommended incorporating community service education into national crime awareness programs to increase public understanding and acceptance of alternative sentencing.

Radulovic (2019) examined the impact of community education on the perception of alternative sentencing in selected districts. The study employed a survey research design with structured questionnaires to gather data from community members. Findings revealed that many people misunderstood community service sentencing, associating it with early release for prisoners rather than an independent sentencing option. Additionally, a significant portion of the population lacked information about its role in reducing prison congestion and rehabilitating minor offenders. The study recommended targeted educational programs and collaboration between the judiciary and community leaders to enhance public knowledge and trust in community service sentencing.

Ellis (2021) analyzed the relationship between community service and crime deterrence by employing both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The study found that while some communities viewed community service as a method for offenders to give back and repair harm, others doubted its effectiveness in addressing victim concerns or preventing recidivism. The study emphasized that the perceived deterrence of community service varied depending on the severity of the offense and the level of supervision imposed. The research suggested integrating support systems and stricter monitoring mechanisms to strengthen community confidence in alternative sentencing.

Roberts (2023) assessed the role of government initiatives in improving public knowledge and confidence in alternative sentencing. Using case studies from multiple countries, the study highlighted the importance of structured programs in ensuring the

success of community service sentencing. Findings suggested that in regions where awareness campaigns were conducted, public confidence in community service as an alternative to imprisonment increased. The study recommended continuous public engagement through advocacy, media campaigns, and direct community involvement in the rehabilitation of offenders.

Overton et al. (2022) investigated the economic and social impact of non-custodial sentencing, including community service, by analyzing various rehabilitation programs. The study found that alternatives to incarceration, such as community service and restorative justice, significantly reduced recidivism rates by addressing underlying causes of crime, including mental health issues and addiction. Additionally, the study emphasized that community-based rehabilitation was cost-effective compared to imprisonment, making it a sustainable option for reducing prison congestion. The researchers recommended increased investment in alternative sentencing infrastructure and expansion of restorative justice programs to enhance their effectiveness.

In general, the reviewed studies highlight varying levels of community awareness and acceptance of community service sentencing. While some communities recognize its rehabilitative potential, others remain skeptical due to misconceptions and concerns about effectiveness. The findings suggest that increasing public education, improving program supervision, and fostering community engagement are crucial in enhancing the acceptance and success of alternative sentencing measures.

2.4.2 Socio-Economic Benefits of Community Service Sentencing

Materu (2021) conducted a study to examine the financial burden of imprisonment on governments and the socio-economic benefits of community service as an alternative sentencing option. Using a qualitative approach, the study assessed how community service enables offenders to remain connected to their communities while fostering a sense of responsibility and reducing recidivism rates. The findings indicated that community service not only rehabilitates offenders but also alleviates the financial strain on the criminal justice system by lowering incarceration costs. Additionally, the study highlighted the importance of community service in providing essential labor for public projects such as park maintenance and charitable activities. The study recommended that governments enhance awareness campaigns to educate communities on the economic and social benefits of community service sentencing.

Ahmad (2024) explored the role of community service sentencing in strengthening community cohesion and economic sustainability. Employing a mixed-method approach, the study analyzed how community service contributes to neighborhood improvements and fosters accountability among offenders. The findings revealed that engaging offenders in community labor led to positive behavioral changes and provided a cost-effective alternative to incarceration. Furthermore, community service programs stimulated local economies by reducing public expenditure on prisons and redirecting resources toward social services. The study recommended policy reforms to expand the use of community service in sentencing non-violent offenders, ensuring its integration with broader rehabilitation efforts.

UNODC (2019) assessed the effectiveness of community service sentencing in reducing prison congestion and promoting public-private collaboration. The study employed a case study approach to evaluate how governments, non-governmental organizations, and community members collectively implement alternative sentencing programs. The findings showed that community service sentencing successfully diverted non-violent offenders from overcrowded prisons and enhanced public trust in rehabilitation-focused justice systems. Moreover, the study found that well-structured community service programs improved offenders' reintegration into society by equipping them with skills beneficial for employment. The study recommended stronger inter-agency partnerships and increased funding for community-based rehabilitation programs to enhance their long-term impact.

Gormley (2022) investigated the impact of legislative reforms on the adoption of community service as an alternative to imprisonment in Tanzania. Using a legislative analysis method, the study examined how sentencing guidelines, bail procedures, and probation policies influence prison population management. The findings indicated that legal provisions for community service in Tanzania, particularly in urban areas such as Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, and Dodoma, have contributed to reducing prison overcrowding. The study emphasized that further reforms in sentencing laws could enhance the efficiency of community service programs. It recommended that policymakers review sentencing frameworks to increase the eligibility of offenders for non-custodial sentences, thereby improving prison conditions and judicial efficiency.

Byrne and Taxman (2015) examined the effectiveness of community service sentencing in enhancing rehabilitation and reducing recidivism rates among non-

violent offenders. Using comparative research methods, the study analyzed the outcomes of incarcerated individuals versus those sentenced to community service. The findings revealed that individuals who completed community service sentences were less likely to re-offend compared to those who served prison terms. The study also found that the reduced prison population allowed correctional facilities to allocate more resources to high-risk offenders. The researchers recommended that community service programs integrate psychological and vocational support services to ensure lasting rehabilitation and reintegration success.

Salim (2022) conducted a study to assess the role of alternative sentencing in alleviating prison congestion and improving community well-being. The study used survey research methods to gather data from key stakeholders, including judicial officers, law enforcement personnel, and community leaders. The findings indicated that community service sentences significantly reduced pressure on the criminal justice system by lowering incarceration rates. Additionally, offenders given community service sentences contributed positively to society through unpaid work, thereby fostering restorative justice principles. The study recommended enhancing legal frameworks governing alternative sentencing and establishing monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance and effectiveness.

The Vera Institute of Justice (2012) and the National Research Council (2014) explored the broader socio-economic advantages of non-custodial sentencing, including community service. Using longitudinal data analysis, the studies examined the financial and social impact of alternatives to incarceration. The findings

demonstrated that community service sentencing led to significant government cost savings, improved employment prospects for offenders, and reduced family disruptions caused by incarceration. Additionally, alternative sentencing was found to enhance public safety by focusing on rehabilitation rather than punitive measures. The studies recommended increased investment in restorative justice initiatives and expansion of community-based sentencing programs to strengthen economic stability and community cohesion.

Therefore, the reviewed studies consistently highlight the socio-economic benefits of community service sentencing in reducing prison overcrowding, lowering government spending on incarceration, and promoting offender rehabilitation. While legislative reforms and community support remain critical to the success of these programs, evidence suggests that alternative sentencing can contribute to economic sustainability and improved social integration. Governments should prioritize policy measures that expand the application of community service sentences, ensuring that they serve as effective tools for both rehabilitation and social development.

2.4.3 The Challenges Facing Government Authorities in Implementing Community Service Sentences

UNODC (2019) conducted a study to assess the challenges associated with implementing community service sentencing as an alternative to imprisonment. The study employed a qualitative approach, utilizing interviews with government officials, justice sector professionals, and community members in various regions. Findings indicated that limited resources for supervision, coordination, and monitoring hindered

the effectiveness of community service programs. Financial constraints, inadequate staffing, and a lack of material support made it difficult to ensure compliance with community service requirements. The study recommended increased resource allocation and stronger institutional frameworks to improve implementation.

Ellis (2021) examined the socio perception of community service sentencing and its impact on offender reintegration. Using a mixed-method approach that combined surveys and focus group discussions with offenders and community members, the study found that many offenders viewed community service as humiliating, leading to a lack of motivation to participate fully. Additionally, community members often held negative attitudes toward alternative sentencing, believing it to be a lenient punishment. The study recommended public awareness campaigns to change societal perceptions and emphasize the rehabilitative benefits of community service.

Materu (2021) explored the impact of corruption on the effectiveness of alternative sentencing in Tanzania. The study used case studies and interviews with legal professionals and justice sector stakeholders. Findings showed that corruption influenced judicial decisions, leading to inconsistent sentencing where some individuals received harsher punishments for minor offences while others avoided accountability due to bribery. The study emphasized the need for judicial reforms and the establishment of independent oversight bodies to monitor sentencing decisions and reduce corrupt practices.

Ahmad (2024) conducted a comparative analysis of community sanctions and imprisonment in Ireland and the Council of Europe region. The study utilized

secondary data analysis, reviewing policy documents, statistical reports, and previous research. Findings indicated that the expansion of community service sentences did not always lead to a reduction in incarceration rates. In some cases, non-custodial measures were not effectively utilized due to a lack of awareness among judicial officials and logistical challenges in enforcement. The study recommended improved data collection, increased training for justice officials, and enhanced support for alternative sentencing programs.

Roberts et al. (2023) investigated the economic burden of incarceration compared to alternative punishments in Tanzania. Using a cost-benefit analysis framework, the study analyzed government expenditure on prisons versus the potential financial savings from community service programs. Findings revealed that maintaining prisoners was significantly more expensive than implementing community service programs. The study also noted that a lack of probation officers contributed to the limited application of alternative sentences. Recommendations included expanding probation services, integrating community service into economic production activities, and establishing policies that incentivize alternative sentencing.

Radulovic (2019) explored the role of judicial discretion in sentencing decisions and its implications for prison congestion. The study adopted a legal analysis approach, reviewing statutory provisions, case laws, and sentencing patterns in Tanzania. Findings suggested that some magistrates strictly adhered to existing statutory punishments without considering alternative options, leading to unnecessary incarceration for minor offences. The study recommended revising sentencing

guidelines to encourage greater use of community service and other non-custodial measures.

Van Ness & Strong (2015) and the National Institute of Corrections (2020) examined the broader policy challenges in implementing alternatives to incarceration. Using policy analysis and stakeholder interviews, their research found that political resistance, public skepticism, and inadequate financial investment were major obstacles. Governments often faced pressure to appear "tough on crime," which discouraged support for alternative sentencing measures. The studies recommended stronger political commitment, increased funding for rehabilitation programs, and strategies to shift public attitudes towards non-custodial sentencing as effective crime reduction methods.

2.5 Research Gap

The research gap is an unanswered or unsolved problem in the study; the scholars who advocated for change enormously appreciated community service as an alternative to imprisonment. Various studies also recommended the alternative to imprisonment, which is community service, as viable (Maruna, 2001). Despite the alternative being appreciated compared to imprisonment, it was seemingly unknown among the community.

The research gap of this study is the knowledge gap, which needs to be made aware of the acceptability of community service sentences; this has resulted from insufficient capacity building and negligence to adopt changes. These weaknesses rationalize the

necessity of the study. It is worth exploring the gap since if the problem of prison overcrowding is not fixed, the government will run unexpected costs since governments are not financially stable enough to expand all prisons in the country to meet the number of prisoners.

Maruna (2001) studied the need for a community service sentence as an alternative to imprisonment; he pointed out several reasons. One was that people change when they return to the community doing manual work due to their faults. However, the community does not understand the reasons. Byrne and Taxman (2015) studied the adoption and application of community service and how people have supported the service. He found out that people are still not supportive because the service is far more human and does not give lessons to offenders. Walgrave (1992) wrote that community service is necessary as it makes offenders reparate rather than imprison them, yet the initiatives have not been fruitful. The study will fill the gap by creating awareness in the community to adopt the program of alternatives to imprisonment to reduce the devastating impacts of holding prisoners in prisons.

