

**THE IMPACT OF INCARCERATION ON YOUNG OFFENDERS' ACCESS TO  
QUALITY EDUCATION IN MALAWI'S PENITENTIARY FACILITIES**

By

**SAMSON CHAIMA ROBIN KAJAWO**

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**SUPERVISOR:**

**PROF. LINEO R. JOHNSON**

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## DECLARATION

Name: Samson Chaima Robin Kajawo

Student number: 13450549

Degree: PhD in Education (Adult Education)

### **The Impact of Incarceration on Young Offenders' Access to Quality Education in Malawi's Penitentiary Facilities**

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I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this PhD work to my late mother, Maria. You sacrificed a lot for me to be born. You suffered in motherhood. You had an option. Everyone would have understood if you had aborted (moreover, you were only 17 years old). But you kept the baby. I am the result of that pregnancy. You raised me with nothing but love. It pains me that you had to go and never see the fruits of your hard labour. You never lived long enough to see your prophecy being fulfilled. But I know you have been my angel, looking over me, smiling. I am standing on your shoulders. Even though I never told you I loved you, I have always loved you, mama. You are still my greatest friend.

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## **ABSTRACT**

There is a dearth of research on incarcerated young offenders' access to education in African penitentiaries. This study was aimed at investigating how the incarceration of young offenders impacts on their rights and access to quality education in Malawi. Guided by Good Lives Model, Risk Needs Responsivity, systems and Marxist theories as the theoretical framework, the study adopted a mixed-methods research approach in the pragmatic research paradigm, utilising a convergent design. The study involved 340 participants at five young offenders' facilities. The first phase involved the randomly selected 290 incarcerated young offenders in a semi-structured survey for descriptive quantitative data collection. In the second qualitative interviews phase, 27 young offenders and 25 educators and officials were purposively selected. Additionally, 25 ex-young offenders were selected using quota and snowball sampling techniques. The study also used the researcher's observations to triangulate survey and interview results. The qualitative data was analysed using narrative and qualitative content analysis approaches, while quantitative data was analysed using the SPSS (v. 22) descriptive statistical tools. The key finding of this study was that the incarceration of school-aged young offenders negatively affected their rights and access to quality education in Malawi. This conclusion was arrived at because the study found that most young offenders had academic and psychosocial problems that were not adequately addressed during their incarceration due to the absence of individualised comprehensive rehabilitation programming that includes education. Secondly, even though education was highly perceived as the most meaningful existing programme at the five facilities, 76% of the incarcerated school-aged young people (N=753) were not enrolled in any education programme, mainly due to some facilities' coercive farming activities. The trend was also attributed to the inadequacy of resources, the inmates' lack of educational interest and motivation, and the absence of education at one male facility and female sections. Finally, the study found that due to a lack of post-release support, the schooling plans of many ex-inmates were generally shattered. In light of the challenges, this study proposed a seven-phase rehabilitation framework applicable in developing countries to guide young offenders' incarceration, and made some policy recommendations.

**Key Terms:** Incarceration; young offenders; access; quality education; penitentiary facilities; Malawi.

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ALP</b>	Adult Literacy Programme
<b>ANOVA</b>	Analysis of Variance
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>BCOM</b>	Bachelor of Commerce
<b>CHRAGG</b>	Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance
<b>EDU</b>	Education
<b>FPE</b>	Free Primary Education
<b>GLM</b>	Good Lives Model
<b>GoM</b>	Government of Malawi
<b>JCE</b>	Junior Certificate of Education
<b>MANEB</b>	Malawi National Examination Board
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MPS</b>	Malawi Prisons Service
<b>MSCE</b>	Malawi School Certificate of Education
<b>MVM</b>	Motor Vehicle Mechanics
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>ODL</b>	Open and Distance Learning
<b>PRI</b>	Penal Reform International



<b>PSLC</b>	Primary School Leaving Certificate
<b>QUAL</b>	Qualitative
<b>QUAN</b>	Quantitative
<b>RMTF</b>	Ros Moger and Terry Furlong
<b>RNR</b>	Risk Needs Responsivity
<b>RWI</b>	Raoul Wallenberg Institute
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNISA</b>	University of South Africa
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>YORCs</b>	Young Offenders Rehabilitation Centres
<b>YOs</b>	Young Offenders

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

This chapter introduces the study that investigated how the incarceration of young offenders in penitentiary facilities in Malawi impacts on their rights and access to quality education. The chapter begins with the background and rationale for carrying out this study at young offenders' rehabilitation centres (YORCs). The background is followed by the statement of the problem, the aim, the objectives, and the study's research questions. It later presents the envisioned contributions that this study makes to the body of knowledge and a brief presentation of the theoretical framework and methodologies, which includes a presentation of pragmatism as the research paradigm underpinning the study and mixed methods as the study's research approach. Issues of the reliability of the data generation instruments, the validity of the results, ethical clearance, and considerations are also outlined. The chapter later explains definitions of some terms used in the study and ends with a summary of the organisation of all chapters of this study.

#### **1.2 BACKGROUND**

Incarceration is a foreign concept in Africa. Pre-colonial African societies had varied non-custodial means of dealing with those on the wrong side of the social and political order (Alexander & Kynoch, 2011). Some of the punishments were execution, in the case of murder or witchcraft, forced exile to live outside the village for a specified period and traditional penalties equivalent to fines such as goats and maize (Ajour, 2008). Thus, the prison idea in African countries is a borrowed concept from their colonial masters (Dastile & Agozino, 2019; Karari, 2018). It is stated that the incarceration concept was born in Europe though its development was largely American (Dastile & Agozino, 2019; Rothman, 1971). During the colonial regimes, the colonial governments imposed legal systems and various methods of enforcement on

the subjects (Alexander & Kynoch, 2011; Daniels et al., 2011). Conley (1992) argues that the colonists relied on societal retribution as the basis for punishment.

It is reported that the British, Portuguese, French and Italian colonial empires used prisons mainly for the incarceration of suspected political rebels or opponents in the Pacific region, Asia, and African countries such as Tanzania, Namibia, South Africa, Angola and Kenya (Havik et al., 2019; Neto, 2019; Peté, 2017). Colonial imprisonment, with or without trial, was usually brutal and was characterised by forced hard labour and corporal punishment with massive transfers of inmates from one colony to another (Havik et al., 2019; Neto, 2019). For example, Anderson and Maxwell-Stewart (2014) narrate that convicted prisoners from Morocco were transferred and used as convict labour by Portuguese in 1415. The same authors indicate that most European colonialists transferred many convicted prisoners to work in their overseas' colonies (Anderson & Maxwell-Stewart, 2014). For colonialists, imprisonment was a convenient way of accessing free and cheap labour to build forts, prisons, schools, hospitals and other government institutions.

In the African colonies, these harsh imprisonment conditions were considered ideal for the indigenous black prisoners as opposed to their white counterparts. This situation was because the imprisonment of white prisoners raised socio-political hitches for the colonialists. They were the “members of the white master race” who, even though they had committed offences, would humiliate, shame and degrade the race if they were to be subjected to the same level of physical punishment the black communities were subjected to (Peté, 2017, p. 21). Therefore, in contrast to the black criminals who were regarded as “dangerous savages”, thus, needed discipline, the white offenders were seen as vulnerable individuals who needed rehabilitation (Crocker & Peté, 2007; Peté, 2017, p. 2). The prison concept was then carried over even beyond the independence of many African countries.

Initially, Malawi was known as Nyasaland before independence. Nyasaland was established as a British protectorate in 1891 (Browne, 2002). Dr David Livingstone, the Scottish explorer and missionary who arrived in the country in 1859, requested

the British to intervene and end the persistent tribal fighting and slavery that was rampant. The British Empire indeed banned slavery and ended the tribal fighting by establishing a “Pax Britannia”, an era that marked the beginning of the use of the British systems in governing the country later named Malawi (Browne, 2002, p. 845).

However, before the arrival of colonialists, Malawi did not have a criminal justice system; thus, no prisons. Disputes were handled using the customary laws with reconciliation as the ultimate goal, which had no element of incarceration (Malawi Prisons Service [MPS], 2021; M<sup>c</sup>Cracken, 2012). It was in 1891 when the new British administration established a penal system after the land had been declared a British protectorate, mainly to apprehend and bring to book those Africans who were resisting and fighting against colonial policies such as land alienation, forced labour and tax payment (Alexander & Kynoch, 2011; Mwakilama, 2010). Nevertheless, M<sup>c</sup>Cracken (2012) claims that the first prison in Malawi was a small establishment constructed at Cape Maclear in Mangochi in 1878, which lodged both male and female criminals even before the Nyasaland Government was established. This small establishment within a Christian mission centre at Cape Maclear aimed to reduce rampant robberies and raids around the Christian colonies’ settlements (M<sup>c</sup>Cracken, 2012). After the establishment of the colonial government, there was a need to discipline the natives for other offences such as adultery, assault, theft, insubordination, and absence or neglect of duty (Boeder, 1981; M<sup>c</sup>Cracken, 2012; Mwakilama, 2010). Initially, these were chiefly dealt with by corporal punishment in which the defaulter was whipped or flogged and then released.

It was in 1897 that the colonial government embraced the concept of imprisonment in Nyasaland for the first time (Boeder, 1981; Mwakilama, 2010). That year, prisons were established nationwide at each of the 19 government stations to detain and house the offenders. This move was mainly to satisfy the demand for labour in farming and construction projects instead of whipping or flogging the offenders for every offence (Boeder, 1981; MPS, 2021). In the job offer letter written by the Nyasaland governor to the first appointed national head of prisons in 1919, it was emphasised that prisons were established for offenders’ detention, engagement in

labour as punishment as well as the provision of moral instruction as an effort of reformation (Mwakilama, 2010). Therefore, every prison had an asylum for psychiatric and mental cases, which imprisoned the mentally problematic individuals arrested for disturbing the peace and causing problems in the communities.

In all these prisons, no formal education or any type of teaching and learning activity was offered to prisoners. This status-quo makes sense since the colonial government did not finance or put effort into the natives' education in the Nyasaland colony until 1963 (Browne, 2002). This decision was largely because the colony was not producing much income when compared to its Rhodesian neighbours. Financing of education of the natives was deemed as an unnecessary luxury (Browne, 2002). Therefore, formal education was provided by the Christian missionaries with the initial aim of helping the black natives learn how to read the Bible to reinforce their Christian beliefs and values. If the education of the black natives in the communities was not a government priority, prisons would be the last place to expect its provision. Only skills programmes such as farming, tailoring, metalwork, carpentry, bricklaying and weaving were offered to long-sentence inmates at Zomba Central Prison by the mid-1930s (Baker, 2003; Mwakilama, 2010). Some skilled natives were employed as prisoners' technical skills instructors in this respect.

Even though some selected skills training existed in some early prisons in Malawi, the prison system's philosophy was aimed at punishing prisoners to unlearn their unacceptable and deviant behaviours. Cullen and Gilbert (2013) argue that the rehabilitation concept was alien to the early colonialists' prison goals since their understanding was that the offender needed to be severely punished for the wrong committed. Imprisonment, therefore, disregarded the wellbeing of prisoners as citizens who would need to continue living after a prison sentence (Macionis, 2006). There were no planned rehabilitation programmes even for young prisoners apart from skills training which were intended to enable them to provide forced labour within the prisons (Mwakilama, 2010). The idea was that if a person was punished, then they would learn a lesson and not repeat the crime committed earlier.

In 1964, when Nyasaland attained independence and changed its name to Malawi, the British legal system was maintained (Mwakilama, 2010). The new government did not revert to an indigenous legal system based on restitution and reconciliation. They maintained the colonial prison system in which social retribution was regarded as the basis for punishment; thus, criminals continued to be sent to those existing prisons when they had committed offences (Alexander & Kynoch, 2011; Conley, 1992). These included young offenders or juveniles. Typical of other African countries, the first Malawi Government used prisons mainly for the incapacitation or detention of prisoners with little effort in rehabilitating them.

Until the late 1990s, no formal education programme was offered to offenders in Malawi, including juveniles who used to be lodged in the same adult facilities. Only religious activities and technical programmes such as carpentry, farming, and bricklaying were available in the prisons (Burton et al., 2005). Technical programmes could not be classified as rehabilitation programmes since they usually involved only those prisoners who already had those skills before their imprisonment (Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022). These programmes were used as prisoners' labour parties, not for rehabilitation. The minimal efforts on rehabilitation and reformation in Malawi incarceration facilities could be partly because the courts focused much on the traditional sentencing theories of deterrence and retribution in which most offenders were sentenced to prison for punishment instead of reformation (Manda, 2015). Mwakilama (2010) observed that many prisons were run as punitive centres in Malawi since they were not yet fully changed into reformatory institutions.

Although the emphasis on incapacitation and deterrence partially prevented future crimes by removing dangerous criminals from the communities, studies reveal that such kinds of imprisonment only increased prisoners' recidivism chances (e.g. Barringer-Brown, 2015; Brym & Lie, 2018; Cullen & Gilbert, 2013; Durrant, 2018; Duwe & Clark, 2017; Heslin, 2016). In a study conducted by Duwe and Clark (2017) using data of 50 000 offenders released from Minnesota prisons in the USA, it was found that incarceration of offenders without engaging them in any intervention increased their recidivism chances. This situation is partly because prisoners not

engaged in meaningful intervention activities often stay idle in prisons. The assembly of many idle criminals may nurture a “criminogenic community” that promotes antisocial behaviour due to increased contact with severely antisocial peers, likely exacerbating recidivism risks (Duwe & Clark, 2017, p.59).

Research and practice advocate for change in the prison management philosophy from retribution to rehabilitation (Cullen & Gilbert, 2013; Durrant, 2018; Duwe & Clark, 2017). In Malawi, the special report by the Special Rapporteurs of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (2001) underlined the need for the change of the prison philosophy from punitive to rehabilitative. The report notes that prisons in Malawi needed to be rehabilitation agencies providing opportunities for offenders to acquire various skills, knowledge and attitudes that would assist them in becoming better people after their release, thus, not re-offend. This recommendation was echoed in a study by Burton et al. (2005) which focused on understanding offending and rehabilitation in Malawi.

This emphasis on rehabilitation is given priority to young offenders or juveniles found in prisons and other reformatory centres because young persons are considered one of the special groups that need international protection (United Nations, 1989). In 1989, countries in the United Nations (UN) officially decided to recognise the rights of children worldwide by creating the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to advocate for the protection of all youth below the age of 18 (UN, 1989). Muncie (2009) observes that the UNCRC recognises that young people need special attention because of their age. Regarding minors found on the wrong side of the law, UNCRC states that in all actions, “their best interests must be a primary consideration” (UN, 1989, p. 3). Instead of nurturing responsible citizens, prisons generally traumatise young offenders systemically. Consequently, they are left less able to proceed with education, get employment, have healthy relationships, and lead productive lives after their release (Faruqee, 2016; Stapleton, 2000).

In the African Union’s Agenda 2063, known as “The Africa We Want”, the issue of access to education for the youth in the continent was put in the first ten-year (2014-

2023) implementation plan (African Union Commission, [AUC], 2015a, p.14). Agenda 2063, which the African leaders adopted at the AU's golden jubilee summit in 2013, is a comprehensive and people-centred vision with an action plan for the transformation of Africa over the next 50 years (Addaney, 2018). According to Agenda 2063, Africa will have the world's largest youth group of more than 70% of the continent's population by 2063, there is, therefore, a need to be well-educated and highly skilled to place the largest number of the population in the middle class with significant spending power to enhance the continent's development (AUC, 2015b). Leaving young offenders incarcerated in prisons or correctional institutions out of this human capital development endeavour might negatively impact the fulfilment of these aspirations and goals. The same paper reports that Africa had 215 million illiterate people in 2011, of which 33 million were school dropout youths (AUC, 2015b, p. 24). Most of them are vulnerable groups, such as girls, youth with special needs and young offenders incarcerated in penitentiary facilities. Therefore, young offenders' access to education and other rehabilitation activities needs to be prioritised.

Malawi is also known to have a youthful population. The 2018 national census shows that 51% of the population was below 18 years (UNFPA Malawi, 2022). Most of these young people usually go through age-related problems and hindrances, including a lack of relevant education and skill-sets that affect their participation in the country's socioeconomic and political development (National Planning Commission [NPC], 2020). Coincidentally, these are among the reasons for juvenile delinquency in many African countries (Burton et al., 2005; Bright et al., 2011; Johnson, 2015; Quan-Baffour & Zawada, 2012). To integrate the Africa 2063 Agenda into the national policy, Malawi developed and launched her own "Malawi 2063 Vision" with a thematic focus on "an inclusively wealthy and self-reliant nation" (NPC, 2020, p. 4). Regarding young people's education, Malawi 2063 commits to the "provision and accessibility of quality education, skills development and decent work opportunities" to all young people in the country so that they could be active contributors to the country's 2063 vision (NPC, 2020, p. 5). The 2063 vision further aspires to "make it compulsory for every citizen to attain at least 12 years of formal education", thereby improving the availability, accessibility and quality of education, especially to all young people at all



educational levels “so that learning outcomes are equitable” (NPC, 2020, p. 37). These young people include those incarcerated in penitentiary facilities.

### **1.3 WHO IS A JUVENILE OR YOUNG OFFENDER?**

The term “offender” is generally used by the judiciary, prison officers, law enforcement officials and the media to refer to people incarcerated in prisons. In many studies, the terms “prisoner”, “offender”, and “inmate” are frequently preferred (Fakude, 2012). When the offender is young, according to the legal ages of criminal responsibility of the particular country, that offender is referred to as a “youth offender” (Lambie & Randell, 2013, p. 449) or “juvenile offender” (Kupchik & Snyder, 2009; der Laan & Eichelsheim, 2013, p. 425), “juvenile delinquent” (Igbinovia, 1988, p. 132), or “young offender” (Kiesl & Wurger, 2002, p. 300).

The terms ‘juvenile’ and ‘young offender’ are misleading on their own as different scholars and countries differ on who a ‘juvenile’ or ‘young offender’ is. Young et al. (2017) define the term ‘juvenile’ as referring to an individual below the age of criminal majority but capable of committing crimes by virtue of being above the minimum age of criminal responsibility. This minimum age differs amongst the countries between the ages of six and 18, while the criminal majority’s age is usually 18 in most jurisdictions (Young et al., 2017). According to Penal Reform International (PRI, 2021), the minimum age of criminal responsibility ranges from seven to 16 across UN member states, with 14 being the most common age in 49 countries. Nevertheless, these minimum ages contradict some countries’ constitutional legal provisions (PRI, 2021). Thus, scholarly data is usually based on the lowest age at which a juvenile is charged and convicted of a criminal offence. Schaefer (2010) referred to the term ‘juvenile’ as an incarcerated person under 18. Lambie and Randell (2013) include all adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18, while der Laan and Eichelsheim (2013, p. 425) indicate the ages between 12 to 18 years.

Nonetheless, in many jurisdictions and legal documents, the term ‘juvenile’ or ‘young offender’ also refers to the youthful section of society over the age of 18. According to Johnson (2015), any person aged 18 and above is legally regarded as an adult in

China, the United States of America and India, among other countries. In contrast, the 18-year-old individual would be regarded as a minor in Indonesia and Japan since the legal age of adulthood in those countries is 20. The UN Secretary-General acknowledges that the meaning of the word 'youth' varies in different jurisdictions worldwide due to differences and changes in economic, demographic, and socio-cultural settings (UN, 2001). The UN, therefore, provides a statistical definition of the term 'youth' as individuals between 15 and 24 (UN, 2001).

In many African countries, a minor's legal definition is commonly limited to persons below the ages of 18 or 21, even though, the definite lower and upper age brackets for a 'young person' or 'juvenile' tend to vary upwards from country to country (Badenhorst, 2011; Igbinovia, 1988; Johnson, 2015; Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022; Manzini, 2020). The UN Economic Commission of Africa (2017) report refers to the youth of ages 15 to 24 in Africa as 'young people'. In Uganda, any young person in conflict with the law is given juvenile status (Quan-Baffour et al., 2022). In South Africa, an individual is considered an adult after reaching the age of 18; thus, those below this age are considered minors. In contrast, South African correctional facilities classify all inmates of the ages between 14 and 24 as young offenders (Manzini, 2020; Johnson, 2015). Consequently, in South Africa, the terms juvenile or young offenders refer to individuals aged 14 to 24 who are in conflict with the law and detained in correctional centres (Badenhorst, 2011; Manzini, 2020).

In Malawi, according to Section 23 of the Malawi Constitution, a 'child' is a person below the age of 18 (Government of Malawi, [GoM], 2018a). However, Section 2 of the Malawi Prisons Act uses the term "young prisoner" to refer to the young offenders incarcerated in prisons. It also specifically defines the term as "a prisoner under the apparent age of 19 years and may, at the discretion of an officer in charge, include a prisoner whose apparent age does not exceed 20 years" (GoM, 2018b, p. 1896). Regarding the choice of terms, Young et al. (2017) argue that the suitable term to use is 'young offenders' since it is broad and can refer to incarcerated individuals under 18 and those young adults in their mid-20s. It should be noted that since the beginning of this chapter, concepts such as 'offenders' and 'prisoners' have been

used interchangeably as was the case during the pre-colonial and colonial eras, including in the twentieth century. In the context of this study, and in trying to adapt to the contemporary penal reforms and terminologies across the world, this thesis interchangeably uses the terms 'young offender' and 'juvenile' to refer to inmates incarcerated at YORCs. However, the words such as 'prisoner' and 'inmate' are used where necessary.

#### **1.4 EDUCATION IN MALAWI PENITENTIARY FACILITIES**

It is reported that education in Malawi prisons started as early as 1980 with the Adult Literacy Programme (ALP), which was run by the Social Welfare and Community Development Department (Chapuwala, 2005). This literacy programme was a Malawi Government's national initiative aimed at reducing illiteracy which was high in those years in the country and was aimed at helping in the fight against poverty, ignorance and disease (Chapuwala, 2005; Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022). This informal education programme was introduced in prisons because most offenders were illiterate.

However, in 1994, in the early years of the multiparty democratic dispensation, inmates in prisons started demanding education. This change was due to the new constitutional order, which introduced the right to education for everyone (GoM, 2018). This era was also when the Malawi Government introduced and immediately implemented the Free Primary Education (FPE) policy (GoM, 2013; Wamba & Mgombezulu, 2014). It all started with two inmates who initially requested the prison authorities to allow them to write United Kingdom 'A' level examinations. Their request received a positive response from the prison authorities. This positive response marked the genesis of prison education since more prisoners started demanding their right to education while serving their prison sentences in Malawi (Chapuwala, 2014). Nonetheless, the establishment of formal education gained momentum in 2000 at Chichiri Prison in Blantyre with senior primary and junior secondary school programmes. To pass time and maintain their professional competence, incarcerated former teachers started the programme by volunteering to teach their fellow inmates (Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022). Zomba Prison followed in 2002

after some inmates graduated from the adult literacy education programme and needed to be promoted to the primary school level. Later in the same year, Maula and Mzimba prisons followed suit. The year 2003 marked the beginning of inmates writing their national examinations in prisons after four maximum prisons were configured into national examination centres.

Over the years, education has been introduced in most of the prisons in Malawi (Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022). The Malawi education system uses an 8-4-4 education system consisting of the basic (primary and secondary schools) and university levels (Ministry of Education, 2020). The primary school takes eight years from Standards 1 to 8. At the end of Standard 8, learners sit for the Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLC) examination which determines their eligibility for secondary education. Secondary school education takes four years; Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) examination is sat in Form 2 and Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) is sat in Form 4 (Ministry of Education, 2020). Inmates in various penitentiary facilities in Malawi now sit for basic education examinations; PSLC, JCE and MSCE within their facilities (Chapuwala, 2005; Kajawo, 2019; Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022).

Kajawo and Nyirongo (2022) report that in 2015, 17 out of 30 prison facilities across the country had education programmes enrolling a total of 3 325 students representing 25% of all inmates incarcerated in those prisons. This figure dropped to 1 946 inmates in 2018 (which was only 14% of the whole inmates' population). In 2020, Kajawo and Nyirongo (2022) further report that the number of prison facilities offering education programmes fell to 15 as a result of the closure of education activities at two prison facilities. Amongst these penitentiary facilities, special attention in providing education services to inmates has been given to juveniles or young offenders lodged in the young offenders' rehabilitation facilities (MPS, 2015). Section 23 of the Malawi Constitution stipulates that all children (persons below 18) must be protected from any harmful action, treatment or punishment that is likely to interfere with their education. These include young offenders in prisons. In the past, the Malawi Prison Service incarcerated young offenders at adult prisons but in the facilities' separate sections (Kajawo, 2010).

The MPS started using Kachere, Bvumbwe, Mikuyu II, Mzimba and Byanzi prison facilities as YORCs in 2010 (Kajawo, 2019). Like in many other prisons, the department introduced educational services in the young offenders' facilities since they were considered a priority (Kajawo, 2019; Salima, 2017). This action was partly informed by a study by Burton et al. (2005), which found that poverty was one of the significant causes of crime and recidivism in Malawi. Malawian children born in low-income families were at high risk of falling prey to crime due to peer pressure and lack of economic opportunities; therefore, education as a rehabilitative tool was pivotal. However, one young offenders' centre was reported as not yet offering educational services to incarcerated juveniles in 2020 because its main activity was farming (Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022). This was the reality even though more than 90% of the young offenders lodged in young offenders' centres were dropouts of primary and secondary schools, needing education for their future. This is why the Malawi Inspectorate of Prisons (2019) and Mwakilama (2010) argue that some penitentiary facilities in Malawi were yet to fully transform from punitive facilities to rehabilitation centres. However, the bottom line remains that young people, whether incarcerated or not, need access to proper education for personal development.

## **1.5 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

Malawi Prisons Service opened YORCs across the country where young people aged 18 to 20 were lodged. These centres were aimed to enable these young persons to return to society as fully functioning individuals. Since education is the basic right of everyone, these young offenders needed quality education within their correctional facilities equivalent to the one accessible to their counterparts in the communities. The researcher was curious to learn mainly from the voices of the young offenders whether their stay in prison impacted on their rights and access to quality education. The need to satisfy this curiosity triggered the interest in undertaking this study.

Therefore, this study aimed at investigating how incarceration impacts on young offenders' access to quality education in Malawi penitentiary facilities. The study intended to fill the knowledge gap regarding how juvenile offenders' right to education

was exercised in penitentiary facilities in developing countries such as Malawi, thus contributing to the identified knowledge gap in the discourse. The study also provides a solid research foundation on young offenders on which other research of a similar nature might be based and replicated in similar environments in Africa. Furthermore, this study also informs government policymakers, prison authorities, education administrators, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) regarding how education programmes targeting young offenders are being managed in Malawian penitentiary facilities. Therefore, this study's results might help in identifying and understanding critical issues and concerns regarding young offenders' rehabilitation, including education programmes and how they are being implemented in Sub-Saharan countries for policy formulation or change.

## **1.6 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Malawi has been struggling with crime and juvenile delinquency for many years like many other countries (Burton et al., 2005; Stapleton, 2000). As a way of curbing this problem, young offenders are often sent to YORCs. They are expected to undergo through various programmes ranging from education, technical training, and guidance and counselling to rehabilitate and reform them in preparation for their post-prison lives. These young offenders need to be engaged in meaningful rehabilitation programmes, including education as stipulated by the international and regional offenders' protocols like the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners of 2015 (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and the African Union's Ouagadougou Declaration on Accelerating Prison and Penal Reform in Africa of 2002 (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2002; Viljoen, 2005; UN, 2015b). However, prisons impact on young offenders' lives when they are released, and the effect of imprisonment is likely to be long-lasting. Juveniles' stay in prison is likely to affect their adult lives, positively or negatively (Heslin, 2016).

Studies have been conducted on juveniles' delinquency, rehabilitation and the effect of incarceration at a global level (Faruquee, 2016; Heslin, 2016; Lahey, 2016). Nevertheless, research on the effects of incarceration and schooling on young

offenders in prisons, particularly after their release, is limited in Africa. Most of the existing studies related to correctional facilities are on rehabilitation and education's impact on recidivism, mostly in western countries (Bennett, 2015; Davis et al., 2013; Garcia, 2013). Most African studies focus on the whole prison population (Johnson, 2015; Quan-Baffour & Zawada, 2012; Rupande & Ndoro, 2014; Vandala, 2019); and few specifically on young offenders (e.g. Gary, 2014; James et al., 2016; Kirk & Sampson, 2013). Shafi (2020) observes that young offenders' educational experiences are little researched, mainly due to researchers' difficulties in accessing them as study participants, and their vulnerability status. However, they need to be studied. Heslin (2016), in his study conducted in Africa on the perspectives of various stakeholders on juvenile delinquency, found that the major problem with most juvenile centres is that they fail to teach their clients how to stay away from crime. The incarcerated young people are still at a high risk of recommitting crimes since prisons do not provide essential programmes and education to reform and rehabilitate them (Lahey, 2016). Thus, they come out worse than before.

In Malawi, even though young offenders are reported to be lodged in young offenders' centres with the main goal of rehabilitating them, empirical studies are scarce. Few studies conducted on rehabilitation in Malawi have focused on adult offenders, and very few to this researcher's knowledge on young offenders (e.g. Chapuwala, 2005; Kajawo, 2019; Moyokunyenga, 2015; Salima, 2017; Stapleton, 2000). Moyokunyenga (2015) investigated the prevalence and causes of recidivism at one adult prison in Malawi. This study revealed that recidivism trends at Mzuzu Maximum Security Prison had been on the increase from 4.5% in 2012, 8.2% in 2013 to 10.3% in 2014. According to Moyokunyenga (2015), this was due to, among other factors, the lack of adequate rehabilitation involvement of most offenders in prisons. This factor could be one of the reasons scholars such as Heslin (2016), Lahey (2016) and Faruqee (2016) argue that juveniles must not be incarcerated at all. For them, the diversion of these juveniles from the criminal justice system and alternative sentencing are the paramount ways of handling juvenile crimes. According to these authors, incarceration should be the last option. Kajawo (2019) examined the management of education in Malawi prisons in adult and juvenile facilities but did not

study the access and quality of education offered to juveniles. Salima (2017) studied the impact of technical and vocational education on male inmates in two adult prisons. Even though several studies attest to the fact that correctional education benefits offenders, studies on the impact of incarceration on juveniles' education access and rights are limited. This study sought to fill this gap.

## **1.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study aimed at investigating how the incarceration of young offenders at the young offenders' rehabilitation centres in Malawi impacts on their rights and access to quality education. The objectives of the study were to:

- Explore the extent to which young offenders are engaged in meaningful rehabilitative activities, including education, during their incarceration at the young offenders' rehabilitation centres in Malawi;
- Analyse the effects of the penitentiary system's environment and resources on the young offenders' rights and access to quality education at the young offenders' rehabilitation centres in Malawi;
- Determine the effects of the education provided at young offenders' rehabilitation centres on the lives of the incarcerated young people and their continued pursuance of their educational or career goals after their release in Malawi.

## **1.8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study's main research question was: What is the impact of incarceration on young offenders' rights and access to quality education at the young offenders' rehabilitation centres in Malawi? In unpacking the research question, the researcher formulated the following sub-questions:



1. To what extent are young offenders engaged in meaningful rehabilitative activities, including education, during their incarceration at the young offenders' rehabilitation centres in Malawi?
2. How do the resources and the environment in the penitentiary systems affect the young offenders' rights and access to quality education at the young offenders' rehabilitation centres in Malawi?
3. What are the effects of education provided to the young offenders on their continued pursuance of their educational or career goals after their release from the young offenders' rehabilitation centres in Malawi?

## **1.9 CONTRIBUTION TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE**

The study envisaged contributing to the body of knowledge regarding policy, theory and practice.

### **1.9.1 Policy**

The international and regional offenders' protocols and instruments oblige the correctional or prison services to provide rehabilitation activities such as educational opportunities to young offenders (Viljoen, 2005; UN, 2015b). The strategic plan and other related policies of the Malawi Prisons Service (MPS) echo the Republic's constitutional call for the rehabilitation of offenders, especially the young ones (GoM, 2018; MPS, 2021). This is essential for their later successful re-entry into society as well as the reduction of reoffending. However, research conducted in most African countries has found that even though many prison or correctional systems have rehabilitation and education-specific policies, there was little being done to implement them (Fakude, 2012; Moyo, 2014; Rupande & Ndoro, 2014). An investigation into how the incarceration of young offenders in Malawi correctional facilities impacts their rights and access to quality education has, therefore, helped to analyse the meaningfulness and quality of rehabilitation programmes at young offenders' centres. This has helped in questioning the current policies and strategies related to offenders'

rehabilitation and education in prisons, thereby informing and influencing rehabilitation policy's reform and formulation in African countries.

### **1.9.2 Theory**

The MPS established YORCs as one way of curbing the problem of juvenile delinquency (Kajawo, 2019). At these centres, young offenders are supposed to be involved in rehabilitation which ought to incorporate individually planned interventions to encourage change in those issues that caused their criminality (Manzini, 2020). Therefore, young offenders are expected to be involved in various activities ranging from education, technical training and psychosocial interventions to rehabilitate them as a preparation for their post-prison life. But this is not usually the reality in many countries. Studies report that many correctional facilities do not have planned rehabilitation or intervention plans that include education, even for young offenders.

Usually, the prison environment, culture and routines centre on security classifications, work parties allocations and supervisions, lockdowns and headcounts, thus, sometimes impeding those young offenders desperately needing education in correctional facilities (Erisman & Contardo, 2005; Johnson, 2015; Manzini, 2015; Vacca, 2004). Security is usually considered a priority in most correctional facilities at the expense of rehabilitation activities such as education (Johnson, 2022a; Manzini, 2020). This study has, therefore, resulted in the development of a rehabilitation framework for young offenders suitable for Malawi and other developing countries that incorporates the essential elements pivotal for the productive functioning of young offenders after their release from the penitentiaries.

### **1.9.3 Practice**

Previous research studies in Malawi report that the majority of prisoners were unwilling to enrol in rehabilitation programmes, including education offered in prisons, as they preferred to stay idle (Kajawo, 2019; Salima, 2017). There was a need to ascertain the enrolment rates and understand factors impeding willingness of the incarcerated young people to be involved in education. This study also investigated

and explored the activities that young offenders were involved in while incarcerated in correctional facilities in Malawi to ascertain if they were engaged in meaningful rehabilitative activities, including education. The results and recommendations of this study inform correctional service officials on how they can best engage young offenders in their rehabilitation journeys for their successful re-entry into society.

### **1.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY**

This study was guided by four theories as a theoretical framework. These are the modern rehabilitation theories; the Good Lives Model and Risk Needs Responsivity, as well as the systems, and Marxist theories. The Good Lives Model (GLM) was conceptualised as a rehabilitation theory by Ward and Stewart in 2003, while the Risk Needs Responsivity (RNR) model was developed by Andrews and his colleagues (Andrews et al., 2011; Murhula & Singh, 2019; Ngozwana, 2017; Ward et al., 2012b). GLM and RNR generally argue that an effective offender rehabilitation programme needs to address the criminogenic needs of offenders and enhance positive factors that can help offenders desist from offending (Durrant, 2018). GLM specifically aims to equip offenders with resources to satisfy their needs and interests in pro-social ways, which include education (Ward & Maruna, 2007). GLM and RNR guided this study because the study was generally about the quality of rehabilitation programming in YORCs. Thus, the quality of education provided in correctional centres would be mainly determined by the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of rehabilitation programming for individual offenders.

The systems theory developed by Ludwig van Bertalanffy considers institutions as open systems requiring quality inputs and processes for quality outputs and outcomes (Benowitz, 2001; Olum, 2004). From the perspective of systems theory, an academic institution has the responsibility of securing inputs and processing them to produce outputs and outcomes (Garira, 2015; Lai & Lin, 2017). The systems theory supported and guided the evaluation of the schooling of young offenders as a rehabilitation tool. The theory guided the researcher in examining the adequacy of resources. It complemented the GLM, RNR and Marxists theories in gauging if the

education accessed by the young offenders in Malawi correctional facilities is of the same quality as that accessed by their counterparts outside prison walls. Finally, the Marxist theory, developed by Marx and Engels, argues that the education system promotes inequality based on social classes (Bowles & Gintis, 2002).

Therefore, these four theories interchangeably guided the researcher in responding to the three research questions of this study, with the GLM theory of rehabilitation as the leading theory. GLM also guided the development of the proposed rehabilitation framework that can be used in developing countries such as Malawi.