This indicator necessitates the study, which will help suggest better ways of communicating community service punishment. The study will explore the attitudes and perceptions of community members and criminal justice stakeholders towards these alternatives and identify barriers to their implementation and adoption. This weakness justifies the rationale of this study.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a visual or written product explained in a narrative form

(Van Der Waladt, 2020). The conceptual framework of this study groups the variables into three parts: independent variables, which form the central aspect of the change from jail life to outside life; these include alternatives to imprisonment, that is, community service sentence, which helps to reduce the number of prisoners from jail. Moderator variables are associated with government laws, policies, institutions, and culture. Dependent variables are expected outcomes, including community knowledge. Alternatively, it is the variable that changes because of the independent variable manipulation; it is the variable that affects or is any outcome you are interested in measuring. This variable, community knowledge, is the one that is being assessed, whether it is high, medium, or low. It is associated with attitudes, sensitization, and awareness. Moreover, the independent variable is one that you can control; any other variable does not influence it in the study. They are also called explanatory variables because they explain an event or outcome; it is the cause variable.

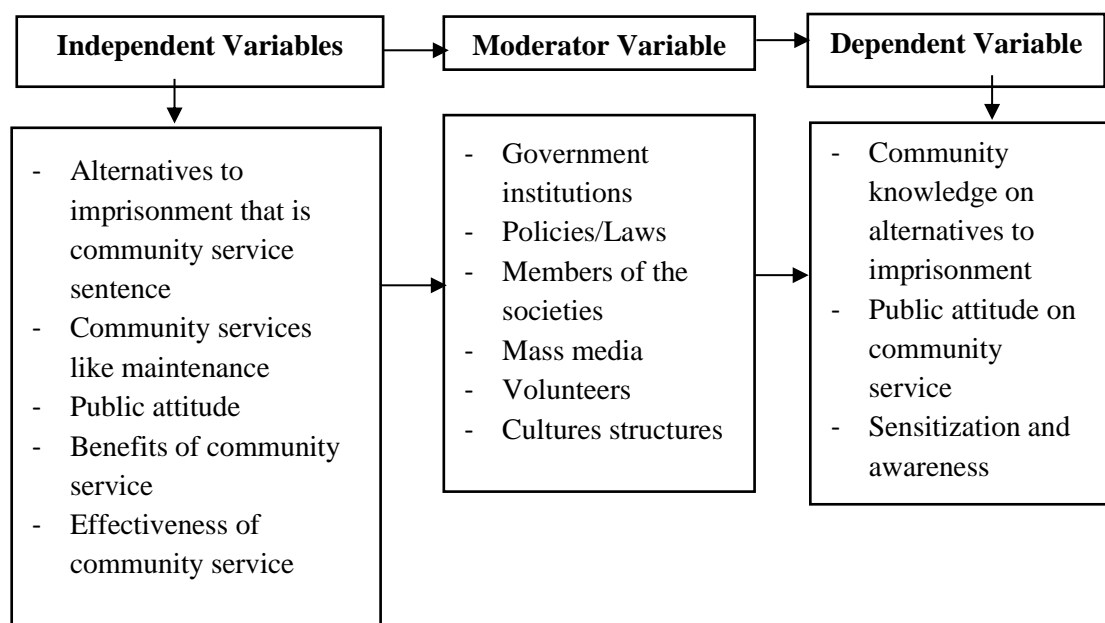


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework

2.7 Operationalization of Variables

The independent variables in this study focus on aspects influencing the implementation and perception of community service as an alternative to imprisonment. These include the availability of community service sentences, types of community services such as maintenance work, public attitude towards such alternatives, perceived benefits of community service, and its effectiveness. The implementation of community service sentences has been discussed in various studies, highlighting its role in reducing prison congestion and fostering rehabilitation (Piché, 2015). Public attitude plays a crucial role in the success of these programs, as acceptance and willingness to support community service sentencing contribute to its effectiveness (Tonry, 2018). The effectiveness of community service is often measured through recidivism rates, cost savings compared to imprisonment, and reintegration success.

The moderating variables consist of external factors that influence the relationship between independent and dependent variables. These include government institutions, policies, members of society, media influence, volunteers, and cultural structures. Government institutions and legal frameworks significantly shape the implementation and public perception of community service sentencing (McIvor, 2019). Policies determine the eligibility, enforcement, and monitoring of offenders engaged in community service programs. Additionally, the media plays a vital role in shaping public perception by highlighting either the benefits or drawbacks of alternative sentencing. Cultural norms and societal values also influence how community service is perceived and accepted as an alternative to traditional imprisonment.

The dependent variable captures the outcomes of community service sentencing, including public knowledge of alternatives to imprisonment, public attitudes towards community service, and levels of awareness and sensitization. Studies indicate that increased awareness campaigns and education on non-custodial sentences positively impact public acceptance and effectiveness (Mandeep, 2020). Awareness initiatives by government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been instrumental in shifting perceptions towards more rehabilitative approaches rather than punitive measures. The level of sensitization on community service as an alternative to imprisonment affects how effectively such programs are embraced and implemented within a given jurisdiction.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter covers research philosophy, research design, research approaches, study area, study population, population frames, population inclusion and exclusion, sample and sample size, sampling techniques, and data collection tools. The chapter is concluded by presenting the reliability and validity of the tools for data collection; the research ethics are last presented as per the presented details,

3.2 Research Philosophy

Philosophy is the fundamental set of beliefs that guide action in interpreting and understanding social phenomena. Research Philosophy is a belief about how data on a specific phenomenon should be gathered, analysed, and used (Kelly et al., 2020). Junjie et al. (2022) note three research philosophies: positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. On the same note, Kelly et al. (2020) revealed that pragmatism takes a more flexible approach, focusing on the potential usefulness and applicability of the research findings. The advantage offered by pragmatics is that it takes and utilizes the merits of both quantitative and qualitative methods (Bryman, 2016) while guided by specific research questions and the context of the study. The reason to have employed pragmatic research philosophy in this study

3.3 Research Design

Research design is a strategy or blueprint used in any research work to answer the proposed research questions using empirical data. Deciding on the research design

demands careful decision-making making, which the overall research objectives and approach should guide, data types, whether primary or secondary, sampling methods, data collection methods, and procedures to be followed in collecting data, and data analysis techniques (Merriam et al., 2015). Research design is generally categorized into groups depending on the purpose of the research, as well as descriptive, explorative, and explanatory research design (Zina, 2021).

3.3.1 Descriptive Research Design

This study is guided by a descriptive research design since it intends to describe systematically the differences and similarities between the variables under study (Bryman, 2016). Further, as Jelcic (2020) pointed out, the descriptive aims to describe the means that can be used to collect information from a specific population. The descriptive research design emphasizes the practical consequences and real-world applications in research, focusing on the researcher's flexibility while capitalizing on what works rather than adhering strictly to theoretical frameworks (Casula, 2021). Considering the specific objectives of this study, which intends to gain knowledge of alternative imprisonment, the impact of social and economic benefits, and the benefits of alternative imprisonment among community members, the reason to have chosen the descriptive research design.

3.4 Research Approach

Research approaches can be defined as a collection of procedures and plans that decide the overall process of research adopted, such as qualitative, quantitative, or mixed approach (Kothari, 2004). Research objectives, research questions, the nature

of the research, and research subjects inform the decision on the research approach. The research objective informs the decision to select a mixed-methods approach since some rely on qualitative data, like the challenges of community service sentences, and quantitative data, like whether the community knows about the alternative to imprisonment.

3.4.1 Mixed Method Approach

Kirner (2022) noted that a mixed-methods approach combines both quantitative and qualitative research approaches within a single research study. This approach allows researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of a research question by leveraging the strengths of numerical data analysis and in-depth exploration of meanings and perspectives methods. Further, Kothari (2004) pointed out that it provides a more holistic view of complex phenomena, validating findings across different data sources and enhancing the overall rigor of the research. Kelly et al. (2020) point out the advantages of mixed methods: the qualitative and quantitative data collected normally complement each other. Combination approaches address the possible weaknesses that can be easily identified when a single approach is employed in any research study. From this point, the current study decided to utilize this approach to foster and address the possible shortcomings of using a single approach.

3.5 Study Area

Bryman (2016) defined a study area as a specific location that can be identified by coordinates, whereas, per the researcher's interest, a research study can be conducted,

as Kothari (2004) states. Based on this definition, the current study was carried out in Mbozi District, one of the Songwe Region's districts.

Further, the District of Mbozi is identified to occupy 3,857 square km with a population of 510,599 inhabitants (NBS, 2022). The reason for choosing Mbozi district as the study area is the prevalence of crime rates compared to other districts in the Songwe region. Taking into consideration other District-based prisons in Tanzania, such as Liwale, Lindi, Kiteto, Babati, Kiberege in Morogoro, and Mbinga in Ruvuma, just by the end of March 2024, Mbozi prison had a total of 320 prisoners while the prison can handle only 200 prisoners (Msoroka, 2018). The district has 120 offenders under community service, which is higher than the other districts in the Songwe region. For instance, Ileje has 31, and Songwe has 47 prisoners (Prison Report, March 2024). It is, therefore, these arguments that have informed the research to focus on the Mbozi district.

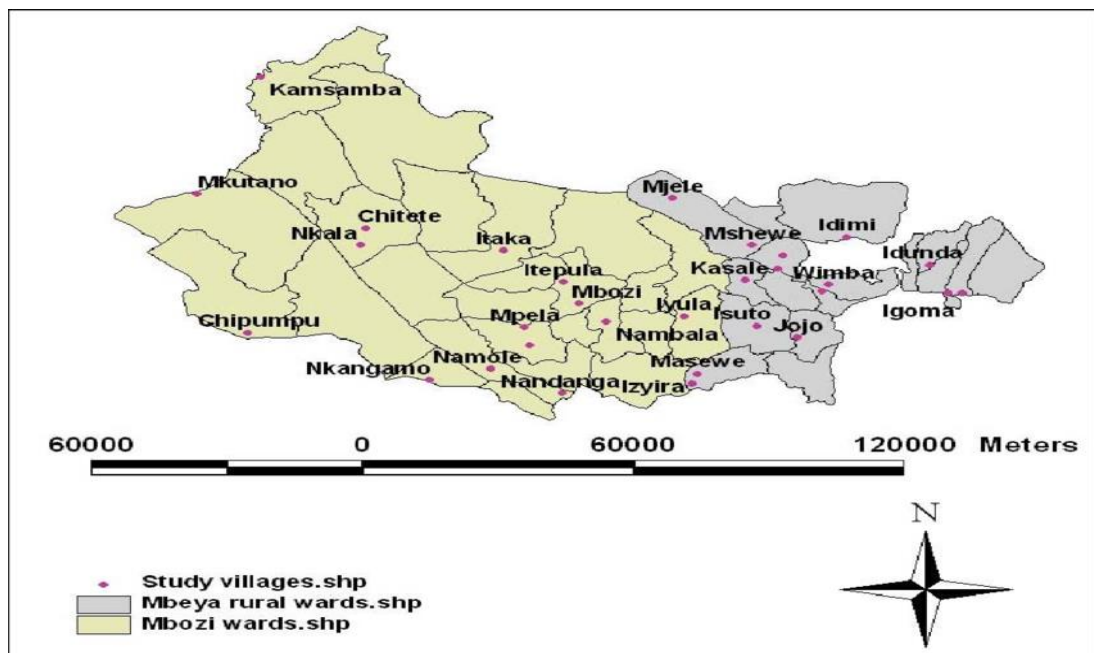


Figure 3.1: Study Area

3.6 Study Population

A study population refers to the entire group of individuals or elements that meet the inclusion criteria in a study (Kothari, 2004). The study includes government officials directly involved in community services, such as prison officers, social welfare officers, magistrates, and police. Due to the nature of the study as per the demand of the set specific objectives, the community members, such as the community leaders, the family members of the offenders, and the offenders who completed the alternative imprisonment, were also involved in informing this study. The study population focused on the age of 20 to 60 years old. It is worth noting that Mbozi has a total population of 510,599 (NBS, 2022), the population age group from 0 to 19 is 218,430, and the age group from 20 to 60 is 271,393. Due to the level of cognitive development and awareness of various socio-economic issues at the community level, a population of 271,393 was taken to inform this study on community service sentences as alternatives to imprisonment.