## **1.11 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study used the pragmatic research paradigm. Pragmatism posits that multiple paradigms can be used in one study to gain from their mutual advantages (Creamer, 2018; Fraenkel et al., 2012). Pragmatism as a philosophical lens was selected for this study to understand how incarceration impacts on young offenders' rights and access to quality education. A thorough understanding of these phenomena was likely to be achieved through the pragmatism paradigm (Feilzer, 2010). The study, therefore, adopted a mixed-methods research approach, using a convergent design to generate and analyse qualitative and quantitative data concurrently (Creamer, 2018). Greater emphasis was put on the qualitative strand in addressing the research problem, while the quantitative strand provided a complementary role [QUAL + quan]. The study was, thus, guided by three research questions which required both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

### **1.11.1 Population, sampling and data collection**

At the time of the study, there was a total population of 753 young offenders in five facilities (748 males and five females). This study involved a randomly selected sample of 290 young offenders for the quantitative survey. The decision to include a large sample of young offenders in Malawi penitentiaries in this study was made to enhance the internal generalisability of the findings (Cohen et al., 2018; Maxwell, 2012). In the second phase, the study purposively selected 27 young offenders from

the survey pool for qualitative interviews. The study also involved purposively selected 25 educators, and 25 ex-young offenders already released from prisons, selected using a combination of both quota and snowball sampling techniques (Bachman & Schutt, 2018; Tracy, 2020). The selection of the interview participants at each facility was based on predetermined key characteristics such as school attendance, gender and age variations (Tracy, 2020; Yin, 2016). Young offenders and ex-offenders were targeted because they were the beneficiary group of the education programme. Similarly, educators were targeted because they were directly involved in the implementation of education and other rehabilitation and re-entry programmes that impact on young offenders' lives. Their voices in this study were valuable in assisting with triangulating data from the inmates. Therefore, a total sample of 340 respondents participated in both quantitative and qualitative data collection activities of this study.

This study also involved the observation method (Muijis, 2004). The researcher used observations to collect rich and detailed information on the school ethos, resources, physical facilities and equipment used for educational activities in the study settings, and policies used in the education of young offenders and examination results as its outcomes. The researcher also evaluated the rehabilitation path used in these YORCs. Observations also served to triangulate data collected from the participants' interviews, surveys and various documents (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

### **1.11.2 Data analysis and interpretation**

The generated data were analysed based on the convergent design tenets of the mixed methods research approach. Through this approach, both qualitative findings and statistical (quantitative) data were analysed, compared and merged to assist in developing a comprehensive understanding of the study's problem (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018). Quantitative findings from the questionnaires and some parts of the observations checklist were analysed manually, while others were descriptively analysed using the SPSS version 22.0. The study used descriptive statistics such as means, percentages, frequencies, and cross-tabulation analysis to summarise,

compare and manipulate the data. The qualitative data from open-ended parts of the questionnaires, interviews and observations were analysed manually using narrative and content analysis techniques. Therefore, the analysed qualitative and quantitative data were used to complement, compare and triangulate the research results.

### **1.11.3 Reliability and validity/credibility and trustworthiness**

Reliability and validity issues are dealt with differently in quantitative and qualitative studies (Maxwell, 2012). In this study, young offenders' data was triangulated with data collected through various instruments and methods, as well as from educators and those ex-inmates already released from young offenders' facilities. The validation and comparison of data collected from various targeted populations enabled the study to meet the quantitative criterion-related validity called "evidence of concurrent validity" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, p. 152). Furthermore, to ensure the instruments' reliability, a pilot study was conducted at one of the maximum security prisons not included in this study on similar groups of respondents to test the data collection instruments. The study used the "test-retest method", which involves administering the same test two times to the same groups after a certain time interval (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, p. 155). Moreover, the reliability test for the questionnaire constructs found all constructs were within the acceptable and good reliability range ( $0.62 \leq \alpha < 0.94$ ). In ensuring the validity of the data in this study, criterion-related concurrent validity was used. Furthermore, data collected from young offenders was compared and validated with data from the educators, released young offenders and from the researcher's observations, thus obtaining "evidence of concurrent validity" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, p. 152). Quantitative data were also compared and triangulated with the narratives gathered from the open-ended question items in the questionnaires.

### **1.11.4 Research ethics**

Ethical clearance and study approval were applied and sought from UNISA and MPS authorities. Additionally, before data collection, all study respondents were briefed regarding the current study's purpose, procedure and ethical issues. They were informed that they had the right to participate or not, or stop participating at any time.

During data collection, COVID-19 protocols such as social distancing, the use of masks, shields and sanitisers, and disinfection of research instruments before further use were strictly observed to ensure the safety of the respondents (Roberts et al., 2021). Finally, all data gathered in this study have been protected; hard copies have been stored in a safe, while soft copies have been encrypted to limit access. The data protection process will be in place for five years in line with UNISA's regulations (UNISA, 2016).

## **1.12 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

It is essential to explain concepts in the study to avoid losing their intended connotative meanings (Creswell, 2015). The concepts explained below are significant in understanding the discourse in this study.

### **a) Incarceration**

Incarceration is the term that is derived from the verb 'be incarcerated', which the Oxford Dictionary of Difficult Words defines as "put in jail or prison" or "confine [someone] in a particular place" (Hobson, 2001, p. 222). Therefore, the word is synonymous with 'imprisonment', 'custody' and 'detention' which, in the classic sense, is associated with various deliberate deprivation of basic tenets such as liberty, autonomy, sexual affairs and goods and services (Cullen & Gilbert, 2013; Durrant, 2018). This meaning is gradually evolving due to the correctional service's emphasis on reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration functions. Some of these deprivations are now considered inmates' needs, such as prisoners' conjugal visits in some prisons (Kajawo, 2021). This study interchangeably uses both 'incarceration' and 'imprisonment'.

### **b) Young offenders**

"Offender" is the title generally used to refer to people incarcerated in prisons by prison officials, law enforcement officials and the media. In many studies and books, the terms "prisoner", "offender", "criminal" and "inmate" are frequently preferred for use to refer to an incarcerated person (Cullen & Smith, 2011; Durrant, 2018; Fakude, 2012; McMahon & Jump, 2017). When the offender is young, according to the legal

ages of criminal responsibility of the particular country, that offender is referred to as 'young offender', 'young prisoner', 'juvenile', 'juvenile delinquent' (Lambie & Randell, 2013; Kupchik & Snyder, 2009; Igbinovia, 1988; Kiessl & Wurger, 2002; Young et al., 2017). In Malawi, Section 2 of the Malawi Prisons Act uses the term "young prisoner" to refer to the young offenders found incarcerated in prisons. It also specifically defines the term as referring to "a prisoner under the apparent age of 19 years and may, at the discretion of an officer in charge, include a prisoner whose apparent age does not exceed 20 years" (GoM, 2018b, p. 1896). This study synonymously used the terms 'young offender' and 'juvenile' to refer to all inmates referred to as young prisoners in the Malawi Prisons Service (MPS).

#### c) Penitentiary facility

The term 'penitentiary' or 'penitentiary facility' is commonly used synonymously with other terms such as 'prison', 'correctional facility', 'reformatory facility' and 'jail' to mean a place where offenders are kept (Cullen & Gilbert, 2013; Hobson, 2001). Cullen and Gilbert (2013) indicate that the goal of the "penitentiary" when it was invented in the 1820s was to put offenders behind bars where they could not escape and to "rescue them from a life in crime" (p. xv) through reformation. The terms 'jails', 'penitentiary', 'prisons', 'correctional institution' and 'correctional service' are currently used simultaneously in various jurisdictions (UNESCO, 2021). However, in many progressive societies, the term 'correctional' has been commonly embraced because it is much more 'user friendly' and is emphasised in various human rights instruments such as the Nelson Mandela Rules (Johnson, 2015; UN, 2015b). In Malawi, the country's Constitution still refers to penitentiary service as 'Malawi Prisons Service'. Throughout this study and thesis, the terms 'penitentiary', 'prison', 'correctional facility' and 'rehabilitation centre' are used interchangeably.

#### d) Education in prison

Education in prison is also known as 'prison education' and 'correctional education' (Davies et al., 2014; Fakude, 2012; Johnson, 2022a; UNESCO, 2021). The US Department of Education defines the term as "that part of the total correctional process that focuses on changing offenders' behaviour through planned learning



experiences and learning environments” (Mentor, 2005, p. 274). MPS (2016) refers to prison education as a set of activities in line with improving prisoners’ well-being and intellectual and technical skills to enable them to be independent and self-reliant members of society after their release. For this study, education in prison is referred to primary and secondary schooling, even though in some instances, tertiary education is also applied where appropriate.

#### e) Quality education

The concept of ‘quality education’ is complex and multifaceted, rendering it difficult to define and extrapolate (Goel & Hamman-Dina, 2017; UNESCO, 2021; UNICEF, 2000). The Commonwealth describes the term as “a system that has passed a certain set of criteria or principles” with room for further maintenance and improvement (Goel & Hamman-Dina, 2017). According to UNICEF (2000), the basic dimensions of quality education that need to be considered in quality discourse are; healthy and quality learners, safe and peaceful learning environments with quality and adequate facilities and learning resources, relevant content and curricula, quality processes in terms of teachers and administrators, and good outcomes. The UN Sustainable Development Goal Four strongly reaffirms the provision of quality education for all, which ensures the successful completion of quality basic education by all children (both boys and girls) by 2030 (UN, 2015a). These young people include at least one million young offenders incarcerated in correctional facilities worldwide, most of whom are boys (van Hout & Mhlanga-Gunda, 2019). This study embraces the above UNICEF basic dimensions of quality education.

#### f) Criminogenic needs

‘Criminogenic needs’ is a concept prominently used in RNR and GLM models of rehabilitation. These are generally factors that are associated with criminal conduct or delinquency that are directly related to reoffending in an offender (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; 2017; Durrant, 2018; Ward & Gannon, 2006; Ziv, 2017). They are “crime producing factors that are strongly correlated with risk” of recidivism (Latessa & Lowenkamp, 2005, p. 15). Scholarly works identify six major factors that are directly associated with delinquency or criminal conduct in individuals. These are antisocial

attitudes, values and beliefs, pro-criminal peers, history of antisocial behaviour, dysfunctional family, alcohol or drug abuse, and low levels of educational, vocational and financial achievement (Andrews & Bonta, 2017; Durrant, 2018; George, 2016; Ward & Gannon, 2006; Willis & Ward, 2013; Ziv, 2017). Nonetheless, criminogenic needs are often considered as those factors, from this group can be changed. These factors are also called 'dynamic factors' such as the acquisition of education, the choice of peers, antisocial personalities, and substance abuse problems (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Durrant, 2018). In contrast to 'static factors' that cannot be altered, the dynamic risk factors are targeted in correctional interventions and rehabilitation programmes such as education, psychosocial counselling and guidance.

### **1.13 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS**

This thesis has eight chapters. The first chapter introduces the current study and all the chapters. Therefore, it discusses the background, study rationale, problem statement, research purpose, objectives and questions, research methodology and definition of key terms for the study. The second chapter presents GLM, RNR, systems and Marxism as the theories guiding this study. Chapter 3 reviews the related literature at the international and African levels regarding trends in young offenders' incarceration, rehabilitation, and education provision. It also reviews recent literature on the impact of incarceration and schooling on re-entry into the community of young offenders. An attempt was, therefore, made to comprehensively review both recent and old and relevant published books, journal articles, legal documents and other sources to inform on the research questions.

Chapter 4 explains the research design and methodology used for this study. It describes pragmatism as the philosophical paradigm guiding the study. It further describes how the mixed methods research approach guided this study's design, sampling strategies, instrumentation issues, data collection, analysis, and interpretation techniques. It also describes how issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations were handled in this study. Chapter 5 presents and discusses the findings from the descriptive statistics from SPSS and data analysed using Microsoft

packages. Chapter 6 interprets and discusses the findings of the qualitative data collected using observations, field notes and interviews. Chapter 7 presents an integrated interpretation of the findings and a discussion of the qualitative and quantitative results regarding the impact of incarceration on young offenders' access to quality education. Finally, Chapter 8 provides a summary, conclusions, implications for this study, and areas for further study.

#### **1.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter provided the study background, rationale, research problem, purpose, objectives and research questions. It also presented the contributions that this study intends to make to the body of knowledge and a brief presentation of the theoretical framework and methodologies, including pragmatism as the research paradigm underpinning the study and mixed methods as the study's research approach. The chapter briefly presented issues of reliability, validity and ethical clearance and considerations, and provided definitions for the key concepts used in this study. The purpose of this chapter was to show the relevance and significance of undertaking this study, which is aimed at analysing how the incarceration of young offenders in Malawi correctional facilities impacts their rights and access to quality education. The next chapter presents the theoretical framework guiding this study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY**

#### **2.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

The use of relevant theories is pivotal in research. Theory assists researchers in explaining research variables and social reality in a study (Ukwoma & Ngulube, 2020). The theory cannot be separated from research because the two are tied to each other (Ngulube, 2018). Theory guides the researcher in “what to look for, and the research provides the researcher with what was found, what was found also provides the researcher with an indication of what to look for in the future” (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012, p. 2). This study was guided by four theories as a theoretical framework, namely, the Good Lives Model (GLM) as the main rehabilitation theory, supported by the Risk Needs Responsivity (RNR), the systems, and the Marxist theories. GLM and RNR advocate for the identification and targeting of the primary or criminogenic needs of offenders for the enhancement of positive factors that can help offenders live pro-social lives (Durrant, 2018). Ludwig van Bertalanffy's systems theory considers institutions as open systems which require quality inputs and processes for quality outputs and outcomes (Olum, 2004; Benowitz, 2001). The Marxist theory, developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, argues that the education system promotes inequality based on social classes. These four theories interchangeably guided the researcher in answering this study's research questions.

#### **2.2 REHABILITATION THEORIES (GLM AND RNR)**

Increasingly, research is advocating for the use of modern theories in the rehabilitation of offenders, such as the application of risk needs responsivity (RNR) and good lives models (GLM) principles (Andrews et al., 2011; Murhula & Singh, 2019; Ngozwana, 2017; Ward et al., 2012b). Even though incarceration practices guided by deterrence or retributive philosophies are slowly disappearing and being avoided (Price & Turner, 2021; Redding, 2016; Swanson, 2018), the journey has not

been smooth. There have been some ups and downs along the way. This section discusses the evolution of prison philosophy from retribution to the currently embraced rehabilitation, and then explains the development and advocacies of RNR and GLM rehabilitation theories, thereby introducing GLM as the leading theory guiding the present study.

### **2.2.1 Evolution of penitentiaries' function toward rehabilitation**

Rehabilitation of offenders has emerged as a widely acknowledged key function of prison or correctional systems worldwide. It has been a contentious topic in sociology, criminology, and penology in the second half of the twentieth century (Coyle, 1992; Cullen & Gilbert, 2013; Kaufman, 1960; Rothman, 1971; 1980). Prior to the rehabilitation regime, imprisonment was meant to be painful. Prison was meant to be the “necessary evil” or the “human dustbin” where the offenders were expected to feel the pain for the wrong they had done in their societies (Parkinson, 1997, p. 16). Imprisonment was aimed at incapacitating and extracting retribution from the offenders and deterring the would-be ones (Durrant, 2018).

This was the conservatives' ideology influenced by the classical school of thought on criminology. The classical school's central assumptions were that people are rational, have free will and are governed by the principle of utility (Phillipson, 1975). Therefore, to the classical school, the goals of punishment were to prevent crime and impose retribution on offenders for the harm they had caused (Beccaria, 1978). Thus, the conservatives embraced deterrence and incapacitation as the functions of punishment (Cullen & Gilbert, 2013). Thus, for crime prevention to take place, punishments ought to be painful enough to offset the pleasure or happiness enjoyed by the offender when committing that crime (Cullen & Gilbert, 2013; Hudson, 1987).

During those days, the punishment was in the prison regime itself, not just in the deprivation of liberty. The words of the Inspector of Prisons of Scotland in 1845 accurately depict the then societal general perception of imprisonment. According to him, when an individual is imprisoned, they automatically lose their freedom “and ceased to be his own master...” since they are cut off from having companionship

with family and friends, and "...that he must neither whistle, sing, nor shout; that day after day, and month after month, except at the intervals of exercise, he is confined within the four walls of his little cell..." (Coyle, 1992, p. 3). This kind of imprisonment was also observed in Malawi (Burton et al., 2005). Burton et al. (2005) observed that in the past, prison life was generally dehumanising with little consideration for offenders' well-being and health in Malawi, since hardships faced by inmates were perceived as deserving for their offences. Bradley (2003) termed this as "*lex talionis*, the law of retaliation; an eye for an eye" (p. 20). In this kind of prison regime, the offender's reformation was not the main concern. The concern was ensuring offenders served and completed their imprisonment sentences without escaping. Reformation would accidentally happen as a result of personal change due to pains felt in prisons.

However, correctional practitioners and theorists later observed that punishment-centred imprisonment often does not effectively work in reducing recidivism and deterrence (Aos et al., 2006; Cullen & Smith, 2011; Durrant, 2018; MacKenzie, 2006; Wilson et al., 2000). Durrant (2018) observes that as much as many scholars agree that the threat of imprisonment helps prevent offending, there is considerable doubt that imprisonment completely deters crime in society because the punitive strength of criminal sanctions is not sufficient to deter offenders. Consequently, prisons are likely to be turned into dens and schools for hard-core criminals. This was the genesis for the reformation theory of punishment, which marked the paradigm shift from conservatism's deterrence and incapacitation as the prison philosophy to liberalism's rehabilitation as the core of the new philosophy of imprisonment (Conley 1992).

With liberalism's rehabilitation (traditional liberals), prisons were viewed as more than punishment centres but as places of redeeming and changing the offenders to become better people (Conley, 1992). Nevertheless, the methods and ways through which the reformation of offenders was to be achieved in prisons have varied over time. In the early period, silence, isolation, labour, and punishment were used as tools since offenders were thought to be "men of idle habits, vicious propensities, and depraved passions..." (Rothman, 1971, p. 579). Thus, it was the duty of prison

officers to inculcate virtues of obedience and respect in them. The methods then moved into more medically-based interventions in which professionals were involved to correct and solve individual offenders' physical and psychological problems through individualised treatments (Cullen & Gilbert, 2013; McNeill, 2012). However, the medical model's coercive nature was strongly criticised (Durrant, 2018; Warr, 2016). Warr (2016) observes that embracing the medical model emphasises control and discipline more than the offender's welfare. Rehabilitative efforts should not aim at 'fixing' or 'altering' offenders implying "that something is wrong with them and they need to be 'fixed'" (Forsberg & Douglas, 2022, p. 108); similar to the 'deficit model of incarceration' philosophy which considers offenders as 'deficits' ready to be corrected (Farley & Pike, 2018, p. 229).

In modern approaches, rehabilitation is viewed as both a social and personal endeavour that considers the social, cultural, and moral context of offenders' lives to assist them in turning away from antisocial to pro-social lives (Durrant, 2018; Forsberg & Douglas, 2022). Therefore, the varying offenders' individual needs ought to be the guide that determines the rehabilitative activities provided. Most importantly, offenders' rehabilitation programmes ought to be entirely voluntary (Coyle, 1992; Cullen & Gilbert, 2013). Offenders need to be given proper guidance and orientation on all choices of rehabilitation programmes offered by the institutions and then be given the freedom to access them if they want to (Cullen & Gilbert, 2013). Additionally, these voluntary rehabilitation programmes need to be offered in a humane environment free of degrading and barbaric conditions such as poor and insufficient meals, forced labour, non-privacy and congested accommodation conditions (Baron & Branscombe, 2012; Kaufman, 1960; Rothman, 1971). Beyond the pain associated with loss of liberty, no additional suffering should be legitimately imposed. In the words of Fogel (1979, p. 202), "...all the rights accorded to free citizens consistent with mass living, and the execution of a sentence restricting the freedom of movement should follow a prisoner into prison." Prisons need to be improved to provide a rehabilitative-friendly environment.

## **2.2.2 Modern rehabilitation theories for young offenders**

Modern correctional facilities are now using various rehabilitation approaches. Amongst several, the risk needs responsivity (RNR) and the good lives model (GLM) have been globally considered the best theoretical models for guiding offender treatment and interpreting the offender rehabilitation literature (Andrews et al., 2011; Durrant, 2018; Ward et al., 2012b). Though RNR was the first to be conceptualised, the GLM has lately gained currency as an alternative or an improvement to RNR (Ward et al., 2012b; Willis & Ward, 2013; Ziv, 2017). This section discusses the RNR model and proceeds to GLM as part of the study's theoretical framework.

### *2.2.2.1 Risk Need Responsivity Model*

The research project that gave birth to the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model was carried out by Donald Andrews and his two colleagues, James Bonta and Paul Gendreau, who also worked with Ross, Hog, Wormith and Kiessling in the 1970s in Canada (Ziv, 2017). This was amidst Martinson's (1974) 'nothing works' doctrine that engulfed academia. During this time, individualised rehabilitation programmes were criticised and discontinued, opting for punitive regimes in some jurisdictions. Nevertheless, Andrews and his colleagues still believed in rehabilitation. They argued that rehabilitation was declared flawed because the previous interventions "...have often been based on incomplete theory and woeful lack of descriptive data or demonstrated poor integration of theory with treatment methods" (Gendreau & Ross, 1979, p. 466). Andrews and his colleagues believed that scientific knowledge could be used for practical purposes. They, thus, developed the RNR model.

With the RNR model, Andrews and his colleagues developed a rehabilitation framework focusing on moderate and high-risk offenders, targeting their criminogenic needs and responsibilities, and then matching the intervention to the offenders' strengths and abilities (Durrant, 2018). The RNR model addresses three key concerns in rehabilitation programming; (1) who should be targeted for intervention (the risk principle); (2) what should be treated (the need principle); (3) how do



practitioners rehabilitate the individual, thereby addressing the responsivity principle (Durrant, 2018; Ziv, 2017).

With the risk principle, the RNR model argues that the intensity of the rehabilitation programme should match an offender's risk of recidivism. Thus, low-risk offenders need not benefit more from the treatment than high-risk individuals since the low-risk offenders are less likely to re-commit an offence after release. Therefore, intensive programmes for low-risk offenders would be a waste of time and resources (Durrant, 2018; Ziv, 2017). Since many correctional facilities have inadequate resources, the logic is that it is prudent to use those scarce resources on high-risk offenders. The RNR model, therefore, advocates for using actuarial risk assessment tools to assess individual offender risk (Andrews & Bonta, 2017).

Secondly, the need principle describes the targeted recipients of rehabilitation programmes. With this principle, RNR recognises the need to isolate criminogenic from non-criminogenic needs to enable the intervention to only target criminogenic needs (Andrews & Bonta, 2010, pp. 45–46). The RNR model identifies static and dynamic factors as two categories of risk. Even though criminal history is the easiest and strongest predictor of an individual's future reoffending possibilities, it is a static risk factor that cannot be altered through rehabilitation programming (Andrews & Bonta, 2017; George, 2016). The dynamic risk factors are the only factors that are capable of being changed; and are, thus, targeted in the intervention. Criminogenic needs include antisocial personalities, pro-criminal peers, deviant sexual interests, intimacy deficits and substance abuse problems (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Durrant, 2018). Moreover, many incarcerated young offenders are illiterate, school dropouts, substance abusers or addicts; some have mental health problems and lack vocational skills (Hunt & Nichol, 2021; Lambie & Randell, 2013; Nowak, 2019). Therefore, all criminogenic needs or risk factors specific to the individuals must be addressed to ensure the programme's effectiveness. The RNR model's logic for targeting criminogenic needs is that since criminogenic needs are "functionally related to and predictive of reoffending, if they can be changed during treatment, then, in theory, individuals should be less likely to reoffend" (Durrant, 2018, p. 397).

Finally, the responsivity principle concerns how the offender's rehabilitation programme is implemented. The responsivity principle guides the practitioners on the effective methods and styles of interventions needed to be employed as they target the criminogenic needs of the offenders (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). According to the principle, every intervention must be tailored to the offender's cognitive abilities and learning styles (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Durrant, 2018).

Since its inception in the 1990s, RNR as a rehabilitation model has proven to be effective with some offenders. Empirical research shows that numerous rehabilitation programmes that adhere to risk, need, and responsivity principles are more effective in reducing recidivism (Andrews et al., 1990; Andrews & Bonta, 2017). For instance, a programme called the reasoning and rehabilitation programme (R&R), which applies the principles of the RNR model, has been successfully implemented in some correctional facilities in the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom and Sweden (Tong & Farrington, 2008). Makhurane (2019) observes that this model is also applicable in juveniles' rehabilitation since it provides rare skills for developing critical thinking and pro-social behaviour, which could be essential to ex-offenders in their communities.

However, RNR has been significantly criticised by some scholars. The first criticism is centred on the absence of well-explained guidelines for developing rehabilitation programmes in the RNR model (Mapham & Hefferon, 2012; McNeill, 2012; Polaschek, 2012). Polaschek (2012) argues that even though the model makes essential suggestions about the necessary elements of an effective rehabilitation programme, it is short of an intervention-level theory. RNR does not provide specifics for the programmes regarding the content, the specialists needed and the kind of offenders intended to be involved (Polaschek, 2012). In addition, the RNR model has been criticised for its central focus on reducing the risk of recidivism instead of enriching or restoring the lives of offenders. Even though offenders' criminogenic needs ought to be part and parcel of the intervention target, it is essential that the interventions focus not only on negative treatment goals but also on positive ones (Durrant, 2018; Ward et al., 2012b). Moreover, the RNR model has also been criticised as disregarding the substantial role of the social and cultural context in the

rehabilitation of offenders and is likely to weaken the intended long-term success of the intervention after the offender has been released (Durrant, 2018; McNeill, 2012; Willis & Ward, 2013). Finally, the theory is criticised due to its focus on only high-risk offenders in the rehabilitation programming, leaving out many low-risk ones (Hannah-Moffat, 2005). Using this model, therefore, denotes targeting only those identified as high-risk, resulting in ignoring the needs of many 'low-risk' offenders.

#### *2.2.2.2 The GLM as an ideal rehabilitation theory*

Tony Ward and Claire Stewart conceptualised the GLM as a rehabilitation theory in 2003 (Mallion & Wood, 2020; Yates et al., 2010; Ward et al., 2012b). This was when the amassed empirical evidence supported rehabilitation instead of punitive interventions in the penitentiaries (Cullen & Gendreau, 2000; MacKenzie, 2000). During this decade (the 2000s), scholars endorsed evidence-based programming in correctional facilities to reaffirm rehabilitation (Ziv, 2017). It was the era in which the scientific-oriented RNR model flourished as the premier model of offender rehabilitation (Andrews et al., 2011; George, 2016). Despite the RNR model's success as a rehabilitation theory, the model received numerous criticisms from some scholars, as discussed previously. Amongst these critics was Tony Ward, the leading proponent of GLM (Durrant, 2018; Ziv, 2017). While acknowledging the role that the empirical studies played in enabling rehabilitation to regain its acceptability, Ward (2013) criticised the strict or sole use of scientific evidence-based orientation to offender rehabilitation. He challenged the overdependence on science because it confined the rehabilitation practice to being a risk framework instead of being treated as advancing the welfare of offenders. Ward (2013) argued that RNR emphasised reducing recidivism, not the offender's welfare. Therefore, to Ward (2013), the RNR model was not in the offenders' interest but only in the interests of the non-offending community, hence the need for a better model.

From Tony Ward and his colleagues' perspective, rehabilitation ought to improve offenders' welfare and abilities (Ward & Maruna, 2007; Ward & Stewart, 2003). Offenders need better lives, not just the reduction of their previous harmful ones

(Ward et al., 2007). Thus, rehabilitation programming must be aimed at providing inmates with "...capabilities to meet their needs, pursue their interests, and therefore live happy, fulfilling lives" (Ward & Maruna, 2007, p. 109). Therefore, correctional programmes need to support offenders in searching for responses to a vital question in their transition. Thus, how they can live different but meaningful and fulfilling lives (Porporino, 2010; Ziv, 2017; Ward et al., 2012b).

Ward and Stewart, therefore, developed the GLM as a theory of offender rehabilitation to express Ward's ideas and as an expansion and "...as a complementary theory to RNR" (Mallion & Wood, 2020; Ward & Maruna, 2007, p. 142). They incorporated some elements of positive psychology research and strength-based practice into the RNR model to develop the GLM (Andrews et al., 2011; Yates et al., 2010; Ward et al., 2012b). Thus, the GLM is an effective guide to rehabilitation programming aimed to "equip clients with internal and external resources to live a good or better life—a life that is socially acceptable and personally meaningful" (Ward et al., 2012b, p. 95), thereby enhancing the quality of offenders' life and increasing their potential of reducing recidivism.

Therefore, GLM is a "strength-based" and restorative offender rehabilitation approach that focuses on enriching positive factors to help individuals desist from offending (Andrews et al., 2011, p. 735; Durrant, 2018, p. 397; Mallion & Wood, 2020). It aims to improve offenders' internal and external resources to enable them to live meaningful lives at both personal and social levels (Ward et al., 2012b). The primary assumption of the GLM is that offenders, just like everyone else, are goal-directed individuals. They also want to function competently in a community, and to feel loved, valued and happy (Durrant, 2018; Ward & Brown, 2004). However, instead of pursuing these goals in a pro-social way, offenders pursue them in antisocial ways. Thus, individuals behave or act in a criminal way when they are unable to attain a meaningful and fulfilling life using pro-social methods (Mallion & Wood, 2020).

The GLM postulates that offenders pursue two types of goods: primary and secondary (Ward et al., 2011; 2012b). Primary goods are those goals which involve

“...mental states, personal characteristics, or experiences that are intrinsically beneficial and sought for their own sake” and often lead to increased well-being (Ward et al., 2011, p. 95). The model identified 11 primary goods, including healthy life goals, knowledge (education), play, friendship, community, happiness, and spirituality. On the other hand, secondary goods are the means or resources used to acquire primary goods (Ward et al., 2012b). For example, pursuing educational goals and going to school can be the means of obtaining the primary goods of knowledge and friendship through interaction with schoolmates. In the context of criminogenic and non-criminogenic needs, the secondary goods are where the temptations to commit another crime may arise (Ward et al., 2012b). For example, a juvenile who drops out of school might pursue knowledge and friendship goals by befriending other school dropouts in the streets and acquiring antisocial street knowledge, thereby indulging in various criminal enterprises.

From the GLM perspective, rehabilitation programmes need to be guided by comprehensive plans that incorporate and take into account the offender's strengths, primary goods, and relevant environments to understand the kind of competencies and resources necessary to help individuals realise their goals (Durrant, 2018; Ward & Brown, 2004). The GLM rehabilitation plan is an implicit set of goals and preferences developed to be used with offenders to guide their behaviour (George, 2016; Ward & Gannon, 2006). GLM is aimed at facilitating the creation of a new socially acceptable life plan that explicitly indicates goals and various means of achieving them for the involved individual's meaningful and fulfilled life.

The model advocates for the practitioners to work together with offenders to devise a rehabilitation plan for use during their stay in the facilities (Ward & Gannon, 2006). By collaborating with offenders to develop a plan for achieving secondary goods in the future, the model is intended to minimise the offending risks while enabling offenders to acquire their primary goods. The assumption is that the rehabilitation practitioner seeks to change an offender's life plan to a good life through the implementation of several phases of the programme (George, 2016; Ward & Gannon, 2006). Thus,

GLM strives to enable an offender to acquire primary goods through pro-social methods (Ward et al., 2012b).

Ward and Gannon (2006) provide detailed guidelines for a GLM sex offenders' intervention applicable in other contexts. The model offers a personalised approach to treatment as compared to RNR's structured treatment guided by a static curriculum (George, 2016). Therefore, programmes ought to vary in length and content dependent on various factors, including the level of risk and responsiveness to counselling and cognitive abilities (Ward & Gannon, 2006).

The first phase involves evaluating the criminogenic needs of each offender. The criminogenic needs in GLM are similar to the RNR model's risk and need principle. However, GLM includes open-ended interviews on top of the RNR's actuarial evaluations of risk factors. The open-ended interviews enable clinical psychologists to recognise the primary good(s) that the individual offender considers a priority or important above all others. This helps in determining the criminogenic needs that should be given priority. To Ward and Gannon (2006), the consideration of individual goals is another essential way of showing offenders that their concerns and values are being prioritised, thereby achieving a good client-practitioner relationship that is essential for the success of the programme.

In the second phase, the clinical psychologists support the offender in isolating the primary good(s) that the offender previously and unsuccessfully strived to fulfil that made them engage in their criminal activities. The existing errors in the individual's life plan are then noted, which helps to logically explain the causes of the offender's antisocial behaviour. After identifying the primary goods, the next phase involves choosing secondary goods to demonstrate to the client how a pro-social lifestyle results in the attainment of primary goods. The fourth phase involves evaluating the offender's environment (Ward & Gannon, 2006). This is the stage in which the future living arrangements of the offender after being released are evaluated and considered. These include schooling or employment options, leisure events,

community aspects and available support. These are merged into the new Good Lives Plan.

The final phase involves completing a Good Lives Plan. The focus at this stage is on helping the offender ascertain a new lifestyle that they will still find meaningful. This phase includes identifying the offender's areas of competence that must be improved to fulfil the plan. This can include all the necessities that McNeill (2012) included as encompassing offender's rehabilitation, such as re-education, re-socialisation and the reinstatement of full citizenship after their release. The central goals of the GLM are to support offenders' design and implement life plans that will result in their meaningful and fulfilling lives achieved in pro-social ways. The assumption is that if the offenders are trained to recognize life-improving alternatives, they will be capable of making the right decisions (George, 2016).

In this model, the achievement of secondary goods is similar to the RNR model's emphasis on criminogenic needs as targets of intermediate change (Ward et al., 2012b; Willis & Ward, 2013). Willis and Ward (2013) observe that criminogenic needs symbolise obstacles that offenders might experience in fulfilling their needs for primary and secondary goods. Therefore, rehabilitation programmes should aim at imparting skills, knowledge and attitudes that facilitate acquiring the goods without involving antisocial behaviour (Willis & Ward, 2013). In GLM, various methods are used to improve offenders' well-being. These include education or schooling, motivational interviews, group therapy, and cognitive behavioural activities (George, 2016; Harkins et al., 2012; Ward & Gannon, 2006; Willis & Ward, 2013). Therefore, a typical Good Life Plan for a juvenile offender of school age will need to integrate education with other activities in response to their criminogenic needs.

Nevertheless, just as with the RNR model, some scholars, including the proponents of the RNR model, also put holes in the GLM, some of which Ward and colleagues defended. The first criticism is that GLM is an unnecessary alternative rehabilitation model since almost everything in the model is already incorporated in the RNR model. Looman and Abracen (2013) argue that RNR included all GLM's authors'

concerns regarding the RNR model's less emphasis on the responsivity principle. Moreover, Looman and Abracen (2013) add that GLM used and depended on a few studies to derive its theoretical assumptions in contrast to the robust meta-analytic studies backing the RNR model (Andrews et al., 2011).

Furthermore, GLM and even RNR have both been criticised for not explicitly explaining other factors beyond the individual that can cause recidivism. It is argued that even in jurisdictions that are religiously using these models, considerable barriers to access to social amenities and resources are placed before those released offenders can live meaningful and fulfilling lives (George, 2016). Most released convicted persons are denied the resources guaranteed to normal citizens. They are denied access to the same resources which would have enabled them to conform to the expected societal norms and morals. For example, in the USA, released offenders are denied access to certain public employment, educational benefits and other social benefits such as public housing (Manza & Uggen, 2006; Segall, 2011). This concurs with the Marxists' arguments that society often treats social classes unequally in terms of access to the means of production. In this case, the individuals released from penitentiaries, despite having the "ability" to perform just like anyone else, are left out since "'ascription' rather than 'ability' [continues] to facilitate labour market stratification" (Themelis, 2017, p. 3).

In contrast, in defence of the GLM theory, Harkins et al. (2012) argue that criticisms that GLM does not have an adequate empirical base are not fully warranted. This is because evidence exists that equates the attrition rate of GLM to RNRs (Harkins et al., 2012). The current attention of scholars and practitioners is rapidly turning towards the GLM (Mallion & Wood, 2020). It has become a preferred and extensively applied strengths-based framework for rehabilitating offenders (Mallion & Wood, 2020). Moreover, the fierce debate between the proponents of RNR and GLM has helped to improve both models. Many aspects have been included or modified along the way in both RNR and GLM theories.