3.6.1 Population Inclusion and Exclusion

Population inclusion and exclusion criteria determine which target population members can or cannot participate in a research study (Kothari, 2004). Factors for determining population inclusion or exclusion are demographic characteristics like age, gender identity, marital status, and education levels. Failure to properly define inclusion and exclusion criteria can undermine the generalization and conclusion of the findings obtained in the study. Also, it can affect the confidence in the validity and reliability of the proposed tools for data collection (Robinson, 2014).

Considering the topic under study and its specific objectives, the government officials who are directly involved are the community services prison officers, social welfare officers, magistrates, and police. Others were the community leaders, the family members of the offenders, and the offenders who completed the alternative imprisonment were also involved. Further, the government officials who participated in this study were based on the time of at least two (2) working under community services, which was also applied to community leaders.

3.7 Sample and Sample Size

Sample and sample size refers to selecting and examining the population to be studied (Kothari, 2004). Yamane's formula is used because it gives a representative sample from a large population. $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$ (Yamane, 1967). the study population of Mbozi to be used is 271,393 age samples from ages 15-65 (NBS, 2022). Where n stands for sample size, N Population of the study, $e = (0.05)$ is the margin of error. $n = 271,393$ divided by $(1 + 271,393(0.05)^2)$ is where you get 399.9, which is equal to 400, which will be my sample size. The Yamane formulae, which are based on a homogeneous population, were utilized as the study focuses on the population dealing with or working with community service and the reasons for employing it.

3.7.1 Sampling Techniques

The sampling technique is a specific plan for obtaining a sample from a given population, usually determined before data are collected (Kothari, 2004). The study used both probability and non-probability sampling procedures. Probability sampling

was applied stratified, and later, simple random sampling was used, while non-probability sampling employed purposive sampling techniques, as detailed below.

3.7.2 Probability and Non-Probability Sampling

Probability sampling involves randomly selecting a sample, with four types: simple random, stratified, systematic, and cluster sampling (Kothari, 2004). Researchers divide a population into homogeneous sub populations called strata based on specific characteristics like race, gender, identity, or location (Kothari, 2004). In the current study, stratification sampling was used to select Mbozi prison out of four prisons in the Songwe region, as well as strata of officers like police, magistrate, social welfare, and prison officers. Nonprobability sampling was used, and individuals trusted to be knowledgeable about alternative imprisonment were chosen to inform this study qualitatively.

3.7.3 Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling is a nonprobability sampling technique used to select participants who are trusted to be knowledgeable or have an in-depth understanding of the topic under study (Jelicic et al., 2020). Utilizing focus group discussion, a total of ninety (90) prison officers (25), social welfare officers (5), magistrates (10), and police (20). Due to the nature of the study as per the demand of the set specific objectives, the community members, such as the community leaders (10), the family members of the offenders (10), and the offenders who completed the alternative imprisonment (10) were also involved were purposefully selected to inform this study.

3.8 Data Collection Tools

Data collection tools are devices used to gather information for research purposes. Some common tools include questionnaires, interview guides, case study guides, survey guides, and observational guides (Kirner, 2022). Considering the current study, semi-structured questionnaires were employed.

3.8.1 Methods of Data Collection

Data collection methods are techniques and procedures for gathering information for research purposes. They are categorized into primary methods, which include surveys, experiments, and observations, and secondary methods, which include documented and published sources (Kothari, 2004).

3.8.1.1 Secondary Data

Secondary data collection involves using existing data collected by someone else for a purpose different from the original intent; it is obtained from various sources, including published journals, online databases, the Internet, government and institutional records, past research studies, and publicly available data (Kothari, 2004). This study visited the online library, such as the Open University repository, and the search engine, such as Google Scholar. Further, the researcher often visited the physical library of the Open University.

3.8.1.2 Primary Data

Primary data refers to information collected from respondents for the first time to address the research question. It involves the collection of original data directly from the source or through direct interactions with the respondents. Primary data includes

surveys and questionnaires, interviews, observations, and focus group discussions (Kothari, 2022). This study's primary data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire.

3.8.1.3 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a list of questions or items used to gather data from respondents about their attitudes, experiences, or opinions (Kate, 2023). It provides a relatively cheap, quick, and efficient way of obtaining large samples of people. The specific objective of this study, focusing on community members' knowledge of alternative imprisonment, its socio-economic impact, and its benefits, employed a semi-structured, closed-ended questionnaire. As revealed by Kothari (2004), a semi-structured questionnaire allows the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data using a single tool, making it suitable for this study.

The questionnaire primarily consisted of closed-ended questions, where respondents selected answers from predefined choices. However, certain questions included probing elements to gain additional insights. A total of four hundred (400) research subjects responded to structured (closed-ended) questions, while ninety (90) participants were probed further for additional qualitative insights, as detailed in Appendix One.

3.8.2 Data Processing and Analysis

Data processing and analysis involve the systematic examination of raw data to extract meaningful insights (Kothari, 2004). This study analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data.

Quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version [25]. Since Chapter Four presents only descriptive statistics, the analysis involved computing frequencies and percentages to summarize respondents' characteristics and key study variables. The processed data was then presented in tables, pie charts, and histograms to enhance clarity and visual interpretation. For qualitative data, responses from open-ended questions were categorized into themes, and key insights were presented using quotations and summary tables to support the findings. This approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of community perceptions regarding community service sentencing as an alternative to imprisonment.

3.8.2.1 Data Cleaning

Data cleaning was conducted before analysis to ensure accuracy and reliability. The dataset was examined for inconsistencies, duplicate entries, and outliers. Errors identified during data entry were corrected, and improperly recorded responses were either verified or removed. The process ensured that only valid and relevant data were used for analysis.

3.8.2.2 Missing Data

A missing data check was performed to identify incomplete responses in the dataset. Cases with minor missing values were handled using mean imputation for numerical responses or mode substitution for categorical variables. However, responses with significant missing data (more than 10% of total responses) were excluded from the analysis to maintain the integrity of findings.

3.8.2.3 Data Coding

Before analysis, data was coded to convert responses into a structured format suitable for SPSS processing. Closed-ended responses were assigned numerical values (e.g., 1 = Male, 2 = Female) for easier analysis. Open-ended responses were categorized into themes and assigned specific codes for qualitative interpretation. This process ensured consistency in data representation and facilitated a seamless analysis process.

3.9 Reliability of Data

Data reliability in research refers to the consistency and accuracy of its measurement and the extent to which the instrument yields the same results over multiple trials (Kothari, 2004). Data for this study was validated by cross-referencing information or triangulation methods while ensuring that findings were dependable and could be replicated. Researchers employ various methods, such as repeated measurements and reliability tests, to gauge and improve data. There are different types of reliability to consider, such as test-retest reliability "consistency of results over time" inter-rater reliability "consistency of results between different raters" and internal consistency reliability "consistency of results across different items within the same measure (Kirner, 2022). To ensure reliability in this study, before the actual work of collecting data, the proposed semi-structured questionnaire was piloted, and the questions that had posed ambiguity were worked to handle the identified discrepancies.

3.9.1 Data Validity

Validity in research refers to how well a study measures what it intends to measure. It is about the accuracy and truthfulness of the data collected (Kothari, 2004). There are

different types of validity to consider, such as content validity, "whether the measure adequately represents all aspects of the construct being measured," and criterion validity, "how the measure correlates with an external criterion."

3.10 Research Ethics

According to Armond (2021), research ethics refers to principles guiding the research design and its practices. The ethical consideration actual details and provides the guidance of sanction posed to the researcher to regulate his or her conduct during research work. These considerations outline the following principles: voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and results communication (Iphofen,2020). The researcher, therefore, should adhere to a specific code of conduct when collecting data. In the context of the Open University of Tanzania, the researchers are obliged to seek permission from the University before they can begin to collect data. Some specific aspects were detailed.

3.10.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent is one of the founding principles of research ethics. It intends for human participants to enter research freely with full information about what it means for them to take part, and they give consent before entering the research (Luehnen, 2018). This agreement shows that they are willing to participate voluntarily after having a complete understanding of what the study entails, including the study's statement, research procedures, duration, risks and benefits, confidentiality, compensations, and emergency contact (Armond, 2021). In the context of this study, the research subjects, after they were identified, the time was taken to explain what the

study entails, its benefits, and the risks involved. It was until when they provided the verbal consent that the process of data collection began.

3.10.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality in research refers to the ethical obligation to protect research participants' privacy and sensitive information (Jaap, 2020). This means that the researcher must ensure that any information provided by participants is kept secure and not disclosed to anyone outside the research team without the participant's consent unless required by law or for specific purposes outlined in the research protocol. Confidentiality helps build trust between researchers and participants, encouraging honest and open participation in studies (Jaap, 2020). In the context of this study, the research subjects were ensured of privacy to their information prior to data collection.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Chapter Overview

This study entitled “Assessment of Community Knowledge on Socio-Economic Relevance of Alternatives to Imprisonment: A Case of Mbozi District in Tanzania” its presentation and findings are guided with three specific objective, which sake to explore the knowledge of community service as an alternative to imprisonment among the community members, to inquire on the challenges encountered by responsible authorities in implementing community service sentence, and to identify the social-economic impacts of community service sentencing in the study area. Further, this sub section presents the information on the selected demographic data from the study area.

4.2 Demographic Information

Ferreira (2017) noted that the significance of demographic data in any research study is that it assists and enhance the ability of the researcher to get acquainted with the population under study’s characteristics, by looking at very specific features such as age cohort, gender disparities, education levels, ethnic groups, customs and practices.

Further, the good use of collected demographic information is very useful in using the information for generalization and understanding the dynamic of the population under study. It is from these views, this study has identified gender, age, education level, marital status, social economic activities

4.2.1 Cross Tabulation of Social Economic Relevancy against Gender, Age, Education Levels and Marital Status

Table 4.1 on the cross tabulation of social economic relevance against gender among the research subject selected to inform this study, shows that 56% of the study respondents had knowledge of social economic relevancy to alternative imprisonment, while 44% had no knowledge of social economic relevance to alternative. Further, Female were the majority with 62%, while 38% was recorded among all male respondents to this study.