The GLM, therefore, guided the researcher in responding to this study's research questions since the study also aimed at ascertaining the quality of rehabilitation activities, which ought to include education in which young offenders are involved while in prisons. Studies have proven that effective rehabilitation programming of young offenders needs to incorporate education programmes with activities that would assist in addressing the underlying psychological causes of offending (Wilson et al., 2016; McMahon & Jump, 2017; Nagin et al., 1995). A meta-analysis study by Wilson (2016) found that educational programmes are likely not to be effective on young offenders when the underlying psychological factors of their offences are not addressed. Many incarcerated young offenders experience multiple social disadvantages even before their imprisonment, including education exclusion (Johnson & Quan-Baffour, 2016; Nkoana et al., 2020). Professional support from clinical psychologists and other counsellors is essential in facilitating rehabilitation programming. These sessions can help in the young offenders' self-realisation that they need the education to enhance their secondary goals to live meaningful lives after adulthood. This, therefore, positions GLM as the key rehabilitation theory for this study. Using GLM as the leading theory guided the study in evaluating how young offenders are treated from the day they are admitted to the day they are released and in their post-release experiences.

Since GLM proposes a highly individualised approach to treatment, GLM guided in determining if young offenders are engaged in coming up with their own Good Lives Plan through unstructured interviews prescribed by the theory. Even though education is mandatory for a certain age group, education that is accessed voluntarily by the young offender can be transformative since it can result in the development of a pro-social identity which is likely to come with pro-social attitudes, values, and beliefs (Clark, 2016). The model, therefore, guided the researcher in ascertaining whether the incarcerated young offenders were taken through individualised rehabilitation plans, free of coercion that includes education as an age-related requirement in their pursuit of meaningful and fulfilling lives ahead of them. GLM also guided the researcher in evaluating the rehabilitation programming of young offenders in Malawi based on an ideal programme for offenders (Ward & Gannon,

2006). Thus, rehabilitation programmes in Malawi needed to include an assessment of the criminogenic needs; identification of primary good(s) of the offender; selection of secondary goods for positive fulfilment of primary goods; consideration of the offender's environment (post-release lives), which includes continued schooling, work options and other support factors; and the development of a Good Lives Plan.

### **2.3 SYSTEMS THEORY**

Systems theory, whose original proponent was the biologist Ludwig van Bertalanffy, was developed in the early 1950s (Lai & Lin, 2017). Bertalanffy developed this theory to answer the biological question: "what ultimately makes an organism an organism?" (Bertalanffy, 1968). Even though Bertalanffy was the main proponent of systems theory, several scholars such as Alfred Whitehead, Silvano Arieti, William Gray, Paul Weiss, Kurt Lewin, Ralph Gerard and Karl Menninger are also considered contributors to this multidisciplinary theory (Laszlo & Krippner, 1998). Moreover, systems theory principles and concepts are also applicable in different disciplines, including social sciences and education, apart from its originally intended field of biological sciences (Garira, 2020; Lai & Lin, 2017).

Bertalanffy (1968) defined a 'system' as a composite of interrelating elements that interact with their environments. It consists of unified parts interacting to achieve specified objectives (Garira, 2020; Olum, 2004). It is "an assemblage of objects united by some form of regular interaction or interdependence" (Mele et al., 2010, p. 129). In the systems theory, parts of each system are hierarchically structured and interdependent such that one part cannot function without the support of other parts (Lai & Lin, 2017). Furthermore, every system is established according to its parts' structures and patterns of interactions, which make every system different, and unique (Lai & Lin, 2017).

Most systems are parts of larger systems called supra-systems; thus, they are usually sub-systems (Benowitz, 2001; Laszlo & Krippner, 1998). In this case, correctional education is only a sub-system of the whole correctional or prison service. The system theory puts emphasis on the environment, the social organisation and human

resources within the organisation as the three levels of an open system (Lai & Lin, 2017). From the systems theory's perspective, an open system needs to have inputs, processes and outputs, and outcomes (Benowitz, 2001; Garira, 2020; Lai & Lin, 2017). These are the same elements that are the primary focus of research on education quality (Garira, 2020; UNICEF, 2000). Garira (2020) observes that research on school education quality is centred on the relationships among the inputs, processes and outputs with the understanding that students need to be provided with an education of good quality.

Regarding inputs, educational institutions as social systems are provided with inputs by the environment. Inputs in the education system are usually considered the primary indicator of the quality of education (Garira, 2020). These inputs comprise physical, human, financial and information resources (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012). In schools, human resources are teachers, administrators and other support staff. Teachers are considered the most important resource at every school. Studies indicate that quality education highly depends on schools having well-qualified teaching resources with proficient teachers contributing to students' academic success (Kyriacou, 2009; Reed & Kochan, 2006). In the current decade, technological advances have significantly impacted teaching and learning, but teachers are still considered essential (Earl et al., 2021; Redlo, 2021; Stauffer, 2020). Earl et al. (2021) argue that apart from their usual focus on core curriculum content; teachers incorporate technological skills in their lessons to help students acquire twenty-first century and fourth-industrial revolution skills. Therefore, the adequacy and capacities of teachers are pivotal for quality teaching and learning in schools.

In correctional facilities, teachers are especially essential because inmate students usually face many limitations in accessing learning resources compared to their counterparts outside the prison walls. For instance, inmate students cannot access private tutoring lessons as remedial learning due to their prison status and limited resources. Thus, students in correctional facilities rely on teachers as the most important learning resource, except in rare cases in which they study on their own

and online in facilities where online study equipment and gadgets are available (Johnson, 2015; 2022).

Physical resources in the systems theory include school buildings, teaching and learning resources and equipment. The school needs to have adequate and proper school buildings, prescribed and reference textbooks, office and classroom furniture, instructional materials and other assets to enhance the quality of education offered (Garira, 2020; UNICEF, 2000). Formal learning takes place in a physical learning environment or space, and the quality of school facilities indirectly affects learning (UNICEF, 2000). This, therefore, denotes that schools need quality facilities such as adequate well-equipped buildings and good open-air spaces for outdoor activities.

In the same way, information resources include curriculum content and resources. According to Williams (2001), the quality of education is reflected in the content by including all skills, knowledge, and attitudes intended for learners in the school curriculum. UNICEF (2000) indicates that a quality curriculum that is non-discriminatory and student-centred, stressing in-depth coverage of the important areas of knowledge and skills, contributes to the quality of education.

Technology is another critical resource in the modern twenty-first century education system (Earl et al., 2021; Olum, 2004; Redlo, 2021; Stauffer, 2020). The use of technology in education contributes to the reduction of global inequalities using various ways, such as the use of the internet for distance learning and as an information resource (UNICEF, 2000). Modern educationists advocate for incorporating twenty-first century competencies and skills that revolve around four key themes known as the 4-Cs: collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking (Earl et al., 2021; Redlo, 2021; Stauffer, 2020). This is because employers currently require these skills globally. Therefore, schools desiring to provide quality education need to embrace technology as a critical resource and inspire teachers to innovatively integrate the 4-Cs into their teaching content (Redlo, 2021).

These inputs go through processes (Benowitz, 2001; Garira, 2020). Even though the availability of quality resources as inputs may be considered an indicator of education

quality, it is still argued that merely having quality inputs alone may not determine the quality of education. This is because inputs on their own cannot produce quality education without quality processes (Garira, 2020). It is how resources are productively used that determines the quality of educational output, thus, benefiting the schools and students. It is, therefore, possible to find schools with similar backgrounds and similar quality and quantity of resources producing different results (Reid et al., 1988). Westwood (1997) argues that learners do not enrol in schools as failures, but the schooling processes sometimes cause them to fail.

Therefore, resources should be productively processed for the students' quality learning. Lai and Lin (2017) argue that exchange processes are engaged when the system receives inputs (resources) and export outputs (products) into the system. The resources, thus, enable the system's parts to work together to transform those resources into products for the benefit of the environment (Lai & Lin, 2017). Processes include supervision and support for teaching and learning and teachers' professional development (Garira, 2020). Processes also include interactions among school administrators, teachers and learners. The proper administrative support to both students and teachers through adequate educational resources must be a necessity at every school (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012; UNICEF, 2000). From the systems theory point of view, school personnel's activities as system processes affect the school's outputs and outcomes.

Finally, outputs and outcomes represent the actual product resulting from the interaction of inputs and processes. They are the intended and unintended results produced during the processing of the inputs and processes (UNICEF, 2000). Nonetheless, quality outputs and outcomes ought to be the expected effects of the educational system. Garira (2015) makes a distinction between the terms 'outputs' and 'outcomes'. According to her, outputs are the short-term effects of education, such as student achievement and certification, while outcomes are the long-term educational benefits such as employment, positive social attitudes, behaviours and skills. Outputs are instantaneously produced products, while outcomes are those products that enhance the quality of life or productivity for clients (Olum, 2004).

Studies have revealed that educational stakeholders' understanding of education quality in schools is usually biased towards outputs, such as students' academic achievements and examinations (Garira et al., 2019; Williams, 2001). This is because outputs such as academic achievement can be easily measured quantitatively using standardised tests. However, Garira (2020) argues that examination achievement is only a minuscule indicator of education quality. A comprehensive understanding of education quality ought to be the combination of all interrelated parts of a system, namely, inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes (Garira, 2020).

From the perspective of systems theory, an academic institution has the responsibility of securing inputs and processing them to produce outputs and outcomes (Garira, 2015; Lai & Lin, 2017). In correctional education, government and prison authorities are expected to provide quality inputs (resources) to correctional education in exchange for quality outputs and outcomes (products). Outputs and outcomes in correctional education are the achievements of the education system's broad goals and the correctional service's objectives. These goals are the inculcation of valuable knowledge, attitudes and skills resulting in passing the national examinations. Outcomes also include the acquisition of citizenship skills that would enhance behavioural change and enable students to have confidence and positive self-esteem to positively participate and contribute to the developmental activities of their communities in a pro-social way (UNICEF, 2000). These can enhance the released ex-offenders' employability chances, thereby reducing the likelihood of recidivism.

Since every young person of school age has the right to quality education regardless of their circumstances (UN, 2015b), young offenders' education needs to also be of good quality to avoid exacerbating inequality as expounded and argued in the Marxist theory. The systems theory guided this study in the evaluation of schooling of young offenders as a rehabilitation tool. The theory guided the researcher in examining the adequacy of resources and qualified educators deployed in prison schools. Regarding processes and outputs, the systems theory helped in evaluating prison facilities' teaching and learning processes and how they influence the outputs and outcomes. These outputs and outcomes include the juveniles' examination

performance and post-release outcomes, such as further pursuance of their educational or career goals.

The use of the perceptions and views of young offenders, ex-young offenders and educators as the clients and key stakeholders of correctional education was one way of obtaining feedback (information) on the environment advocated in the systems theory. Lai and Lin (2017) argue that every system needs both negative and positive feedback to correct some errors detected within the system. Feedback is an essential input for the improvement of the system. The theory eventually contributed to an effective evaluation of the quality of education provided to young offenders in YORCs as education systems.

## **2.4 THE MARXIST THEORY**

Marxism as a theory was originally developed by both Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the mid-19th century (Gronow, 2016; Levitas, 2012; Mclellan, 1998). Karl Marx (1818-1883) was born in Germany to a Jewish family, which was originally Protestant, while Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) was the son of a Manchester factory owner (Marx & Engels, 2018; Singer, 2000). Marx and Engels collaborated in many works on economics and contemporary politics, which include *The Communist Manifesto*, published in 1848. Marxists believe that there is always a struggle between social classes. In the words of Marx and Engels expressed in *The Communist Manifesto*, “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles” (Marx & Engels, 1948, p. 18; 2018; Wolff, 2019). Marx and Engels did not directly develop any education theory, nor did they comprehensively integrate education into their social theory (Saha, 2011). Nonetheless, they made reference to education frequently in their writings on class struggle (Saha, 2011). Saha (2011) observed that Marx and Engels made references in passing to the education of the progeny of the working class and education as a tool for socialist transformation. Their ideas established the base of the neo-Marxist reproduction theory.

Marxists believe that people in society are categorised into social classes depending on the property they own. Marx and Engels arrived at this conclusion by analysing

how capitalistic societies were structured and functioned through historical dialectic approaches (Marx & Engels, 2018; Saha, 2011). The Marxism perspective of history is grounded on the distinction between the means of production (land, natural resources, and technology) and the social relations of production. Marx argued that the mode of production changes in any given society in history. Changes in the mode of production are usually a result of conflict between the forces of production and relations of production (Turner et al., 2012; Wolff, 2019). Thus, Marxists perceive society as transitioning from one historical stage to another in terms of class struggle.

According to this theory, there have always been opposing interests between the bourgeoisie (those who own the means of production) and the proletariat (those who do not) as social classes (Turner et al., 2012). This conflict is due to unequal access of these different classes to societal resources. Thus, there has always been a conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed at every stage of human history, from the times of slavery and feudalism to the current capitalistic society (Cole, 2008; Turner et al., 2012). That is why there have always been revolts of the oppressed or the ruled against the rich or the ruling class in pursuance of an idealistic egalitarian human order (Cole, 2008). The theory, therefore, holds that social class, race, ethnicity, gender and age are linked to numerous inequalities, including educational privileges (Macionis, 2006).

Regarding education, Marxists believe that educational opportunities are not provided equally to everyone. Since the bourgeoisie owns the means of production in society, they also control the kind of education their children and the children of the proletariats access. According to Engels, the proletariats live in appalling conditions which are already disadvantageous to their children's schooling resulting in neglect of their education (Engels, 1845). Marxists argue that the proletariats' children are provided with an education that the bourgeoisie think suits the children of the proletariats, which is of poor quality and of short duration to suit their working-class status (Levitas, 2012).



Ironically, in the eyes of the capitalists, education is a meritocratic system that provides equal chances of success to everyone, irrespective of socio-economic status (Au, 2018). According to the capitalists, success in education signifies opening doors that break the chains of poverty as one climbs up the socioeconomic ladder. Au (2018) observes that to capitalists, poor individuals must work hard and prove their worth to escape poverty. With the capitalists' meritocracy, resources and structural inequalities do not matter.

Marxists, therefore, maintain that the education system works in the ruling class elites' interests since it reproduces and legitimates class inequality (Bowles & Gintis, 2002). Inequality is reproduced since it is carried from one generation to the next. In society, the middle class and other well-off parents use their wealth to ensure their children get a good education from the best schools (Brown & Saks, 1977). The wealthy can afford excellent schools rich with extracurricular programmes and can pay for private tutoring (Alvarado, 2010). Their children are exposed to better resources and opportunities and will likely succeed and get better jobs. The low-income communities usually have schools with inadequate resources (Alvarado, 2010). Thus, poor children are more likely to get a poor standard of education, resulting in low educational returns. Consequently, class inequality is reproduced.

To Marxists, meritocracy is nothing but a myth (Alvarado, 2010). Marxists assert that class inequality is legitimated by the 'myth of meritocracy', which makes people believe that they all have equal chances of success and that grades or measures of success depend on their efforts and abilities (Alvarado, 2010, p. 10). If they fail, the myth of meritocracy forces them to believe it was their fault, not the system. This contributes to self-blame and "an erosion of the sense of self-worth" for those not doing well as they start believing that "their current status in society is due to their lack of talent or hard work" (Alvarado, 2010, p. 13; Au, 2018). This legitimates or justifies the inequality system and unequal society, forgetting that some students had the upper hand due to the kind of resources and quality of education that the system structures provide (Brown & Saks, 1977). This controls and protects the status quo, perpetuating the vicious cycles of poverty and crime.

In the penitentiary context, correctional or prison systems are state-controlled repressive environments in the eyes of the Marxists. Louis Althusser (1971), one of the twentieth century's most influential Marxist educationists, categorised prisons as among what he called 'repressive state apparatuses' since they are run mostly by force and control (Cole, 2008; Althusser, 1971, p. 145). Penitentiary facilities incarcerate by force those people whose conduct or behaviour is outlawed by the ruling class since they threaten the capitalist status quo and the accumulation of wealth. In a capitalistic society, penal law and correctional policies are generally created for the benefit of the bourgeoisie as a tool for crime control (Bonger, 1969). To Rusche and Kirchheimer (2007), penitentiaries have existed as class-based, crime-control and profit organisations. Rusche and Kirchheimer (2007) argue that the rise in the idea of the prison between 1550 and 1650 was more a form of punishment and curtailment of prisoners' movement and their removal from society for the bourgeoisie's benefit. Marx and Engels refer to prison inmates as the industrial reserve army exploited by the ruling class (Marx, 1977). This makes sense because most incarcerated offenders are from "the lowest sediment of the relative surplus population" (Marx, 1977, p. 797).

Therefore, educational inequality can be legitimated if young people are imprisoned where they will not receive basic education or will only be able to access low-quality education compared to that enjoyed by their counterparts outside the penitentiaries. Ou and Reynolds (2010) argue that juvenile offenders need proper attention while incarcerated since they are already a disadvantaged population due to their possible poverty, family dysfunction and abusive backgrounds. Thus, they are more vulnerable to delinquency behaviours. Inequality is manifested when these young offenders are not provided with education in prisons or access to a worthless, low-quality education. It would be dangerous, in the Marxists' words, if "...the bourgeoisie [the authorities] fail to offer real education" to young people in correctional facilities (Cole, 2008, p. 30). This would result in these youths returning to their communities of poverty after release. This is likely to make them engage in crime as adults, and they could go back to prison, leaving their families behind in poverty. Their children are most likely

to also engage in juvenile delinquency; thus, the vicious cycle of poverty and crime is created and propagated by class inequality.

Consequently, Marxists advocate for equal access to education for all children. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marxists include the provision of free education to all children as one of the 10 most important principles to be applied in any system of education (Marx & Engels, 2018). They advocate for the abolition of many forms of exploitation of children, such as child labour that would disadvantage a certain group of children from acquiring similar education as other children access. This is more relevant to the conditions of incarceration of young offenders. These principles have been integrated into almost all international human rights instruments related to children (e.g. UN, 1989; 2009; 2015a; 2015b; Viljoen, 2005).

Marxism as a theory is still relevant today. Nail (2020) argues that Marxism is a perennial philosophy as its ideas are reinvented to fit the needs of each human era. In this study, the theory helped the researcher to question whether the education accessible to young offenders is of the same quality as that provided to their counterparts in the communities outside prisons. This theory helped in assessing the propagation of class inequality against this vulnerable social group. The theory guided the researcher in identifying factors likely to affect young offenders' rights and access to quality education.

The theory also guided the researcher in examining whether the education provided to young offenders was meaningful to their rehabilitation process of making them reliable citizens, as claimed in the prisons' policies. According to UNESCO (2015) and UNICEF (2007), simply offering education to people is not enough. It should be of good quality to enable individuals to achieve economic and social goals. In this respect, society should not be seen as treating the youth outside prisons differently from those incarcerated, as theorised by Marxism (Heslin, 2016). If the law entitles every young person to quality education as a right, young offenders should also enjoy that entitlement since they are the neediest group. Moreover, the provided education needs to be well-resourced to enhance its quality as argued in the systems theory.

Instead of using education as the ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1971; Cole, 2008), the education of young offenders can be a tool of enlightenment that is rehabilitative. In the Marxist lens, education can contribute to a more productive economy and freedom if accessed and provided equally to all persons unimpeded by prejudice and social status (Bowles & Gintis, 2002). Therefore, incarcerated young people need quality education.

## **2.5 IMPLICATIONS OF THE THEORIES FOR THE STUDY**

The rehabilitation theory of GLM (including RNR), systems, and Marxist theories interchangeably guided the researcher in responding to this study's three research questions. These theories imply the importance of providing holistic service to young offenders when incarcerated to enable them to access quality education like their counterparts outside prison walls. The Marxist theory emphasises removing inequality that promotes the vicious circle of poverty and crime among the victims. This is likely to be caused mainly by the lack of a conducive environment for learning, inadequacy and poor quality of resources to pursue the prescribed content and curricula, affecting the education outcomes as espoused by the systems theory. GLM and RNR provide models for this holistic treatment towards positive outcomes of rehabilitation efforts on young offenders, illuminating the systems theory's parts, including the environment, inputs, resources, processes, and outcomes or outputs.

Looking at the needs of the present study, it is evident that one theory could not meaningfully address the research problem and all three research objectives of this study, leading to the necessity of using all four theories to guide the researcher in pursuance of this study's three objectives. Thus, the Marxist, systems and the GLM (complemented by RNR) theories interchangeably guided the researcher in responding to this study's three research questions. Nevertheless, since this study aimed to investigate how the incarceration of young offenders in Malawi correctional facilities impacts their right and access to quality education, the GLM theory of rehabilitation (complemented by RNR) was the leading theory. GLM provides the ideal rehabilitation model for the successful rehabilitation of offenders incarcerated in

correctional facilities. The school-aged young offenders' rehabilitation plan cannot be complete without the inclusion of education programmes. The GLM led the other three theories in questioning whether young offenders in correctional facilities have access to quality and well-resourced education meaningful for their rehabilitation needs as propagated by both systems and Marxist theories. Moreover, the use of multiple theories as a theoretical framework in this study was within the pragmatic philosophical view adopted by this study.

## **2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The chapter presented the theoretical framework which guided this study. Four theories, namely; the GLM (complemented by RNR), the systems and the Marxist theories were highlighted. These four theories interchangeably guided the researcher in responding to this study's research questions. It was noted that the GLM and RNR theories of rehabilitation argue that an effective offender rehabilitation programme needs to be strength-based, aiming to enhance positive factors that can help offenders desist from offending, and to live a good and fulfilling life. Bertalanffy's systems theory considers institutions as open systems which require quality inputs and processes for quality outputs and outcomes, and Marx and Engel's Marxist theory argues that the education system should promote equal access to quality education regardless of social class. The chapter ended with a discussion on the implications of the theories for the study. The next chapter reviews the literature on young offenders' incarceration, rehabilitation and education in correctional facilities.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This study aimed to investigate the impact of incarceration on young offenders' access to quality education through a mixed-methods research approach at five YORCs in Malawi. This chapter presents a review of the literature related to the study. The chapter starts with a review of juvenile delinquency as a global, continental and national issue. The chapter then reviews the global emergence of the rehabilitation function of correctional facilities. It further appraises the young offenders' rehabilitation practices worldwide before zeroing in on education as its essential element. Later, it discusses the international requirements on the rights and access to quality education for young offenders and compares them with the global, African and Malawian practices. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the scholarly work on the impact of incarceration and education and other pre and post-release interventions on young offenders' re-entry outcomes in some jurisdictions, including Malawi.

The review assisted in narrowing the topic from general correctional education provision to young offenders' education access. It provided literature that has already been written on this topic, thereby indicating the gaps that exist to which the present study contributed. In pursuit of this study's main objective, the study attempted to answer the key question: *What is the impact of incarceration on young offenders' rights and access to quality education in Malawi's correctional facilities?* In unpacking this research question, three sub-questions needed to be addressed:

- a) To what extent are young offenders engaged in meaningful rehabilitative activities, including education, during their incarceration at the five young offenders' rehabilitation centres in Malawi?

- b) How do the availability of resources and the environment in the penitentiary systems affect the young offenders' rights and access to quality education at the five young offenders' rehabilitation centres in Malawi?
- c) What are the effects of education provided to the young offenders on their continued pursuance of their educational or career goals after their release from the young offenders' rehabilitation centres in Malawi?

### **3.2 INTRODUCTION**

Studies on young offenders and juvenile delinquency have become issues for debate among many researchers. This is because young people commit various crimes worldwide (Roodman, 2017). It is reported globally that around one million juveniles are involved in the criminal justice system (Formby & Paynter, 2020; Nowak, 2019; van Hout & Mhlanga-Gunda, 2019). According to a global study sanctioned by the UN, out of the one million, more than 410 000 children are held in correctional facilities every year (Nowak, 2019; PRI, 2021). This is making juvenile delinquency a huge global issue. In the USA alone, Puzanchera et al. (2021) report that over 53 000 juvenile offenders were involved in the juvenile criminal system in 2019. In Malawi, the existing reports show that there were around 900 young offenders (7.7%) in correctional facilities in 2014 (World Prison Brief, 2021). This signals that many school-going aged individuals are incarcerated in correctional facilities in some parts of the world.

Studies show that young people often commit various offences ranging from misdemeanours to serious ones. In the Middle East, apart from ordinary criminal offences such as murder, theft, rape and violence, acts such as alcohol consumption, unlawful assembly and sexual behaviour among young people are considered criminal offences (Young et al., 2017). In Indonesia and Portugal, most delinquent juveniles are involved in theft, violence, drug and alcohol abuse, verbal bullying and sex offences (Marcellin et al., 2020; Sulistiyana, 2020). In Africa, recent studies consider activities committed by children or young people such as vandalism, school-based bullying, cheating during examinations, illegal weapon possession, alcoholism,

drug abuse, rape and physical violence as juvenile delinquency (Ajah & Ugwuoke, 2018; Arthur, 1996; Quan-Baffour & Zawada, 2012). For instance, in Eritrea, the most common forms of juvenile delinquency are theft, physical bullying, vandalism, and school violence (Yemane, 2020). In South Africa, serious crimes such as rape, murder, ATM bombings and drug smuggling are also more prevalent among young people (Quan-Baffour & Zawada, 2012). In Malawi, many young offenders often commit serious offences such as murder, rape, defilement and theft (Kajawo, 2019).

Criminal psychology studies suggest that several factors cause juvenile delinquency in society worldwide, ranging from their immaturity in adolescence period to extreme environmental factors beyond their control (Bright et al., 2011; Byrd & McCloud, 2021; Lambie & Randell, 2013; McMahan & Jump, 2017; Ou & Reynolds, 2010). McMahan and Jump (2017) argue that young offenders are involved in a disproportionate amount of offences because of their age and immaturity. Psychosocially immaturity causes them to succumb to peer pressure and acceptance, poor judgement, excitement and anger, and making immature choices resulting in criminal offences (Lambie & Randell, 2013). Ou and Reynolds (2010) observe that many juvenile delinquents come from underprivileged populations who usually have family dysfunctional and abusive backgrounds. In fact, dysfunctional family problems are the common risk factors for youths' delinquencies (Bright et al., 2011; Yao, 2021). Poverty also causes juvenile delinquency, especially in developing countries (Khuda, 2019; Ou & Reynolds, 2010; Sulistiyana, 2020).

In Africa, recent studies reveal various levels of relationship between juveniles' criminal behaviour and numerous individuals' and environmentally related criminal-risk factors in communities. These are dysfunctional families, illiteracy, school failure and dropout, poverty and peer pressure (Dube-Mawerewere & Chiborise, 2017; Ou & Reynolds, 2010; Quan-Baffour & Zawada, 2012). Yemane (2020) conducted a study in Eritrea to examine the causes of juvenile delinquency in this Sub-Saharan African country. This study found that dysfunctional or broken families are conducive breeding grounds for young people's involvement in criminal activities. In Zimbabwe, Dube-Mawerewere and Chiborise (2017) found that low education attainment



resulted in the majority of the released young offenders having problems getting proper employment, thus failing to sustain their basic needs after their release from prison. This caused them to commit further crimes leading to re-incarceration (Andersen et al., 2015; Dube-Mawerewere & Chiborise, 2017). Illiteracy and school failure were also found to be factors causing juvenile delinquency in Malawi in 2005 (Burton et al., 2005).

This shows that young people confined in correctional facilities need to be engaged in rehabilitation activities. Incarceration needs to aim at rehabilitating offenders through various interventions or programmes. Lambie and Randell (2013) observe that apart from rehabilitation, imprisonment for young offenders should support them in their development processes as adolescents in acquiring social autonomy and integration (Lambie & Randell, 2013). Incarceration needs to enhance their knowledge, skills and attitudes for their growth and development. Correctional facilities must provide programmes promoting constructive and pro-social peer interaction (Stone, 2020). Thus, this study aims to investigate the impact of incarceration on young offenders' access to quality education (as a rehabilitation strategy) in Malawi.

### **3.3 REHABILITATION OF THE INCARCERATED YOUNG OFFENDERS**

Rehabilitation has emerged as an important function of most correctional facilities across the globe. This has consequently enhanced the paradigm change in many countries from the concept of 'prison' to 'correctional services' to prioritise supporting offenders in acquiring the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge (education) to reduce reoffending (Cullen & Smith, 2011; Smith & Schweitzer, 2012).

#### **3.3.1 Rehabilitation function vis-à-vis education for young offenders**

The idea that correctional facilities should not just be punishment centres but arenas for rehabilitation has a long history (Durrant, 2018). All along, there was a belief that people incarcerated in correctional facilities should not be dumped there for punishment but should be supported to enable them to desist from reoffending after release (Cullen & Gilbert, 2013; Kaufman, 1960; Martinson, 1974). For instance,

education as a rehabilitative tool dates back to the 1700s in North America (Johnson, 2015). Initially, the offenders were engaged in religious-type education facilitated to enable them to change their ways through reflection and introspection in their solitary confinements (Cullen & Gilbert, 2013; Johnson, 2015). In the 1960s and 1970s, the idea of rehabilitation began to be widespread in prisons (Durrant, 2018; Kaufman, 1960). However, a 'what works' review by Martinson (1974) changed the atmosphere.

Martinson (1974) reviewed about 200 relevant rehabilitation studies involving hundreds of thousands of participants from 1945–1967 to assess their effectiveness mainly in reducing recidivism. He evaluated programmes including education and vocational training for juveniles, psychotherapy, medical, and community-based interventions as rehabilitation activities. His key finding was that “with few and isolated exceptions, the rehabilitative efforts that have been reported so far have had no appreciable effect on recidivism” (p. 25). Regarding education programmes, Martinson observed that there was little empirical evidence to support their effectiveness. Martinson found that academic achievements in terms of grades made no significant difference in recidivism rates. The exception was noted in a small percentage of young offenders with higher Intelligence Quotients (IQs) who were already doing well in their previous community schools. This small group with high IQ performed outstandingly in their correctional education. He observed that rehabilitation programmes such as education and psychotherapy were generally poorly administered.

In his conclusion, Martinson (1974) argued that the studies he reviewed did not provide enough evidence that rehabilitation of offenders helped reduce recidivism, even though he found a few isolated cases of success which produced no clear pattern to specify the effectiveness of any particular rehabilitation programme. He also critiqued the 1960s-1970s popular understanding of crime as a disease that offenders were like patients requiring a cure (e.g. medical model) as a flawed theory since it overlooked and denied personal and societal normality of crime. He also argued that their coercive nature rendered them both offensive and ineffective. Martinson's (1974) findings influenced a temporary sway in focus from rehabilitative

to punitive policies. Duwe (2017) argues that the “nothing works” conclusions from Robert Martinson’s 1974 study and another publication which he co-authored in 1975 with his colleagues regarding the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes in reducing reoffending (Lipton et al., 1975) invigorated a change in the focus from the rehabilitative ideal which triumphed in the 1950s and 1960s back to deterrence and ‘just desserts’.

Nevertheless, in the 1980s and 1990s, researchers critiqued the methods used in Martinson’s studies and challenged their conclusions (Duwe, 2017). Several systematic reviews and meta-analyses of rehabilitation programmes helped in changing the perspectives from punishment to rehabilitation again since it was suggested that rehabilitation, including correctional education, is effective in reducing reoffending (Aos et al., 2006; Cullen & Smith, 2011; Durrant, 2018; MacKenzie, 2006; Wilson et al., 2000). The controversial Martinson himself renounced his earlier 1974 condemnation of rehabilitation as he recognised that there were many examples of successful rehabilitation programmes that worked under various conditions (Gendreau & Ross, 1979; Martinson, 1979). Offenders need to be rehabilitated by giving them tools to help them live a good life outside the prison walls, thereby becoming productive members of their society (Modecki, 2008; Swanson, 2018).

In the contemporary world, various rehabilitation programmes are offered in correctional institutions, ranging from educational and work-based to cognitive behavioural programmes (Durrant, 2018; McMahon & Jump, 2017; Wilson, 2016). Education has been singled out as the pillar of effective rehabilitation (Coates, 2016). Gehring (2017) calls ‘correctional education’ the “hidden heritage” (p. 1) of prison reform. Even though education is usually overlooked, it has always been a crucial element in the rehabilitation function (Finlay & Bates, 2018). Correctional education is important because incarcerated people, especially youth, are often already an educationally disadvantaged population (Davis et al., 2013; Johnson & Quan-Baffour, 2016; Nkoana et al., 2020; UNESCO, 2021). They lack the literacy and work skills to live a pro-social and self-reliant life in society (Durrant, 2018). If prisoners are engaged in meaningful education and other rehabilitation programmes while in

prison, they will have meaningful lives. As a result, they are less likely to re-offend (Nkoana et al., 2020). Therefore, Durrant (2018) is not surprised to find that many correctional facilities offer a range of educational, vocational, and technical training programmes to enhance offenders' literacy and numeracy skills.

Moreover, a meta-analysis study by Davis et al. (2013) involving 58 studies in the USA revealed that educating people incarcerated in prisons reduces their risks of reoffending after release. The same study found that inmates' involvement in education programmes increased the odds of employment after their release by 13%. Finlay and Bates (2018) argue that education "enables a natural process of self-transformation" because it provides students with a chance to exercise their choices as "an individual subject rather than an object of a treatment or rehabilitation programme" (p. 124). Moreover, several studies have underlined education and training as essential activities that help correctional services create and enhance positive emotions and experiences in prisoners that inspire them to respond positively to rehabilitation (Boggs, 2019; Johnson & Quan-Baffour, 2022; Schinkel, 2014; Tønseth & Bergsland, 2019).

Furthermore, education can be a tool that ex-offenders can use to overcome stigma in their communities after their release. Darke and Aresti (2016) indicate that education, especially at the tertiary level, can become "collateral that can be used as currency to negotiate the stigma commonly experienced by former prisoners in the conventional world" (pp. 28 - 29). This is because education provides a new identity and an alternative way of living to offenders studying while incarcerated and those already released. A life that used to be meaningless is made meaningful in their new goal of pursuance of education (Darke & Aresti, 2016). This helps in their successful reintegration if the ex-offenders retain their students' identities and decide to further pursue their educational goals by linking themselves to a learning community after their release (Pike & McFarlane, 2017). Moreover, success in studying in a challenging environment such as prison is already a show of discipline and resilience (Clark 2016; Farley & Pike, 2018).

Engaging in education also encourages offenders to consider themselves more as students than offenders, thereby promoting their rehabilitation. Farley and Pike (2018) observe that engaging in education enables correctional inmates to strongly identify themselves as students. They envision their outside 'student' image as something better than the obvious offender status. This is rehabilitative in its own right because it makes it possible for an individual to change their sense of self from an antisocial to a pro-social identity accompanied by pro-social attitudes, values and beliefs (Farley & Pike, 2018). Based on their UK study, Pike and Adams (2012) observe that inmate students usually value their student identity as a lifeline and are ready to protect this valued identity against the conflicting perspectives of their offender identity. These kinds of inmates are unlikely to cause trouble in the facility. Boggs (2019) also contends that society (families, communities and local economies) benefits greatly when an offender is released after acquiring an education because they return to their communities prepared and ready to rebuild their lives, secure gainful employment, and consequently pay taxes.

However, a meta-analysis study by Wilson (2016) produced another profound revelation on generalising rehabilitation programming on all offenders. This study found that educational, vocational, and work-based programmes tend to be more effective with adult offenders than young offenders in correctional facilities. This is because such programmes do not address most of the underlying psychological offending factors, a crucial element of young offenders' treatment. This study concurs with one of Martinson's (1974) conclusions in his 'what works' study. In his cautious statement that nothing works, Martinson avoided making a sweeping conclusion that other factors such as age did not contribute to reducing reoffending of the released offenders. He acknowledged that an individual's age is also a major factor in their involvement in criminal behaviour since research showed that recidivism often tends to be lower in offenders over the age of 30 compared to younger ones. Thus, minimal rehabilitation efforts that often work on adult offenders, confined solely to education or the development of work-based skills are less likely to yield positive results for young offenders who need comprehensive rehabilitation programming.

Wilson's (2016) conclusions make sense when read together with other studies in juvenile sociology. Studies reveal that young offenders are often at a high risk of offending because of their immaturity and naivety, especially during their late adolescence (McMahon & Jump, 2017; Nagin et al., 1995) and because of their vulnerability to peer influence (Suzuki & Wood, 2018). This is often a temporary behaviour that ceases when they are older and more mature (Moffitt, 1993). This phenomenon leads to the conclusion that activities such as education and training that are not complemented with psychosocial treatments have little impact on juvenile offenders. This is why Blomberg et al. (2011) argue that rehabilitation programmes such as formal education in correctional facilities are usually ineffective because they do not provide the specialist education services usually needed by juveniles with significant learning and psychological problems. It is, therefore, essential to supplement education with other types of programmes that target change in young people's psychological characteristics, such as psychosocial or cognitive behavioural treatment programmes (Hollin & Palmer, 2006; Wilson, 2016).