Table 4.1: The cross tabulation of socio-economic relevancy against gender, age, education levels and marital status

	Male	Female	Percent (%)
Knowledgeable	20	36	55%
Without Knowledge	18	26	44%
Total	38	62	100%
Age Cohort			
20 - 35	14	20	34%
36 - 45	10	22	32%
46 - 55	8	12	20%
56 +	6	8	14%
Total	38	62	100%
Marital Status			
Married	24	30	54%
Unmarried	12	22	34%
Divorced or Separate	2	10	12%
	38	62	100%
Education Levels			
Primary Level	10	20	30%
Secondary Level	8	12	20%
College Certificate	5	5	10%
Diploma Level	10	16	26%
Bachelor's and above	5	6	11%
Total	38	62	100%

Further, Table 4.1 on the crosstabulation of socio-economic relevance against age cohort shows that 34% represents the age group of 20 – 35, 32% represents the age group of 36 – 45; 20% represents the age group of 46 – 55, and 14% represents the age group of 56 and above. This is to say that the dominant age cohort among others was 20 – 35, with 34%. Further, women comprised the majority, with 62%, compared to men, who comprised 38%. Further still, Table 4.1 on the crosstabulation of social-economic relevance against marital status shows that married research subjects were the majority, with 54%; 34% represented the unmarried, and 12% described the divorced or separated. Females represented 60%, compared to males, who were 40%. These findings show that most of the research subjects were married (54%), and 60% represented the female population.

Besides gender, age cohort, and marital status, socio economic relevance is cross tabulated against education level. 30% was noted from the primary level, 20% was noted from the secondary level, 10% was recorded from a college certificate, 26% was observed from a diploma, and 11% was recorded from a bachelor's degree. Despite the recorded 30% not being the most dominant, it shows that many research subjects had primary school (30%) and 26% from diploma level. Furthermore, females (62%) were the majority group, compared to 38% of males.

4.2.2 Discussion on Demographic Findings and Their Implications

4.2.2.1 Socio-Economic Relevance against Gender

The findings indicate that 56% of female respondents had knowledge of the socio-economic relevance of alternatives to imprisonment, compared to 44% of males. Peter

and Norton (2018) highlight that gender significantly influences research participation and perceptions. The higher awareness among females may be attributed to their increased involvement in community and household responsibilities, especially when male family members are incarcerated. This underscores the necessity of integrating gender-sensitive approaches in alternative sentencing policies to minimize the economic burdens on women and families.

4.2.2.2 Socio-Economic Relevance against Age Cohort

The study found that the dominant age cohort was 20–35 years (34%), followed by 36–45 years (32%). The United Nations (2020) suggests that age influences individual participation in social and economic activities. The dominance of younger respondents in this study implies that youth are more engaged in discussions on criminal justice reforms. This highlights the need for targeted awareness campaigns among younger populations to enhance understanding and acceptance of alternative sentencing measures.

4.2.2.3 Socio-Economic Relevance against Marital Status

Married respondents constituted the majority (54%), with 34% unmarried and 12% divorced or separated. According to McLanahan and Sandefur (1994), marital status influences socio-economic stability. The predominance of married respondents suggests that family-oriented individuals are more likely to perceive the economic impact of alternative sentencing, as imprisonment often disrupts household economic activities. Policy interventions should, therefore, focus on family-centered rehabilitation programs to support both offenders and their dependents.

4.2.2.4 Socio-Economic Relevance against Education Levels

The findings reveal that primary education holders (30%) were the largest group, followed by diploma holders (26%). Oreopoulos and Petronijevic (2013) argue that education plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions and knowledge acquisition. The high proportion of primary school respondents suggests that awareness campaigns on alternative sentencing should be simplified and delivered through accessible channels such as community meetings and radio broadcasts. Additionally, education should be incorporated into rehabilitation programs to enhance re-entry prospects for offenders.

In conclusion, the United Nations (2020) noted that demographic information is a cornerstone of the research study; it provides a basis for understanding the population under study, its dynamics, relationships, and various outcomes. This study adopted four demographical variables, namely, gender, age, marital status, and education levels; females dominated at 62% as compared to males (38%) in all categories. The dominance of Females can be associated with the nature of the topic under study, as when a male is imprisoned, they are automatically forced to assume the core socio-economic roles of males. On the other hand, the dominance of Females is supported by the National Bureau of Statistics (2022), which noted that the population of females is 51.3% while for males, it is 48.7%.

4.3 Validity and Reliability of Data

To ensure the validity and reliability of the collected data, multiple strategies were employed. The study utilized triangulation by incorporating surveys and interviews to enhance credibility. A pilot study was conducted to refine the questionnaire, ensuring

clarity and relevance. To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha test was used to measure internal consistency. The reliability test results are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Reliability Test results using Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Knowledge on Community Service	6	0.79
Challenges in Implementation	5	0.82
Socio-Economic Impacts	7	0.85
Overall Scale	18	0.81

A Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.7 indicates an acceptable level of reliability (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The overall reliability score of 0.81 confirms that the instrument was reliable for data collection.

4.4 Knowledge of Community Service as an Alternative to Imprisonment among the Community Members

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was held with ninety participants from the following categories: a total of ninety (90) prison officers (25), social welfare officers (5), magistrates (10), and police (20). Due to the nature of the study as per the demand of the set specific objectives, the community members, such as the community leaders (10), the family members of the offenders (10), and the offenders who completed the alternative imprisonment (10) were also involved were purposefully selected to inform this study. Each group of participants had an opportunity to respond to one of the themes as indicated. For instance, the government officials were exposed to awareness and understanding, the community leaders on the benefits, the families on

participatory, and those who completed the alternative imprisonment on community perceptions. More details are provided,

Table 4.3: Visualization of focus group discussion findings and implications

S/N	Theme in the Checklist	Findings	Implication/Message
01	Awareness and understanding of community service as an alternative to imprisonment	In the study area as pointed by the government officials, there are still very limited knowledge and awareness of community service as an alternative to imprisonment. Little has been done at community level to create awareness and no information at grassroot levels are provided to support the public awareness. Due to this limitation, community members still lack knowledge of community service altogether.	Limited knowledge of community service as an alternative to imprisonment
02	The Benefits of community service as an alternative to improvement	The findings from the community leaders noted that it gives an opportunity for the person under community services to continue supporting his or her family. The family do not miss his or her emotional, psychological, and socio-economic support.	The benefit of community service to the family outweighs the imprisonment
03	Community Service as a participatory alternative to imprisonment	The findings from the families with person under alternative imprisonment asserts that community services allow the families and community members to participate the process of restoring and rehabilitating their behavioural practices of the offenders. The families take pride in seeing their beloved changing as per social norms.	Involvement of the families in support the offenders to change accordingly.
04	Community Perception to community Service as an alternative to Imprisonment	Capturing the perception of persons who completed alternative imprisonment note that some community members see it as the means to keep ties with the families and the way to reduce congestion in the prison. Others noted it as a warning imprisonment especially after committing minor offense.	It is used to rebuke the offender not to repeat the same mistakes

4.4.1 Discussion on the Finding of the Knowledge of Community Service as an Alternative to Imprisonment among the Community Members

Due to increasing offenses, which ultimately lead to congestion in prisons, community service is seen to reduce the overcrowding in the prison. However, it is only administered to offenders who have committed an offense for the first time and those who have committed a minor offense. At the community level, the alternative to imprisonment is administered at the government structures or activities, where the offender does an assigned work without expecting any payment. However, the community must see and recognize the benefits of unpaid work. The discussion of the FGD is guided by the implication from each identified implication, as shown in Table 4.2,

4.4.1.1 Limited Knowledge of Community Service as an Alternative to Imprisonment

As presented in Table 4.2, the findings reveal that community members are still confronted with limited knowledge of alternatives to imprisonment. Though it is one of the innovations taken by the government to reduce overcrowding in the prison, little is known about it by the community members. With this shortcoming, it needs more public support, which is detrimental to its achievement. In agreement with these findings, Muntingh (2005) pointed to limited public education as a setback to community knowledge on the awareness of alternative imprisonment. Moreover, Penal Reform International (2020) recommended that the government and other stakeholders increase public awareness to make information related to alternative imprisonment available to the community.

4.4.1.2 The Benefit of Community Service to the Family Outweighs the Imprisonment

The FGD findings noted that even though the offender has committed a mistake, which otherwise was supposed to be imprisoned, the alternative to imprisonment necessitates them to continue providing emotional, psychological, and socio-economic support to the family. Further, they also participate in the family's socio and economic acts, which help maintain each member's peace and tranquility member. About these findings, the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC, 2013) noted that for first offenders and minor offenses, an alternative to imprisonment is a suitable means to rehabilitate the offenders while allowing them to maintain family ties and carry on with the family socio-economic activities.

4.4.1.3 Involvement of the Families in Supporting the Offenders

The findings from the FGDs show that community service as an alternative to imprisonment allows them to help the offender reform. They supported it as it recognizes their role in supporting the restoration and rehabilitation process of the offender, a family member. On the same note, Penal Reform International (2020) noted that the family takes it as a lesson from which other members can learn and take the necessary measures to commit the same offense. Given these findings, Singh (2016) noted that families favor alternative imprisonment as it allows them to participate in the restoration process.

4.4.1.4 It is used to Rebuke the Offenders with Minor Mistakes

The findings from the FGDs revealed that alternative imprisonment is used to alarm the offenders; once the same mistakes are committed, the same offender must save

time in imprisonment. In this view, other community members see it as a means to reduce congestion in the prison. Further, the findings still recognize the varying altitudes among community and family members; others perceive it as positive, while others are very negative. From this understanding, Van Ness & Strong (2015) noted that alternative imprisonment has socio-economic benefits to the family and community, as it allows or is the means for the offenders to contribute or give back to their community.

In conclusion, as observed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2018), the benefit of community service as an alternative to imprisonment outweighs lifetime imprisonment. The offender can still participate in numerous socio-economic activities at the community and family levels. Further, the alternative to imprisonment allows the offender to remain with the family while providing services to the government for community activities.

4.5 Challenges Facing Government Authorities in Implementing Community Service Sentences

This question on the challenges was answered by three variables: awareness of existing challenges, identification of challenges, and recommendation to overcome the difficulties identified. More details are presented.

4.5.1 Awareness of the Challenges Facing Government in Implementing Community Service Sentence

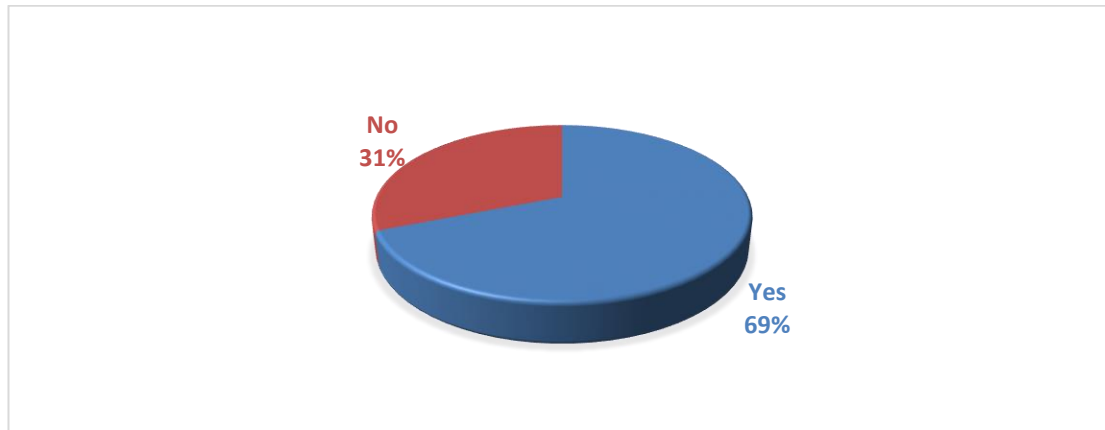


Figure 4.1: Awareness of the community service challenges

Despite community service sentencing going on for two decades, many Tanzanians still need to be aware of it and its challenges. Figure 4.1 noted that 31% of the study respondents were unaware of community service sentencing challenges. Notably, at a significant score of 69%, the majority were aware of the community service sentencing. The findings, therefore, reveal that despite the increasing challenges facing community service, many community members are aware of it.

4.5.1.1 Discussion on the Awareness of the Challenges Facing Government in Implementing Community Service Sentence

Figure 4.1 shows that a significant number of research subjects are aware of community service sentencing. However, the 31% who are not aware cannot be ignored, especially given the time since the Law on alternative punishment was enacted in 2002. Penal Reform International (2020) notes that community service, in general, is given little resources, which hampers the effective performance of

probation officers and social workers. These individuals are the engine of the program and play a crucial role in creating public awareness of community service. Without adequate resources, their efforts are hindered, contributing to the remaining 31% being unaware.

4.5.2 Identified Challenges Facing Community Service Sentence

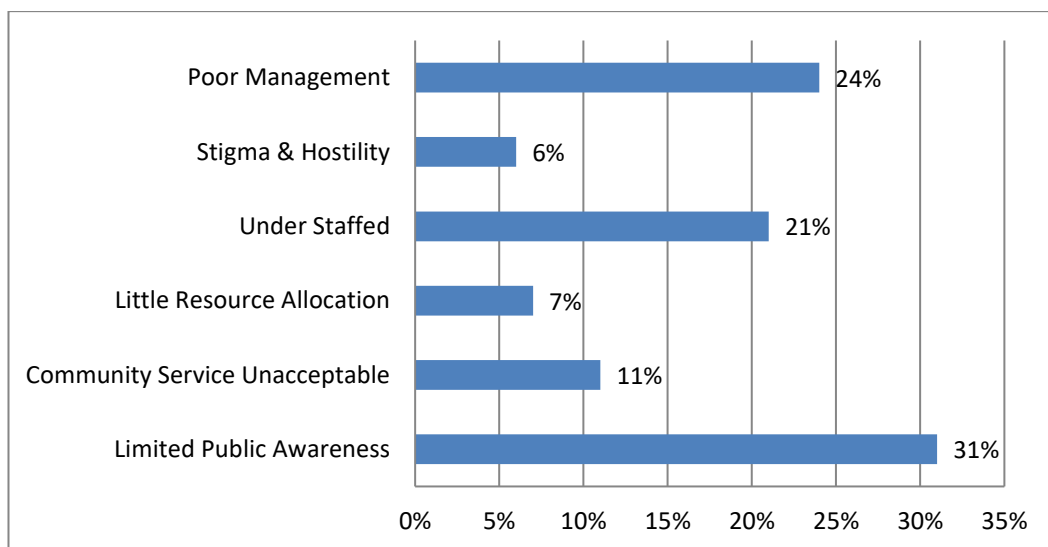


Figure 4.2: Identified challenges facing community service sentencing

Table 4.2 presents six (6) identified challenges confronting community service sentencing: poor management, stigma and hostility, under staffing, little resource allocation, community service, and limited public awareness.

Further, out of the six challenges, the leading as per 4.2 were as follows: 31% recorded at limited public awareness, 24% observed at stigma and hostility, and 21% noted at community service and sentencing as understaffed. Other challenges were recorded below 12%, namely 11% at the community service as unacceptable in the community,

7% noted as having little resource allocation, and 6% as challenges related to stigma and hostility.

4.5.2.1 Discussion on the Identified Challenges Facing Community Service Sentencing

As per Figure 4.2, the findings show that the identified challenges confronting community service sentencing are interrelated and interconnected. None of the identified challenges is more dominant or significant than the other. The finding implies that the identified six challenges equally affect community service sentencing. From these findings, Penal Reform International (2020) noted various challenges identified in developing countries, compounded by corruption and poor management of limited resources. Further, the competencies and skills among personnel working in community service were noted to be increasing tension in the provision of quality services.

4.5.3 Qualitative Proposition to Address the Identified Challenge on Community Service Sentencing

The qualitative questions on the proposition to deal with numerous challenges confronting community service sentencing were exposed to five social welfare offices working at Mbozi District Council. They were the key informants in the context of the question. The measures they proposed were sensitizing the community members through public campaigns on community service, capacitating the social welfare officers and probation officers on the primary responsibility while working with the community service, allocation of resources, and instilling a sense of accountability

among the individuals involved in the community service sentencing. More details were revealed as follows,

One of the Social Welfare officers noted,

"Community service sentencing or an alternative to imprisonment is still unknown and needs to be discovered among community members because there is no budget allocated to create awareness of the program at the community level. The government and the interested stakeholders should collaborate to collect funds, which can be used to create awareness of community service to the public."

Cementing on this observation, another revealed,

"The content covered in class among social welfare officers working under the community service sentencing is not enough to make them competent. Hence, training and capacity building is inevitable in this context".

In agreement with the above assertion, she narrated,

"The community service lacks commitment and accountability among its staff; these can be dealt with when the staff gets trained on accountability and the negative impact of corruption and mismanagement of available scarce resources."

The qualitative findings from the social welfare officers from the Mbozi District Council study area recognize the challenges facing the community service sentence; as a result, they have offered their proposition to mitigate the challenges.

4.5.3.1 Qualitative Discussion of the Proposed Solution on the Identified Challenge on Community Service Sentencing

The visibility and recognition of any program serving people at the community level must invest in creating awareness of its services to its clients, who, in this context, are

the community members. Increased publication awareness would help the community members to be informed of the benefits of community services and their contribution to reducing recidivism. As observed by Van Ness & Strong (2015), investing in public awareness of community service sentencing would ultimately help win and build public support, necessitating community leaders' engagement. The engagement of community leaders would attract the media to begin allowing the aspects of community service to be featured as one of the topic stories, capturing headlines.

The qualitative findings show that community service suffers from integrity among its employees. Any services provided without integrity suffer accountability and open the doors for corruption. It's from this point that Penal Reform International (2020) proposed that community service should be regularly audited while ensuring that the report is transparent and accessible to the public; this practice would reduce corruption and would hold each personnel accountable and work while observing transparent and fair treatment.

Moreover, the findings have shown that community service sentencing suffers from limited allocation of resources. UNODC (2013), while proposing a solution, notes that the government should show its commitment by allocating sufficient resources to ensure the activities under the program are carried out as planned. The resource allocation should include the funds for probation officers, the social welfare officers, and on-demand training related to community service sentencing. Generally, dealing with the identified challenges demands a multi-purpose intervention

4.6 Identification of the Socio-economic Impacts of Community Service Sentencing

It is worth noting that community service sentencing allows offenders to undertake specific community work under the supervision of a social welfare or probation officer without expecting any payment. This approach has negative and positive socio-economic impacts; however, for the sake of this study, the focus is given to positive impact (Matthews, 2021). This specific objective is dealt with using two aspects: the community's awareness of the socio-economic positive implications and the identified positive impact on the community. More details as presented,

4.6.1 Community's Awareness of Socio-Economic Positive Impact of Community Sentencing

Depending on its efficiency in its implementation, community service sentencing has numerous socio-economic benefits (positive impact of community service sentencing). More details as presented,

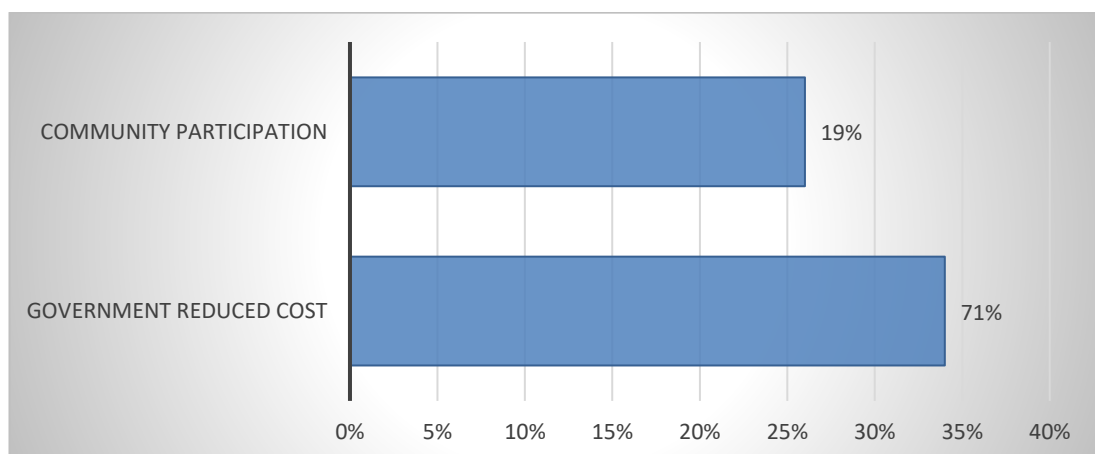


Figure 4.3: Socio-economic benefits of community sentencing

Figure 4.3 show that the research subjects recognize the socio-economic benefits of community service sentencing. Further, Figure 4.3 reveals that most respondents (71%) know the advantages of community sentencing. On the other hand, 19% do not see any benefit of community sentencing. The 19% is still a significant number around community sentencing. They indicate a lack of awareness of the program, an eye-opener to the custodian and government entitled to create awareness and sensitize the public.

4.6.1.1 Discussion on Community's Awareness of Socio-economic Positive Impact of Community Sentencing

As presented in Figure 4.3, the findings revealed that most research subjects (71%) were conversant with the socio-economic benefits of community service sentencing. Despite the challenges facing the program, the respondents still recognize its benefits. Noting the socio-economic benefit of community service sentencing, the National Institute of Corrections (2020) revealed that the family members of the offenders continue to access benefits such as emotional and psychological of having the offender around the family. Further, during free time, the offender can still participate in socio-economic activities, which helps boost the household income.

For minor and first-time offenders, community service sentencing is a cost-effective alternative to incarceration. It not only reduces prison overcrowding and government costs but also allows families to continue benefiting from the offender's presence. Furthermore, it provides offenders with an opportunity to contribute positively to their community, demonstrating their commitment to restoration.

4.6.2 Identification of the Socio-economic Impacts of Community Service Sentencing

Figure 4.4 Using four variables, such as government reduced cost, community allowed to restore the offenders, reduced cost to the offenders' families, and offenders using the community service as an opportunity to acquire competencies, were the identified positive benefits of community service sentencing.