Psychosocial and cognitive behavioural treatment programmes are grounded in the idea that the way the offenders think and reason, in addition to their beliefs, values, and norms, play an essential role in triggering their criminal behaviour (Durrant, 2018). Many prisoners need these cognitive behavioural treatments, even though they are likely to opt for practical programmes such as education and training (James et al., 2016; Horney et al., 2012). The content and approaches of cognitive behavioural treatments vary depending on the specific groups of offenders. These programmes include core elements such as cognitive skills development, interpersonal problem-solving strategies, anger control, and relapse-prevention treatments (Durrant, 2018; Wilson, 2016). Therefore, rehabilitation, which uses behavioural interventions and includes education programmes, is likely to be successful for young offenders (Hollin & Palmer, 2006; Swanson, 2018; Wilson, 2016). This is because, even though adolescents are less responsible for their behaviour due to immaturity, "they are also more corrigible and educable than adults," and more responsive to meaningful rehabilitation efforts (Dunn, 2008, p. 32).

However, many studies report that these comprehensive rehabilitation programmes are scarce in many correctional institutions, including young offenders' institutions worldwide (Lambie & Randell, 2013; McGrath et al., 2020; Zitko, 2021b). Zitko (2021b) doubts the rehabilitation role of some correctional facilities in the USA. According to him, some correctional facilities in the USA are packed with impoverished people with little or no education. Even though it is claimed by many states, such as California, that they are prioritising rehabilitation, Zitko (2021b) argues that this priority is not visible in many prisons since they have gradually drifted towards a retributive approach. Simpkins (2015) concurs with Zitko as he argues that some American prisons, which were "originally designed to rehabilitate offenders, are now considered by most to be warehouses where people are 'stored' until released back into society" (Simpkins, 2015, p. 26). However, the recent study by Davis and Tolbert (2019) reveals that, apart from correctional education, there were many rehabilitation programmes such as re-entry, cognitive behavioural therapy and drug treatment programmes offered in many correctional facilities in the USA, which they noted were competing with education programmes such as 'college programmes'.

In the UK, McGrath et al. (2020) indicate that, despite their availability within the correctional facilities, psychological services are generally underutilised by young offenders mainly due to the offenders' general negative attitudes towards psychological treatment, as well as their distrust and unwillingness to open up about emotional issues. Many studies concur that young offenders are problematic when it comes to receiving psychological treatments (Mitchell & Latchford, 2010; Nasset et al., 2011; Olver & Wong, 2011). Olver and Wong (2011) further observe that juvenile offenders have a high chance of dropping out of psychological interventions. In contrast, adult offenders are more likely to accept psychological support for their mental issues than juveniles (Olver & Wong, 2011).

### **3.3.2 African review on young offenders' rehabilitation**

Various rehabilitation programmes, including education, are provided in many African countries' correctional facilities. In the words of Quan-Baffour and Zawada (2012),

“education and training for prison inmates are thus currently gaining currency in many democratic countries” (p. 73). Many studies report that education benefits both the offender and society (Johnson, 2015; Quan-Baffour & Zawada, 2012; Vandala, 2019). A recent study by Vandala (2019) in South Africa concluded that education can transform offenders “by changing behaviour and attitude, boosting self-esteem and self-confidence, enhancing employment skills, reviving humanity, improving cognitive skills, promoting growth, improving literacy levels...” (p. 12).

However, studies still report a scarcity of comprehensive rehabilitation programmes in young offenders’ centres in many African countries (Ajah & Ugwuoke, 2018; Bella et al., 2010; Igbinovia, 1988; Samanyanga, 2016), and in Malawi (Burton et al., 2005; Kajawo, 2019). In Zimbabwe, Kusada (2014) indicates that some facilities have psychosocial therapeutic programmes which complement other educational, vocational, religious and other rehabilitation programmes. However, Samanyanga (2016) shows scepticism about the effectiveness of these activities in addressing the offenders’ needs for effective rehabilitation and societal reintegration. He argues that offenders are hardly involved in pre-programming counselling sessions to deal with their previous antisocial behaviours. Further, he also observes the lack of clear diagnostic criteria and standards to correctly ascertain the offender's needs. Consequently, offenders are coercively allocated to the available rehabilitation programmes, such as farming, irrespective of their suitability and personal preferences (Kusada, 2014; Samanyanga, 2016).

In Lesotho, Ngozwana (2017), in her study that assessed the views of adult offenders on rehabilitation programmes, found that penitentiaries were offering educational, vocational, life skills, agricultural, religious and recreational activities as rehabilitation programmes. However, this study concurs with what Samanyanga (2016) found. Similar to the Zimbabwe context, rehabilitation programming in Lesotho was ineffective mainly because many activities were imposed on offenders without considering their needs and interests (Ngozwana, 2017). Moreover, offenders considered many skills programmes, such as farming, as hard labour meant to punish and not to rehabilitate them due to the absence of educational components within



those programmes. Ngozwana (2017) concluded that offenders in Lesotho lacked proper motivation to participate meaningfully in rehabilitation programmes.

In Tanzania, the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance [CHRAGG] (2011) inspected the conditions of incarceration in juvenile detention facilities in Tanzania. The report revealed that incarcerated juveniles in Tanzania generally did not have access to meaningful activities and programmes to help in their rehabilitation and re-entry into society. According to the report, young offenders did not have individualised rehabilitation plans, and there were few mechanisms to assist young offenders in preparing for re-entry into society. Instead, many young offenders were just incapacitated in prisons without receiving adequate rehabilitation.

In Nigeria, Ajah and Ugwuoke (2018) reveal that, instead of being housed in special rehabilitation centres, young offenders were mixed with adult offenders. This was also reported in Tanzania (CHRAGG, 2011). In Chad, it was reported that there were no special young offender rehabilitation centres. Even though some correctional facilities had separate cells for juvenile offenders, young offenders were held together with adult offenders in many facilities, which exposed them to more delinquent behaviour such as smoking cannabis which was readily available for sale in many Chadian adult prisons (Amnesty International, 2012). Amnesty International (2012) also revealed that in adult prisons, juveniles were often ill-treated by adult inmates. This trend is more likely to worsen the juveniles' lives than rehabilitate them.

### **3.3.3 Young offenders' delinquency and rehabilitation in Malawi**

There is a dearth of research in Malawi on young offenders' delinquency, incarceration and rehabilitation. As discussed in Chapter 1, there were no prisons in Malawi before the colonial regime, just like in many other African societies (Dastile & Agozino, 2019; Karari, 2018). Families and community elders were responsible for ensuring discipline and conformity to the accepted code of behaviour of children and young people in Malawian society. In the matrilineal communities, both the upbringing of children and youth and the settlement of disputes remained the responsibility of members of the *mbumba* (mothers and maternal uncles), while in the patrilineal

communities, the same responsibility was on the father and male elders of the village (McCracken, 2012). Thus, parents, siblings, other relatives and other children provided an immediate social context for the cultural socialisation of a child.

Villages and households were considered critical social units (McCracken, 2012). The principles of Ubuntu or *Umunthu* (as the term is known in the Malawian local language) required that all community elders take responsibility for all children within the community. This is well presented in the saying “it takes a whole village to raise a child” (Johnson, 2015, p. 42), which has its Malawi indigenous language (Chichewa) version “*mwana wa nzako ndi wako yemwe [ukachenjera manja udy naye]*” which literary means “someone’s child is your child [if you are clever you will benefit from him/her]” (Kayange, 2018, p. 128). Indigenous knowledge systems also claim that many communities had an excellent non-formal education system in which rites of passage ceremonies included a period in which a group of boys or girls would be taken to the mountains or special secluded places for initiation ceremonies. These were the arenas in which they were educated on the expected societal behaviours and etiquette and other moral and ethical lessons for their conformity to societal values and expectations by the elders of the villages. Therefore, juvenile delinquency was not common. However, in the rare cases of delinquency and criminality, pre-colonial Malawian communities had varied non-custodial means of dealing with those on the wrong side of the social order. Issues were often handled using the customary laws with reconciliation as the ultimate goal (MPS, 2021; McCracken, 2012).

McCracken (2012) indicates that almost all Malawian communities, including the Yao, Mang’anja, Tonga, Nyanja, Makua, Chewa and Chipeta, Maravi and Ngoni, shared a similar justice system in which meetings called *milandu* would be summoned where the traditional chiefs, village headmen and elders would come together to settle disputes brought before them. These were serious cases that family negotiations could not resolve. Restitution and restorative justice principles were used in which the victim and offender were involved in the justice system’s process of repairing the harm brought about by the crime and focusing on compensating for the wrong done instead of just punishing offenders. For children, their parents would be held

responsible for not supervising and controlling them from indulging in delinquent activities. Therefore, they would be compelled to pay for the compensation on behalf of their children. Anecdotal evidence suggests that even though many indigenous practices were eroded by the influence of western cultures, some cultural aspects, such as initiation ceremonies of the boys and girls at puberty, have been preserved in many Yao, Lhomwe, Chewa and Ngoni rural communities.

When the colonialists established their government, they constructed prisons at 19 government stations all over the country to detain and house the offenders, including juveniles (Mwakilama, 2010). Literature does not distinguish between the offences committed by young and adult offenders during the colonial period (Boeder, 1981; M<sup>c</sup>Cracken, 2012; Mwakilama, 2010; MPS, 2021). Young and adult inmates were mixed. No formal education was offered to inmates. Only skills programmes such as tailoring, metalwork, carpentry, bricklaying and weaving were offered to long-sentence inmates at Zomba Central Prison (Baker, 2003; Mwakilama, 2010). Some skilled natives were employed as inmates' technical skills instructors. Nevertheless, the prison system's philosophy was still aimed at punishing prisoners to unlearn their unacceptable behaviours.

After independence in 1964, offenders continued to be sent to the existing prisons (Alexander & Kynoch, 2011; Conley, 1992). The young and adult prisoners were still mixed as there were no special prisons for young offenders (Chirwa, 2001). Chirwa (2001) observed that this practice exacerbated various forms of abuse, including sexual abuse of juveniles. No formal education was provided to young offenders; only adult literacy classes were accessible to prisoners, especially at one central prison in Zomba (Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022).

In contemporary times, young offenders in Malawi often commit offences such as violence, murder, rape, defilement and theft, among others (Chirwa, 2001; Kajawo, 2019). More than 90% of the young offenders lodged in YORCs were dropouts of primary and secondary schools, needing education for their future (Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022). This means that young offenders need serious rehabilitative

interventions for their successful community re-entry outcomes. To address the young offenders' rehabilitation needs, Malawi declared some prisons to be YORCs in 2010, which saw the transfer of all young offenders from adult prisons to those facilities (Kajawo, 2019; Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022). As in many other prisons, the MPS introduced educational services in the YORCs since they were considered a priority (Kajawo, 2019; Salima, 2017). However, few studies have been conducted, to this researcher's knowledge, on young offenders in Malawi (e.g. Chapuwala, 2005; Kajawo, 2019; Moyokunyenga, 2015; Salima, 2017; Stapleton, 2000).

A qualitative study conducted by Moyokunyenga (2015) revealed that recidivism trends in Malawi prisons had been on the increase in those years (2012 to 2014) due to, among other factors, the lack of adequate offenders' involvement in rehabilitation programmes. Although this study was conducted at one adult prison, it informed this present study on the rehabilitation issues to investigate. Kajawo (2019) examined the management of education in Malawi prison facilities but did not study the access and quality of education offered to juveniles which this study intended to study. The review generally showed that even though several studies attest to the fact that correctional education benefits offenders, studies on the impact of incarceration on juveniles' education access and rights are limited. Therefore, it is safe to state that studies on the impact of incarceration on juveniles' access and rights to quality education are limited in Africa. The current study sought to fill this gap.

### **3.4 EDUCATION ACCESS AND QUALITY OF YOUNG OFFENDERS**

Education is an indisputable device that provides unlimited opportunities in life. Education of poor quality penalises a child since it provides fewer life prospects. According to Field et al. (2007) and OECD (2012), people obtaining an inferior education have limited economic capacity to be productive, grow and innovate. One of the qualities of the best education systems in the world is that they strive to provide quality education to all citizens regardless of their social status in their respective countries, with a focus on equity and quality (OECD, 2012). Youth incarcerated in correctional facilities also deserve to have access to quality education.

### **3.4.1 Young offenders' rights and access to education in penitentiaries**

Education access is considered mandatory and obligatory by law for school-aged young offenders in contrast to their adult counterparts (Hawley et al., 2013; Jäggi & Kliewer, 2020). Education of young offenders is a basic human right (Johnson & Quan-Baffour, 2022). School-aged incarcerated young people “must receive schooling meeting the minimal standards of mandatory public education” (Jäggi & Kliewer, 2020, p. 2). This is powerfully stipulated in the international legal instruments. The Nelson Mandela Rule 104 states that education must be provided to all prisoners who can benefit from such educational opportunities and “the education of illiterate prisoners and young prisoners shall be compulsory and special attention shall be paid to it by the prison administration” (UN, 2015b, p. 30).

The same rule further stipulates that "the education of prisoners shall be integrated with the country's educational system so that after their release, they may continue their education without difficulty" (UN, 2015b, p. 30). This is because young offenders are among the thousands of prisoners worldwide that are expected to be released from prisons each year (Bachman & Schutt, 2018; Davis et al., 2014; Formby & Paynter, 2020); thus, they should not find it challenging to resume schooling in society. However, studies indicate that the international laws granting similar educational rights enjoyed by the communities outside prisons to offenders do not always translate to access or provision of quality education in correctional facilities (Hawley et al., 2013; Farley & Pike, 2018). Gadama et al. (2020) argue that even though international standards are vital, there is usually a risk of non-compliance and being ignored by duty-bearers because “they are soft laws” (p. 14).

In the USA, schooling for school-aged incarcerated young offenders is obligatory. Young offenders are expected to receive correctional education in penitentiary facilities across the USA (Davis et al., 2014; Jäggi & Kliewer, 2020). This is because the juvenile justice system philosophy is embedded in rehabilitation, not punishment. Thus, school is the basic rehabilitation tool for the youth in the protected space of a penitentiary facility (Grant, 2017). In Europe, Hawley et al. (2013) also indicate that

education in correctional facilities is mandatory for young offenders to prepare them for the future.

In the United Arab Emirates, Hourani et al. (2019) indicate that guided by the UN instruments regarding juveniles, the government provides quality education at the juveniles' centres to address the academic, vocational, emotional and social needs of every school-aged offender. A study by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute (RWI) of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (2015) also found that young offenders were provided with formal education in many ASEAN member states such as Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Azam et al. (2021) and Hassan and Rosly (2021) concur that education is an essential activity in offenders' rehabilitation in Malaysian correctional facilities. Hassan and Rosly (2021) observe that young offenders' facilities in Malaysia are called 'approved schools' to make them "look less like prison[s] and more like...school[s]" (p. 644). However, the RWI (2015) report still indicated that educational services were not sufficiently provided in many correctional facilities in the region. For instance, in Cambodian prisons, the report revealed that young offenders' conditions of incarceration were deplorable and degrading, with some facilities not providing education or other programmes. The report also showed a shortage of teaching staff in countries such as Brunei Darussalam and Myanmar.

In some African countries, studies report that many young offenders are provided with formal education (Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017; Ajah & Ugwuoke, 2018; Arthur, 1996; Fambasayi & Moyo, 2020; Johnson, 2015; Makuwerere, 2020; Msoroka et al., 2018). Aheisibwe and Rukundo (2017) report that education programmes are offered in many penitentiary facilities, especially in western, eastern and southern African countries such as South Africa, Namibia, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leon, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. However, these authors reached a generalised conclusion that education was accessible to the whole prison population without providing information on young offenders' access.

Nevertheless, several studies have provided specific evidence pointing to the access to education by young offenders in many African countries. In Ghana, it is indicated that young offenders had always been admitted to borstal training centres before their independence (Arthur, 1996). These centres combine education, vocational training and counselling for young offenders' rehabilitation. Borstal training centres are also used in Kenya (Fambasayi & Moyo, 2020). In South Africa, education is seen as a constitutional right and a "foundation stone for rehabilitation" and is provided to all correctional inmates, including young offenders (Quan-Baffour & Zawada, 2012, p. 73). Johnson (2015) indicates that South Africa has youth correctional centres that are known as 'centres of excellence' in which young people on the wrong side of the law from the age of 12 to 22 are treated well with good food, clothing and lodgings in addition to being provided with quality education.

However, studies have also reported that education is not accessible to some young offenders in some African countries. In Tanzania, a report by CHRAGG (2011) revealed that juveniles in pre-trial detention could not access formal education while incarcerated. The report provided an example of a boy aged 17 years at Segerea prison (incarcerated at the age of 14) who stayed at the pre-trial detention facility for three years without any formal education being provided to him, even when he requested it. The report further revealed that many young offenders have limited access to education and other rehabilitative activities such as vocational training, psychosocial support and recreation to help their successful rehabilitation. Msoroka et al. (2018), in their study at five correctional facilities in Tanzania, observed that this is because no law in Tanzania obliges prison authorities to provide formal education to the incarcerated people, thus making education provision not mandatory. According to them, Tanzania has an excellent correctional education policy, but it is not legally binding. Thus, it cannot be used to force prison authorities for its implementation. Msoroka et al. (2018) argue that "there is no room for anyone to question its implementation" (p. 48). As a result, recent studies in Tanzania still reveal that formal education is not offered in many correctional facilities in the country (Msoroka et al., 2018; Msoroka, 2019). Likewise, Amnesty International's (2012) report revealed that

the correctional facilities in Chad often did not have any rehabilitation programmes, including education for juveniles serving their sentences or waiting for trial.

In Malawi, the law protects children from any punishment, treatment or work that is hazardous to their physical and mental health and likely to disrupt their education (GoM, 2018). These include young offenders in prisons. As in many other countries, MPS has introduced formal education and technical and vocational training programmes in all young offenders' facilities since they are considered a priority (Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022; Kajawo, 2019; Salima, 2017). This was partly informed by the study by Burton et al. (2005), which revealed that poverty was among the leading causes of crime and recidivism in Malawi. The study also revealed that children born in low-income families were at a high risk of falling prey to crime due to peer pressure and lack of economic opportunities. These findings point to the need to provide quality education to the incarcerated young people. These studies, in addition to focusing on adult prisons, were interested in the management of the programmes and not their meaningfulness to the education and career success of the offenders. This review points to the need for more studies on correctional education in facilities incarcerating school-going young offenders.