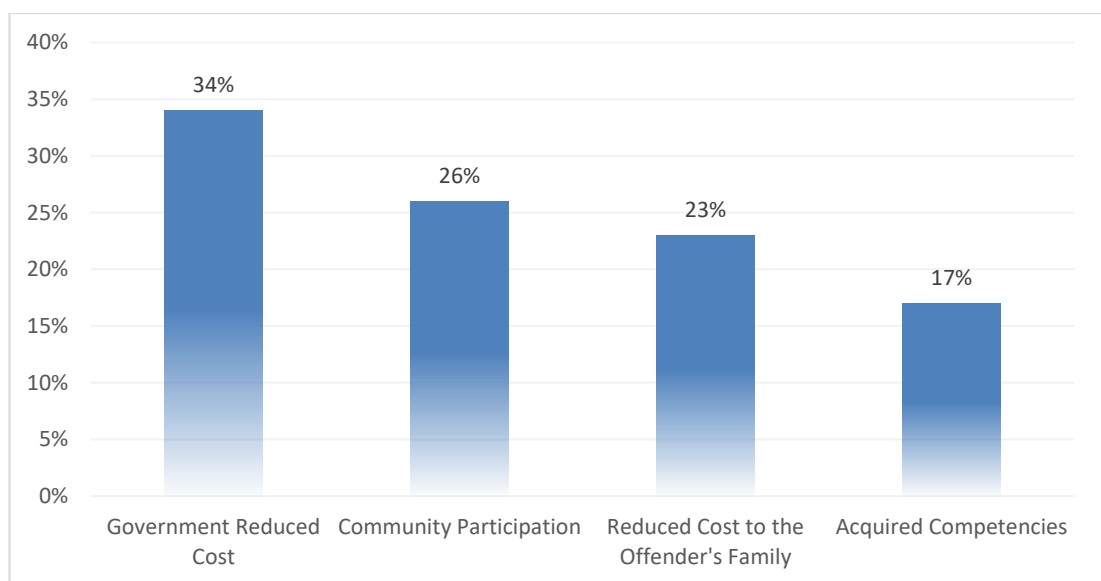


Figure 4.4: Identified positive socio-economic benefits of community service sentencing

The findings, as presented in Figure 4.4, noted that the leading two socio-economic positive impacts of community service sentencing were 34% recorded at the government-reduced cost of incarceration of the offenders and 26% observed in community participation in rehabilitating the offender. Further, the least two benefits were 23% noted at a reduced cost to the offender's family, and 17% recorded as the offenders' getting opportunities to new competencies during the community service

sentencing. Generally, the findings range between 34% (the highest) and 17% (the lowest) among the four benefits of community service sentencing.

4.6.3 Discussion on the Identification of the Socio-economic Impacts of Community Service Sentencing

Despite the scores among the identified benefits of socio-economic impact of community service, all of which were below 50%, they show their dependence and interconnectedness. For this reason, the highest score of 34% recorded at Government reduced cost differs from the lowest score of 17% recorded at acquired competencies among offenders, allowing other two variables in between them.

As per Figure 4.4, the findings echoed by Matthews (2021), who noted that community service sentencing allows the Government to reduce the costs of incarcerating offenders. Further, Brennan & Mednick (2021) pointed out that community service sentencing helps the family to reduce the cost and resources that could be spent to support the offender while incarcerated; they are utilized at the community and family levels. On the same view, Miller (2018) opined that community services allow offenders to remain at home while undertaking socio-economic activities to support the family and community. By undertaking community service, the National Institute of Corrections (2020) proposed that the offenders actively allow the family and community members to participate in the restoration and rehabilitation process. In turn, Beckett (2019) noted that offenders find an opportunity to learn and acquire life skills and competencies that help them participate in socio-economic activities after the community service period.

4.7 Relevancy of Social Learning Theory to the Findings of the Study

Using the lens of social learning theory, Matthews (2021) noted that when responsible government officers under the program of community service are empowered with the necessary skills and competencies, it can become helpful in creating awareness about the benefit of community service sentencing as an alternative to imprisonment to the community. It is this aware, as pointed out by Van Ness & Strong (2015), when carried out successfully, which would bring about equal benefit to the offender (s), the offender (s) family, the community, and the Government.

Further, Bandura (1977) posed that any person, in this case, the offender (s), can acquire certain behaviors and aspirations through observing others; it is after this act of observing others that they can begin to imitate their act and through various experiences. The theory further, as noted by Harding & Matarasso (2020), helps to show the relevancy of socio-economic benefit to the offender, the family, and the community at large. Unlike incarceration, offenders are likely to reduce recidivism and can contribute to the community and their families.

Moreover, Beckett (2019) revealed that community service sentencing, when implemented accordingly, creates learning and skills acquisition among the offenders. Further, Akers & Sellers (2013) posed that when the offenders acquire skills and competencies after completing the sentence, they are likely to actively contribute to the socio-economic gain of the family and the community. This is more applicable to the offenders who committed offenses due to lack of employment (Beckett, 019); the

community sentence can reduce the burden of unemployment caused by a lack of specific skills and competencies required to get a particular job.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the study's key findings observed from each specific objective, general judgments, and recommendations.

5.2 Summary

The study's general objective was to "Assess Community Knowledge on Socio-economic Relevance of Alternatives to Imprisonment. A Case Study of Mbozi District Council." The study was informed by the following specific objectives: to explore the knowledge of community service as an alternative to imprisonment among the community members, assess the challenges encountered by responsible authorities in implementing community service sentences, and identify the social-economic impacts of community service sentencing in the study area of Mbozi District Council.

Additionally, considering the nature of the specific objectives, the study was guided by the social learning theory in investigating the community members' awareness or knowledge of the alternative to imprisonment and the socio-economic value or benefits of community service sentencing. The identified specific objectives were used to guide the literature review while referencing other regions such as America, the Caribbean, Europe, Australia, and the Pacific Islands. Further, other locations such as Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Southern African Development Community, and the East Africa Community regions were equally compared or contrasted in relation to the other areas.

In the context of the current study, the variables such as the knowledge of alternative imprisonment, the challenges confronting the implementation of community service, and the socio-economic benefits of community service were utilized accordingly. It is worth noting that this study adopted the pragmatic philosophy, and a descriptive design was employed to interrogate the identified variable as per chapter four. Adding on, a sample size of four hundred (400) research subjects participated in this study. Data was collected from government officials, community leaders, families with persons under alternative imprisonment, and persons who have undergone alternative imprisonment.

5.2.1 The Knowledge of Alternative to Imprisonment among the Community Members

Findings show that the research subjects recognize the socio-economic benefits of community service sentencing. Further, Figure 4.3 reveals that most respondents (71%) know the benefits of community sentencing. On the other hand, 19% do not see any benefit from community sentencing. The 19% is still a significant number regarding community sentencing; they indicate a lack of awareness of the program, which is an eye-opener to the custodian and Government entitled to create awareness and sensitize the public.

5.2.2 The Challenges Facing Authorities in Implementing Community Service Sentences

The study identified six challenges: 31% recorded at limited public awareness, 24% observed at stigma and hostility, and 21% noted at community service and sentencing

as understaffed. Other challenges were recorded below 12%, namely 11% at the community service as unacceptable in the community, 7% noted as having little resource allocation, and 6% as challenges related to stigma and hostility.

5.2.3 Identified the Socio-economic Impacts of Alternative to Imprisonment

The findings show that the leading two socio-economic positive impacts of community service sentencing were 34% recorded at the government-reduced cost of incarceration of the offenders and 26% observed in community participation in rehabilitating the offender. Further, the least two benefits were 23% noted at a reduced cost to the offender's family, and 17% recorded as the offenders' getting opportunities to new competencies during the community service sentencing. Generally, the findings range between 34% (the highest) and 17% (the lowest) among the four benefits of community service sentencing.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concluded that while the Government of Tanzania and stakeholders have made efforts to implement community service sentencing as an alternative to imprisonment, its effectiveness remains limited due to several challenges. The findings highlight that awareness of community service sentencing among community members is relatively low, leading to misconceptions, stigma, and inadequate support for the program. Furthermore, the implementation of community service faces institutional challenges, including insufficient staffing, inadequate funding, and weak coordination among responsible authorities.

To enhance the effectiveness of community service sentencing, the study emphasizes the need for strategic investments in public awareness programs, capacity building for implementing agencies, and stronger stakeholder collaboration. These efforts would contribute to reducing stigma, improving program management, and fostering community participation in the reintegration of offenders.

Despite its contributions, the study encountered several limitations. First, the research was confined to Mbozi District, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other districts in Tanzania. Second, some respondents displayed reluctance to discuss their perceptions of community service, potentially affecting the accuracy of responses. Third, due to time and resource constraints, the study did not extensively assess the perspectives of offenders and their families on the impact of community service sentencing. Future research should address these gaps by expanding the study scope, including a broader range of stakeholders, and utilizing longitudinal approaches to assess the long-term effectiveness of community service sentencing.

5.4 Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were proposed.

5.4.1 Recommendations to the Government

While the Government of Tanzania has introduced community service sentencing to reduce prison overcrowding and rehabilitate first-time offenders with minor offenses, its effectiveness is hindered by challenges such as inadequate staffing, budget constraints, and low public awareness. To improve the implementation of community

service sentencing, the Government should increase budget allocations to ensure sufficient staffing, infrastructure, and operational efficiency. Without adequate funding, the intended goals of rehabilitation and offender reintegration may not be fully realized.

Additionally, the Government should strengthen public awareness campaigns to educate community members about the benefits of alternative sentencing. Many people are unaware of how community service functions and its advantages over imprisonment, leading to misconceptions and resistance. By implementing comprehensive sensitization programs, the Government can foster greater acceptance and support for community service sentencing.

Furthermore, enhancing coordination between the judiciary, correctional services, and local government authorities is crucial for streamlining the implementation of community service programs. Effective collaboration among these institutions will improve monitoring, resource allocation, and overall management of the program. Lastly, capacity-building initiatives should be introduced for law enforcement personnel and other stakeholders involved in community sentencing. Training on best practices, program implementation, and offender supervision will ensure the success of community service as an alternative sentencing approach.

5.4.2 Recommendations to Community Members

The study revealed that limited knowledge about community service sentencing contributes to low participation and support among community members. Many

individuals are unaware of their role in the rehabilitation process, which creates barriers to the successful reintegration of offenders. To address this issue, government officials and local leaders should actively engage community members through sensitization programs, public meetings, and media campaigns. These initiatives will help clarify the purpose and benefits of community service, thereby fostering greater community involvement.

Community leaders also have a vital role to play in facilitating offender reintegration. By encouraging community participation in rehabilitation efforts, they can create a more supportive environment that reduces stigma and helps offenders' transition back into society. Additionally, civil society organizations should collaborate with local authorities to enhance public education on the socio-economic benefits of alternative sentencing. Such partnerships can lead to the development of policies and programs that further strengthen the effectiveness of community service sentencing.

5.4.3 Recommendations for Further Study

Given the scope and limitations of this study, future research should explore additional aspects of community service sentencing. Expanding the study to other regions will help assess variations in community perceptions and implementation challenges across different areas. A broader geographic scope would provide more comprehensive insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the program nationwide.

Moreover, future studies should investigate the perspectives of offenders, their families, and community leaders on the benefits and challenges of alternative

sentencing programs. Understanding how these key stakeholders experience and perceive community service sentencing can offer valuable insights for policy improvements.

Finally, conducting longitudinal studies is recommended to evaluate the long-term impact of community service sentencing on offender rehabilitation, recidivism rates, and overall community well-being. A long-term approach will help determine whether community service sentencing achieves its intended goals over time and identify areas for further enhancement.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Semi Structured Questionnaire for Research Subject on community Service Sentence as Alternative to Imprisonment

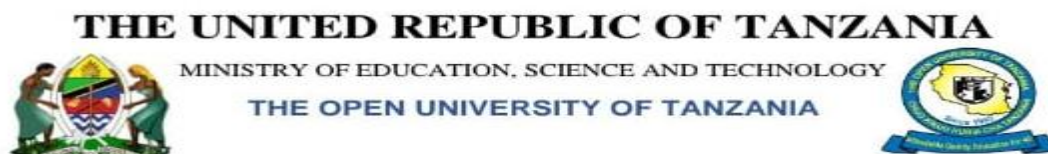
My name is MATHEW FELIX MNGOCHELA, am studying Master of Arts in Governance and Leadership at the Open University of Tanzania. My study is focusing on issues of community awareness towards the application of community service sentence as alternative to imprisonment. My study significance is on the use of other alternatives to imprisonment which are more human compared to imprisoning offenders. such alternative is community service punishment for the aim of reducing number of prisoners in the prisons. Am requesting your cooperation so as to fulfil my requirement of master's degree program under study.

Please put an appropriate answer by filling and ticking the correct answer

01	What is you Gender	
	1. Male	2. Female
02	In which Age group to you belong to?	
	1. 20 - 35	2. 36 - 45
	3. 45 - 55	4. 56+
03	Education levels	
	1. Primary level	2. Secondary Level
	3. College Certificate	4. Diploma
	5. Bachelors	
04	Are you aware of the community service as an alternative to imprisonment?	
	1. Yes	2. No
05	Do you think the community has knowledge on community service sentencing as an alternative to imprisonment? Probe for the following	
	1. Awareness and understanding of community sentencing	2. The benefits of community service sentencing as an alternative to imprisonment
	3. Community service sentencing as a participatory alternative to imprisonment	4. Community perception to community service sentencing as an alternative to imprisonment
06	Are you aware of the challenge facing government authority when implementing community service sentencing?	
	1. Yes	2. No
07	The following are the selected identified challenges facing community service sentencing as an alternative to imprisonment (Tick where relevant	
	1. Poor management	2. Stigma and hostility
	3. Understaffed	4. Little or no resource allocated

	5. Community service is unacceptable	6. Limited Public awareness
08	In your opinion, what do you think can be done to address the identified challenges (Probe more on the solution)	
09	What are the socio-economic benefits of community service as an alternative to imprisonment?	
	1. Community Participation	2. Government reduced cost
10	What is the positive socio-economic impact of the community service sentencing as an alternative to imprisonment	
	1. Government reduced cost	2. Community participation
	3. Reduced cost to offenders' family	4. Acquired competencies
Thank you for your participation		

Appendix: II: Clearance Letter



Ref. No OUT/PG202102085

27th August, 2024

Regional Administrative Secretary(RAS),

P.O Box 946,

SONGEA.

Dear, Regional Administrative Secretary,

RE: RESEARCH CLEARANCE FOR MR. MATHEW FELIX MNGOCHELA REG NO: PG202102085

2. The Open University of Tanzania was established by an Act of Parliament No. 17 of 1992, which became operational on the 1st March 1993 by public notice No.55 in the official Gazette. The Act was however replaced by the Open University of Tanzania Charter of 2005, which became operational on 1st January 2007. In line with the Charter, the Open University of Tanzania mission is to generate and apply knowledge through research.

3. To facilitate and to simplify research process therefore, the act empowers the Vice Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania to issue research clearance, on behalf of the Government of Tanzania and Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, to both its staff and students who are doing research in Tanzania. With this brief background, the purpose of this letter is to introduce to you **Mr, Mathew Felix Mngochela Reg.No PG202102085**), pursuing **Masters of Arts Governance and Leadership(MAGL)** We here by grant this clearance to conduct a research titled **"Assessing of Community Knowledge on Social Economic Relevance of**

Alternatives to Imprisonment". He will collect his data at your office from August 29th 2024 to 30th September 2024.

4. In case you need any further information, kindly do not hesitate to contact the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) of the Open University of Tanzania, P.O.Box 23409, Dar es Salaam. Tel: 022-2-2668820. We lastly thank you in advance for your assumed cooperation and facilitation of this research academic activity.

Yours sincerely,

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA

Prof. Gwahula Raphael Kimamala

For: VICE CHANCELLOR

Appendix: III: Acceptance Letter



THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
PRESIDENT'S OFFICE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MBOZI DISTRICT



In Reply Please Quote:-

28/08/2024

REF: NO OUT/PG202102085
FOR: DEPUTY VICE CANCELLOR (Academic)
THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA,
P.O.BOX 23409.
DAAR ES SALAAM.

RE: **PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH CLEARENCE.**

Refer the heading above. This is response to your letter with reference Number. OUT/PG202102085 dated on 27th/August: 2024 is concerned.

2. This is to inform you that Mr. MATHEW FELIX MNGOCHELA is permitted to collect data in order to fulfill his studies. That permission should commerce on 29th/08/2024 to 30th/09/2024 at Mbozi District regarding Mbozi Prison and Local Government Community Office.

3. During that time, the permitted student shall aside all rules and requations that govern Public Servents.

Thank you.

cc: -MBOZI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (DED)
- DISTRICT ADMNISTRATIVE OFFICER (DAS)
-MBOZI PRISON OFFICE (DPO) Ilembo
-LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERS OF MBOZI.

Appendix IV: Manuscript

ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC RELEVANCE OF ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT: A CASE STUDY OF MBOZI DISTRICT IN TANZANIA

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Abstract

The study sought to Assess the Community Knowledge on Socio-Economic Relevance of Alternatives to Imprisonment: A Case Study of Mbozi District in Tanzania” is guided by three specific objectives, which seek to explore the knowledge of community service as an alternative to imprisonment among the community members, to inquire on the challenges encountered by responsible authorities in implementing community service sentence, and to identify the social-economic impacts of community service sentencing in the study area. The study used social Learning theory. Further, the pragmatic philosophy, which embraces the utilization of descriptive design and mixed approach, was employed in this study, which used 400 sample size. The SPSS was used to analyse quantitative data, while quotas were used to analyse qualitative data. The findings show that 38% of males, as compared to 62%, participated in the study, and 44% of males had knowledge of alternative imprisonment compared to 55% of females. Further, the community members recognize the benefit of community service, and 31%, against 69%, recognize the challenges that community services face. The study concludes by noting the number of challenges and socio-economic benefits to the community, which demands the government to invest more in creating awareness among the community members on the benefits offered by the alternative to imprisonment.

Keywords: Community knowledge, socio-economic relevance, imprisonment.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Prison became established as an effective punishment system throughout the ages and societies around the world continue to embrace it (Roberts et al., 2023). The increasing problem of prison overcrowding urged numerous nations to seek out different sentencing options including probation and house arrest in addition to fines and community service programs (WPB, 2022). Community service has become accepted as an active rehabilitative approach for criminal offenders because it enables them to serve positive societal functions rather than remain in crowded prison facilities. Maruna (2001) established Desistance theory by showing through his research that criminal nature can fluctuate since proper reintegration opportunities lead individuals toward positive change. Community service has gained recognition in prison reform efforts across the globe through national adoption in India, Singapore, South Korea and numerous African states (Nelson et al., 2023). The African country of Zimbabwe introduced community service as its first program in 1992 and Uganda became the

second nation after Zimbabwe in 1996 while Tanzania enacted this system through the Community Service Act No.6/2002 in 2004 (PRI, 2004; Stoian, 2019). Due to low levels of public knowledge about community service sentencing it struggles to substitute prison time as an effective sanction.

According to official statistics in March of 2022 the prison population in Tanzania has surpassed its maximum capacity reaching 109% (Tanzania Prison Reports, 2022). Prison overcrowding produces substandard inmate conditions as well as poor ventilation and higher disease transmission rates and causes psychological harm to prisoners (World Prison Brief, 2021). The implementation of community service as alternative punishment faces barriers since people tend to prefer incarceration over other approaches and show limited awareness about this option. Tanzanian notoriety cases featuring community service sentences include the convictions of Elizabeth Michael (Lulu) along with former government ministers Basil Pesambili Mramba and Daniel Aggrey Yona yet public opinion remains uncertain (Mathews, 2021). According to Materu (2021) people hold divergent opinions about community service regarding celebrity offender cases where some perceive it as soft treatment and others see its power for rehabilitation and offender return prevention. The varied understanding between public and judicial systems regarding alternative sentencing demands evaluations of community awareness along with social and economic knowledge about these practices.

Official March 2022 assessments show that Tanzania faces ongoing prison overcrowding as the maximum capacity is at 109% (Tanzania Prison Reports, 2022). The problem of overcrowding creates unsanitary living spaces, restricted airflow, elevated infectious disease risks and emotional turmoil for people incarcerated in prisons (World Prison Brief, 2021). The implementation of community service remains erratic because citizens show limited understanding about it and prefer traditional prison sentences. Tanzanian public opinion about community service remains doubtful despite prominent offenders such as Basil Pesambili Mramba and Daniel Aggrey Yona and Elizabeth Michael (Lulu) receiving this form of punishment (Mpoki, 2011; Mpoki, 2020). Various perspectives exist about community service sentencing because people interpret it either as a soft punishment for famous offenders or as an effective rehabilitation tool that decreases repeat offenses (Materu, 2021). Departments need to assess how people in communities understand the value that alternate judicial penalties serve in society because different public views exist on this subject.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study was guided by Social Learning Theory. The theory was developed by Bandura (1977), serves as the guiding framework for this study, emphasizing that human behavior is learned through observation, social interactions, and reinforcement. SLT is particularly relevant in understanding alternatives to imprisonment, such as community service sentences, as it highlights how individuals acquire and maintain behaviors by observing and interacting with others in their environment (Bandura, 1986). The theory asserts that learning occurs in a social context through a dynamic

interplay between the individual, their environment, and their behavior, which is crucial in shaping perceptions of legal alternatives to incarceration (Bandura, 1977). The behavioral capability constructs within SLT, which posits that individuals must have the knowledge and skills to perform a particular behavior, aligns with the study's focus on public awareness regarding community service sentences as an alternative to imprisonment (Bottoms et al., 2004). Furthermore, SLT underscores the importance of reinforcement and modeling in behavior acquisition, which supports the idea that individuals can adopt pro-social behaviors through structured community engagement programs (Bandura, 1977). The theory is instrumental in explaining how attitudes and behaviors can be influenced by external factors, reinforcing the notion that community-based sentences provide opportunities for behavioral correction and reintegration into society. Despite its applicability, SLT has been criticized for focusing excessively on cognitive processes while overlooking biological influences, as well as for assuming that environmental changes directly translate to behavioral changes, which may not always hold true (Flamand, 2009). Nevertheless, its emphasis on observational learning and social reinforcement makes it an appropriate theoretical foundation for this study, as it provides insight into how the community perceives and internalizes alternative sentencing approaches to promote behavioral change and social integration.

2.2 Empirical Review

Materu (2021) examined public perceptions of community service as an alternative to imprisonment. Using a qualitative approach, the study analyzed public opinions on the effectiveness of community service in rehabilitating offenders. The findings indicated that while some individuals viewed community service as a humane and rehabilitative measure, others perceived it as a lenient form of punishment, particularly for severe crimes such as economic offenses and violent acts. The study recommended that public awareness campaigns be intensified to educate communities on the objectives and benefits of community service as an alternative to imprisonment.

Similarly, A study by Ahmad (2024) explored the role of community service sentencing in strengthening community cohesion and economic sustainability. Employing a mixed-method approach, the study analyzed how community service contributes to neighborhood improvements and fosters accountability among offenders. The findings revealed that engaging offenders in community labor led to positive behavioral changes and provided a cost-effective alternative to incarceration. Furthermore, community service programs stimulated local economies by reducing public expenditure on prisons and redirecting resources toward social services. The study recommended policy reforms to expand the use of community service in sentencing non-violent offenders, ensuring its integration with broader rehabilitation efforts.

Building on this discourse, Ellis (2021) examined the social perception of community service sentencing and its impact on offender reintegration. Using a mixed-method approach that combined surveys and focus group discussions with offenders and community members, the study found that many offenders viewed community service as humiliating, leading to a lack of motivation to participate fully. Additionally,

community members often held negative attitudes toward alternative sentencing, believing it to be a lenient punishment. The study recommended public awareness campaigns to change societal perceptions and emphasize the rehabilitative benefits of community service.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Approach

The descriptive research design allowed investigators to analyze systematic comparisons between investigation variables and document insights about alternative imprisonment along with its social effects and economic results and benefits to community members. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were employed as part of mixed methodology to generate complete insight into the research issue. This methodology let researchers execute numeric data analysis methods with detailed exploration of perspectives that combined for a whole understanding of the research area. The integration of qualitative and quantitative methods within this research study improved both validity and research rigor because it resolved the problems related to studying with one method alone (Kothari, 2004).

3.2 Study area and Population

This study was conducted in Mbozi District within Songwe Region which makes up an area of 3,857 square kilometers where 510,599 inhabitants reside (NBS, 2022). Mbozi was selected because it showed the most severe crime rates among all districts within the region together with its elevated community service offender numbers. A total of 320 prisoners resided in Mbozi Prison beyond its 200-person capacity as of March 2024 although 120 community service offenders exceeded the numbers in both Ileje (31) and Songwe (47) according to Prison Report (2024). The study examined a group consisting of prison officers and social welfare officers together with magistrates and police officials alongside community leaders and relatives of offenders and former inmates who finished their alternative prison sentence. A sample of 271,393 people aged 20 to 60 received attention because this age group is likely to have developed cognitive capabilities needed to share information about community service sentencing instead of imprisonment (Kothari, 2004).

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling

Sample size determination was based on Taro Yamane's mathematical model (1967), a valuable tool for estimating sample size in studies employing primary data (Kothari, 2019). The formula used was:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n= sample size,

N=population of the study

e= Confidence level (expressed into percentages 5%-10%,

For this study e=10%), N=271,393

$$n = \frac{271,393}{1 + 271,393 (0.05^2)} = 399.9$$

$$= 400$$

Therefore, the study employed the sample size of 400 for a population of 271,393. The study used both probability and non-probability sampling procedures. Probability sampling was applied stratified, and later, simple random sampling was used, while non-probability sampling employed purposive sampling techniques.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis Methods

The research used both primary and secondary data collection approaches. Secondary research material originated from published journals along with Google Scholar data and institutional documentation whereas primary research relied on using a semi-structured questionnaire. The research instrument contained mostly multiple-choice questions and some open-ended questions which were delivered to 400 participants also including 90 participants who provided qualitative findings. SPSS version 25 served as the platform to analyze data where quantitative results were presented using descriptive statistics that generated frequencies and percentages as displayed in tables and pie charts along with histograms. The qualitative data needed thematic breakdown before researchers added quotations and generated summary tables. A cleaning process was executed before analysis to detect data errors and fix duplicate entries as well as extreme deviations to maintain data precision. Database rows containing important data gaps received mean values for numerical answers while categorical variables received mode values for substitution purposes and excluded complete records with notable missing information. The researchers applied data coding processes to transform answers into both quantitative and qualitative formats which enhanced analysis consistency.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability of accumulated data were ensured through the implementation of survey and interview methods alongside each other for credibility enhancement. The researcher performed a pilot study to enhance the clarity and relevance of the questionnaire before data collection. Cronbach's Alpha served as the assessment measure for reliability through internal consistency calculations. These results demonstrated that the instrument achieved reliability through scores exceeding 0.7 across all variables with a total of 0.81. This established its effectiveness for data gathering purposes.

4.0 RESULTS

A total of 400 respondents out of 400 completed the questionnaires, thus yielding a response rate of 100%.

4.1 The Knowledge of Community Service as an Alternative to Imprisonment among the Community Members

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was held with ninety participants from the following categories: a total of ninety (90) prison officers (25), social welfare officers (5), magistrates (10), and police (20). Due to the nature of the study as per the demand

of the set specific objectives, the community members, such as the community leaders (10), the family members of the offenders (10), and the offenders who completed the alternative imprisonment (10) were also involved were purposefully selected to inform this study. Each group of participants had an opportunity to respond to one of the themes as indicated. For instance, the government officials were exposed to awareness and understanding, the community leaders on the benefits, the families on participatory, and those who completed the alternative imprisonment on community perceptions.

4.2 The Challenges Facing Government Authorities in Implementing Community Service Sentences

This question on the challenges was answered by three variables: awareness of existing challenges, identification of challenges, and recommendation to overcome the difficulties identified. More details are presented.

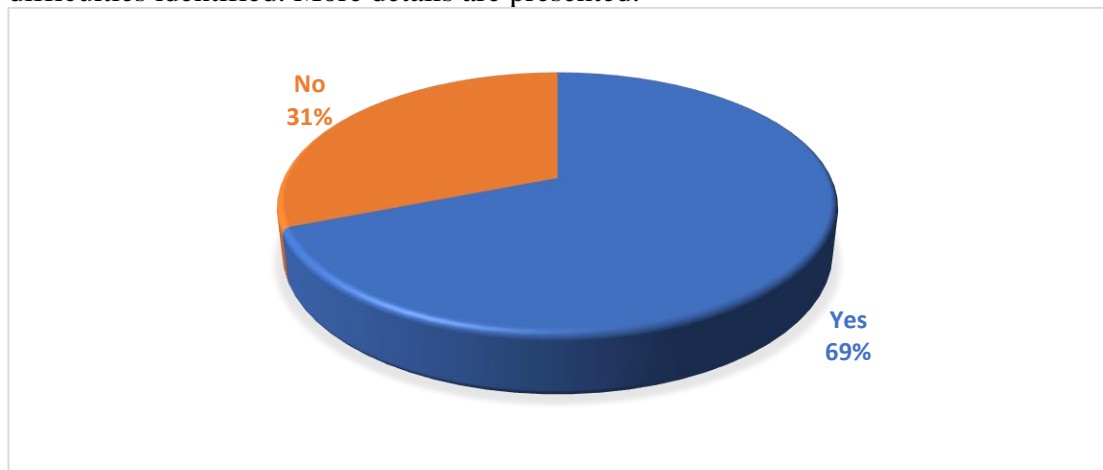


Figure 4.1: Awareness of the Community Service Challenges

Despite community service sentencing going on for two decades, many Tanzanians still need to be aware of it and its challenges. Figure 4.1 noted that 31% of the study respondents were unaware of community service sentencing challenges. Notably, at a significant score of 69%, the majority were aware of the community service sentencing. The findings, therefore, reveal that despite the increasing challenges facing community service, many community members are aware of it.

4.3 Identification of the Socio-economic Impacts of Community Service Sentencing

It is worth noting that community service sentencing allows offenders to undertake specific community work under the supervision of a social welfare or probation officer without expecting any payment. This approach has negative and positive socio-economic impacts; however, for the sake of this study, the focus is given to positive impact (Matthews, 2021). This specific objective is dealt with using two aspects: the community's awareness of the socio-economic positive implications and the identified positive impact on the community. Depending on its efficiency in its implementation, community service sentencing has numerous socio-economic benefits (positive impact of community service sentencing). More details as presented,

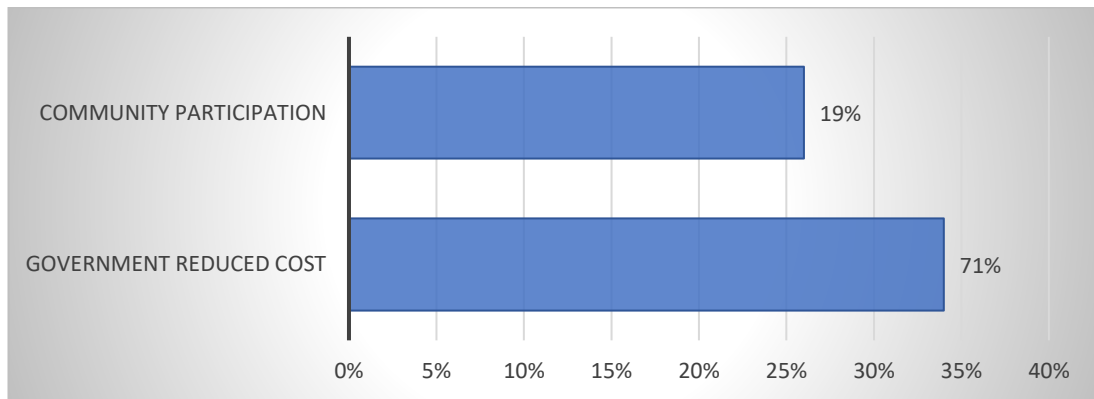


Figure 4.2: Socio-Economic Benefits of Community Sentencing

Figure 4.2 show that the research subjects recognize the socio-economic benefits of community service sentencing. Further, Figure 4.2 reveals that most respondents (71%) know the advantages of community sentencing. On the other hand, 19% do not see any benefit of community sentencing. The 19% is still a significant number around community sentencing. They indicate a lack of awareness of the program, an eye-opener to the custodian and government entitled to create awareness and sensitize the public.

5.0 DISCUSSION

The results revealed that the community members are still confronted with limited knowledge of alternatives to imprisonment. Though it is one of the innovations taken by the government to reduce overcrowding in the prison, little is known about it by the community members. With this shortcoming, it needs more public support, which is detrimental to its achievement. In agreement with these findings, Muntingh (2005) pointed to limited public education as a setback to community knowledge on the awareness of alternative imprisonment. Moreover, Penal Reform International (2020) recommended that the government and other stakeholders increase public awareness to make information related to alternative imprisonment available to the community. Figure 4.1 shows that a significant number of research subjects are aware of community service sentencing. However, the 31% who are not aware cannot be ignored, especially given the time since the Law on alternative punishment was enacted in 2002. Penal Reform International (2020) notes that community service, in general, is given little resources, which hampers the effective performance of probation officers and social workers. These individuals are the engine of the program and play a crucial role in creating public awareness of community service. Without adequate resources, their efforts are hindered, contributing to the remaining 31% being unaware.

In addition, as per Figure 4.2, the findings show that the identified challenges confronting community service sentencing are interrelated and interconnected. None of the identified challenges is more dominant or significant than the other. The finding implies that the identified six challenges equally affect community service sentencing. From these findings, Penal Reform International (2020) noted various challenges identified in developing countries, compounded by corruption and poor management

of limited resources. Further, the competencies and skills among personnel working in community service were noted to be increasing tension in the provision of quality services.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

Evidence shows community service sentencing has received attention in Tanzania but its capabilities remain restricted because of insufficient staffing together with funding problems and societal stigma and limited awareness. The study proposes three improvements for better community service sentencing success: increased public awareness funding combined with implementing agency capacity development and better stakeholder coordination. While the research made significant progress it had key restrictions because it studied Mbozi District exclusively and some respondents disagreed to be interviewed while lawbreakers received no direct attention therefore requiring additional research that reaches a wider audience.

6.2 Recommendations

Generally, the research concludes with recommendations for improving community service sentences by requesting governmental funding increases and expanding public sensitization efforts and improving institution-to-institution coordination. Active involvement of community residents through education programs should occur to lower stigma perceptions and help reintegrate offenders. Future research about community service sentencing needs to study additional regions and combine perspectives from offenders and their families in addition to developing long-term follow-up studies for evaluating how community service affects offender rehabilitation and recidivism metrics.

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