### **3.4.2 Quality of education in the young offenders' facilities**

Although there is considerable evidence regarding the importance of quality education for offenders during incarceration, studies report that education provided in prison is not usually similar in quality to the one provided in the community (Cavendish, 2014; Formby & Paynter, 2020; Gary, 2014; Lanskey, 2016; Leone, 2015; Mears & Travis, 2004; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Lambie and Randell (2013) assert that young offenders often receive a "more fragmented and inferior education than that of their peers in the community" (p. 454). Lanskey (2016) reports on two studies that involved ex-young offenders previously incarcerated in secure institutions in England and Wales. From these studies, most young offenders indicated that educational programmes were not well-organised. Lanskey (2016) concluded that the



prison authorities were not committed to educational activities; thus the schools were not run like those in the communities.

In the USA, even though many correctional facilities provide education to young offenders, Leone (2015) observes that there is low-quality education in some US penitentiary facilities. In his literature review, he indicates that incarcerated young people are provided with an education that is inadequate and of substantially inferior quality to the one their counterparts are receiving in public schools. Leone (2015) also noted that these young offenders in many states of the USA often do not get the chance to complete their education or to develop various career and technical skills suitable to them in prisons. According to him, 37 local young offenders' centres regularly failed to meet government regulations related to curriculum, teacher qualifications, and instructional practices.

The situation is worsened in African countries by lack of proper rehabilitation policies, resulting in the rehabilitation function not being well-financed (Rupande & Ndolo, 2014; Johnson, 2015; Chigunwe, 2014). In Malawi, despite the rehabilitation function being inscribed in 1994 in the country's constitution and prioritised in the subsequent prison policies as the essential means through which the MPS intends to contribute to public security, the reality is the opposite (Kajawo, 2019; MPS, 2016). Kajawo (2019) observes that the rehabilitation function that included education provision to offenders was hardly allocated resources. This made many young offenders unable to continue their education after being released. This shows that education provided in penitentiaries is usually of inferior quality.

Studies have provided several reasons to support the assertion that education provided in prison is not usually similar in quality to the one provided in the community, as presented below.

#### *3.4.2.1 The negativity of correctional facilities' environments*

The environment in which an education facility is located plays a critical role in the quality of education provided. Since young offenders' schools are sub-systems of

supra-systems which are the correctional facilities in the systems theory viewpoint (Benowitz, 2001), the facilities need to provide a suitable environment for effective schooling. In this case, for learning and teaching to occur, the school needs to provide a safe and peaceful atmosphere, not oppressive for staff members or students, and a climate of high expectations (Ornstein & Levine, 2008). Warr (2016) opines that education in prison needs to be developed and established around the personal, emotional, cognitive and educational development of inmate students in environments that represent relationships of care and welfare.

However, studies on correctional education programmes revealed that correctional facilities do not usually provide a positive environment for teaching and learning. As opposed to a typical school or college environment, correctional educational institutions operate in a closed environment in which inmates are tightly controlled (Farley & Pike, 2018). Warr (2016) argues that one of the glitches that plague offenders' education in the UK is that correctional facility is framed around discourses of control and discipline in which an offender primarily exists as a bureaucratic entity to be managed. This is not the original aim of correctional education. The penitentiary facilities, though naturally coercive environments are thought to have the potential to provide educational space to "engage, enable and empower" young offenders incarcerated therein (UNESCO, 2021, p. 97). Correctional education can help enrich young offenders' lives to make them realise their potential and contribute to their communities' socioeconomic development after their release (UNESCO, 2021).

Furthermore, Hopkins and Farley (2015) explain that offenders, including students, are sometimes subjected to movement restrictions or transfers that negatively affect their education. Due to some security classifications, some inmate students cannot meet to discuss their schoolwork; their class sessions are at the mercy of security officers who can interrupt, cancel or change them at short notice. This is why Farley and Pike (2018) opine that the priority in correctional facilities is usually safe and secure custody of the inmates. Penitentiary security is prioritised over everything else, including education (Johnson, 2015). Farley and Pike (2018) also agree that education is the last concern on most penitentiary management's priority lists, even in

western countries. Therefore, Warr (2016) observes that correctional education is gradually moving away from its typical and expected general pedagogical aims.

Studies have also revealed the existence of prison officials' negative attitudes toward correctional education. A study by Darke and Aresti (2016) indicates that some students in some western countries' prisons harboured the perception that prison officers were hostile and apathetic to the inmates' efforts to acquire an education within the correctional facilities, thus affecting their motivation. This is reported to be serious, especially in African countries. In a study done by Johnson (2015) in three penitentiaries in South Africa, the majority of female offenders reported that most of the correctional officers at the female correctional facility were not supportive of their educational activities. This made those female offenders feel apathetic and unmotivated toward correctional education.

In unfortunate situations, these officers include the management of correctional facilities (Achakzai et al., 2015; Fakude, 2012; Kajawo, 2019; Mkosi, 2013; Rupande & Ndoro, 2014). For example, Mkosi (2013) indicates that education was not valued by some correctional facilities administrations in South Africa. Priority was given to security activities such as headcounts and lockdowns, which hindered the effective management of the correctional schools. This was also observed in Pakistan in a study conducted by Achakzai et al. (2015) in the Balochistan province that focused on incarcerated women. The study revealed that senior authorities were unsympathetic and callous about the well-being of offenders, especially women in their facilities. This is why the authors argue that incarcerated Pakistani women were praying for the return of Elizabeth Fryto (a British charity lady who lived in England in the 1800s) to "come over and improve their conditions in jails" (Achakzai et al., 2015, p. 28).

Fakude (2012) argues that the reason for the correctional officials' negativity could be that the majority of custodial staff themselves have no or a low-level education and a deeply entrenched resistance against offenders' education, thus, they put much emphasis on safe custody over rehabilitation. Some of them consider education as an undeserved privilege for offenders. If officers harbouring this negativity engrained by

socialisation are in the majority at a particular facility, then the education goal is bound to face opposition since it is the same security officials who control almost every activity of offenders in the facility (Moyo, 2014). This is worse in jurisdictions where facilities are congested. Overcrowding hinders the successful implementation of rehabilitation programmes such as education (Benatar, 2014).

Furthermore, schools in penitentiary facilities face several challenges, including a shortage of quiet places to study for students and a lack of updated educational resources due to archaic prison laws that do not allow inmates access to computers (Barringer-Brown, 2015). Prisons are naturally noisy, congested, disorienting, depressing and hostile environments which are unlikely to be a suitable learning environment for students (Gona et al., 2014; Hopkins & Farley, 2015). Mwenya and Chibomba (2019) found that one of the significant challenges in the provision of correctional education to incarcerated offenders in Zambia was disruptions caused by unceremonious transfers of inmate students from one facility to another and limited class periods. The same was also noted in Uganda (Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017).

On the issue of limited time provided for educational activities, studies have found that education is run on a part-time basis in some jurisdictions. In Slovakia, in a study by Lukacova et al. (2018), teachers reported that correctional education was provided part-time as afternoon classes. This was because offenders were involved in prison work duties in the morning. Mwenya and Chibomba (2019) also observed in their Zambian study that students had minimal time to learn in a day since lessons were usually conducted in the afternoons after the inmates had knocked off from their manual work when they were already too exhausted to concentrate. All these factors point to a lack of interest and support from the general prison management in most countries on prison education.

#### *3.4.2.2 Inadequacy of physical resources*

Studies in many countries, especially in America, Europe and other countries such as South Africa, Singapore and Malaysia, show that correctional education programmes are well administered and resourced in some facilities (Johnson, 2015; Davis et al.,

2014; Davis, 2019; Hassan & Rosly, 2021, RWI, 2015). For instance, in Malaysia, Hassan and Rosly (2021) report that there are young offenders' centres called approved schools. Each young offenders centre sits on a plot of land of between five to 20 hectares in size with the necessary facilities such as classrooms for formal education, workshops for technical and vocational training, a library, administrative block, hostels, cellblocks, a dining hall, school and prayer halls and sports grounds for outdoor activities. Hassan and Rosly (2021) also report that the facilities are equipped with computer rooms, a gymnasium and TV and conference rooms. This is all done to make these facilities look more like school campuses. However, the same study reported that a small proportion of the country's young offenders' population benefited from such educational facilities due to limited space and the number of educators and skilled practitioners involved (Hassan & Rosly, 2021).

These best practices in young offenders' education are not common in many countries. Studies have reported that correctional education programmes are not well-funded in many jurisdictions in the world leading to numerous challenges in accessing resources. Barringer-Brown (2015) observes that the biggest challenge always remains as to who will fund and resource the prison education programme as a rehabilitation tool, especially for young offenders. In the USA, Zitko (2021a) found that correctional education was impeded by many resource challenges, including a lack of basic teaching and learning resources such as textbooks, pens and paper, and insufficient access to student resources such as counselling, student services and libraries in Northern California. Lanskey (2016) also reports that the released young offenders from some facilities in England and Wales indicated inadequacy and low quality of learning resources as among the issues that compromised the incarcerated young offenders' education. Similar findings were reported in Slovakia (Lukacova et al., 2018).

However, the resource challenge is worse in African correctional facilities. Studies reveal that education programmes in many prisons in Africa (both for adults and young offenders) face similar challenges of resources (Ajah & Ugwuoke, 2018; Bella et al., 2010; Ismaila, 2020; Johnson, 2015; Rupande & Ndolo, 2014). In Nigeria, Bella

et al. (2010) revealed that Nigeria's juvenile justice system was performing poorly because the education offered in many juvenile facilities was marred by many problems. These challenges included inadequate funds, lack of proper policies, shortage of teachers, and lack of necessary educational infrastructure. Ajah and Ugwuoke (2018) also observe that some juveniles were sometimes dumped in remand homes in Nigeria, where they had no access to education because of resource insufficiency. This was also reported in Uganda, where offenders complained of a lack of adequate quality infrastructure and academic materials. According to Aheisibwe and Rukundo (2017), the facilities did not have adequate classrooms, furniture, laboratories or libraries. It was revealed that some classes were conducted under the trees, especially in the females' section, due to shortages of classrooms.

In Zambia, Mwenya and Chibomba (2019) conducted a study in Muchinga Province to evaluate the provision of formal education to inmates in correctional facilities. The study revealed that education provided in correctional schools was of low quality mainly due to inadequate teaching and learning materials, as well as poor and insufficient academic infrastructure such as classrooms. According to this study, teachers complained that students in different classes were combined and taught in one classroom due to the unavailability of adequate classrooms. Teachers also complained that the facility had inadequate prescribed textbooks for effective teaching. In Zimbabwe, Samanyanga (2016) also reported an insufficiency of learning resources, including stationery for educational activities in correctional facilities as derailing offenders' effective rehabilitation.

In Malawi, Kajawo and Nyirongo (2022) conducted a mixed-methods study at 17 prison facilities in 2018 involving inmate students, teachers, education coordinators and station managers. This study revealed a huge problem of resources marring the education programme in all facilities. The schools lacked laboratories, libraries, proper classrooms and adequate learning materials such as notebooks, prescribed textbooks and pens. However, this study did not disaggregate the findings of adult

and young offenders' facilities, making it difficult to understand the situation at the young offenders' centres only.

Generally, the literature shows that many schools in correctional facilities lack resources. The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education observes that many correctional systems consider the provision of educational opportunities as a temporary privilege extended to inmates at the prison authorities' discretion rather than as a fundamental right (UN, 2009). This results in the penitentiary system failing to provide effective educational programmes with pragmatic rehabilitation outcomes. If incarceration disrupts young people's education, it logically follows that incarceration will adversely affect their lives after prison. This current study also investigated the level of resources and how they affected the right to quality education of school-aged young people incarcerated at young offenders' facilities.

#### *3.4.2.3 Inadequacy of qualified educators*

Teaching in the penitentiary environment is considered social work. Medders (2010) observes that teachers teach in penitentiaries to make a difference. Teachers are partly motivated by the need to contribute to making the world a better place for everyone by extending education opportunities to prison inmates. Barringer-Brown (2015) reveals that there is a remarkable number of teachers who are motivated to work in prison schools by the fact that they are contributing to the rehabilitation of inmates and by the feeling that they are assisting the less privileged groups of society, as well as because inmates show an interest to learn. The unique traits that offenders have, such as eagerness and willingness to learn, motivate teachers to work in correctional facilities (Schenck, 2005).

For instance, the study done in the USA by Schenck (2005) revealed that many teachers working in prisons were not only motivated by the excellent remuneration packages received, but also by the reality of working in prisons contributing to the rehabilitation processes of inmates. This was in contrast to the studies done in Africa, where most teachers, although willing and interested in working in prison schools, complain of poor conditions of service (Kajawo, 2019; Ntholola, 2007; Rupande &

Ndolo, 2014). Nevertheless, Dewey et al. (2020) recommend recruiting educators willing to work in a penitentiary environment would be an outstanding effort to enhance sustainable correctional education.

Nonetheless, studies, especially in Africa, report that correctional schools usually face the challenges of the inadequacy of qualified teachers (Ajah & Ugwuoke, 2018; Lanskey, 2016; Lukacova et al., 2018; Mwenya & Chibomba, 2019; Samanyanga, 2016). In Zambia, Mwenya and Chibomba (2019) found that the facilities were not providing quality education to offenders because of a lack of qualified teachers in correctional schools. According to the study, only 60% of the minimum teacher requirements for the particular facilities were teaching in the targeted facilities. Worse still, out of the inadequate teachers engaged in those facilities, only 22% were qualified to teach. According to this study, this was because the ministry of education was not deploying trained teachers in schools situated in the correctional facilities on behalf of the government. In contrast, in South Africa, Johnson (2015) observes that many young offenders' facilities had enough well-qualified educators.

In Malawi, Ntholola (2007) reports that there were only five qualified teachers at Maula Prison and three at Mzuzu Prison in 2007 to teach at both primary and secondary schools. Kajawo (2019) and Salima (2017) also reported a shortage of qualified educators in correctional facilities in Malawi. However, the policy was to recruit more educators for the education programme's success in both adult and young offenders' facilities. The researcher aimed to determine in the current study whether this status quo was improved after the new establishment dubbed as 'correctional oriented' had been put on the ground, particularly in the YORCs.

#### *3.4.2.4 Inadequacy of library and other information services*

Offenders enrolled in education programmes need access to information for their schooling needs (Canning & Buchanan, 2019; Demir, 2020; Eze, 2016; Ijiekhuamhen & Aiyebilehin, 2018; Khumalo et al., 2019; Sambo et al., 2017). In the contemporary world, students are expected to have access to both print and digital information sources. However, many studies found that people in penitentiaries usually face huge



information poverty (Canning & Buchanan, 2019; Drabinski & Rabina, 2015; Gama et al., 2020; Ijiekhuamhen & Aiyebilehin, 2018). In this modern information age where the internet is the primary source of information, in many countries, prison inmates are usually not allowed to have online access to information for security reasons (Canning & Buchanan, 2019; Drabinski & Rabina, 2015). In a study conducted at one Scottish penitentiary facility, Canning and Buchanan (2019) observed that the facility did not allow students to have access to the internet, a thing that was considered by many teaching staff as one of the barriers to offenders' quality education at that facility. This situation is common in Africa. Ismaila (2020) reports that inmates in many African countries, including Nigeria, are not allowed access to the internet and mobile phones for security reasons.

In contrast, Allen (2016) argues that the use of internet-based communications technology for the communication needs of incarcerated offenders is growing globally, especially in the developed world. According to Allen, in India, digital learning is used in some penitentiary facilities where offenders are provided with personal email accounts as part of an e-literacy programme. In the USA, one private prison provides inmates with specifically designed JP5 mini tablet computers for their communication needs, though in some parts of the same country, such as Northern California, studies report a lack of access to digital eLearning technologies as the main challenge impeding college education in correctional facilities (Zitko, 2021a).

In New Zealand, some correctional facilities have a digital resource called Secure Online Learning, in which young offenders securely access educational websites, thus enjoying quality educational resources for their effective schooling while in custody (Allen, 2016). Ismaila (2020) also reports that some prisons in Uruguay and India allow offenders to access internet resources for their information needs. Moreover, Farley (2017) reports that offenders have access to computers for their educational needs in some parts of Australia, even though Farley (2017) argues that they were not very useful to students, especially the post-graduates, because, in some facilities, they were poorly maintained with out-dated hardware and software. It

was also observed that the degree of access to some whitelisted websites was inadequate for some students' educational needs.

In addition to a lack of access to online sources of information, incarcerated offenders usually have limited access to physical library services, even those enrolled in education programmes. This is in contrast to the Nelson Mandela Rule 64 which advocates for the availability of an adequately stocked library at every penitentiary facility for the inmates' use. This rule further states that the prison library should be "...stocked with both recreational and instructional books, and prisoners shall be encouraged to make full use of it" (p. 23). Incarcerated people can benefit significantly from the presence of quality libraries and information services in their facilities (Formby & Paynter, 2020). In Turkey, it was found that the policy direction was that the library services in prison facilities were the responsibility of the public library service to enhance uniformity in the national standards (Dilek-Kayaoglu & Demir, 2014). However, these researchers found that prison library services were of low quality because of the inadequacy of qualified personnel, book collections, and user service. According to this study, the concept of the prison library was just on paper "rather than in serving its purpose as a provider of educational, rehabilitative, and vocational activities" (Dilek-Kayaoglu & Demir, 2014, p. 137).

This problem is worse in African countries. In South Africa, most correctional facilities have good library facilities and services for offenders. However, Khumalo et al. (2019) argue that there is no clear mandate for the provision of library and information services in correctional facilities. The public libraries mainly facilitate those services through their outreach programmes. South African government had not yet given a specific mandate on the management and funding of the correctional service libraries, which partly affects the offenders' education. However, Khumalo et al. (2019) claim that this could be because of the sensitivity of the correctional facilities' environment.

In a descriptive survey by Ijiekhuamhen and Aiyebilehin (2018) involving 1,154 incarcerated offenders in Delta State prisons in Nigeria, it was revealed that library services and resources were available at all prisons in the state. However, the study

also revealed that those libraries were usually inaccessible to offenders due to the inadequacy of library materials and the hostile nature of prison workers. Ijiekhuamhen and Aiyebilehin (2018) argue that prison authorities just strived to install libraries at all prisons but never put in place good strategies to ensure the inmates access and utilise those resources. These findings are supported by similar studies which were conducted in Kwara State and other states in the Southeast and Northwest part of Nigeria by Sambo et al. (2017), Eze (2016) and Ismaila (2020), respectively.

In Uganda, Aheisibwe and Rukundo (2017) argue that although the prison authorities provided education to offenders, many facilities did not have well-equipped libraries for inmates' studies. The libraries generally had religious books and a few recreational books such as novels which were not directly helpful to students studying formal educational courses. This coupled with the fact that offenders did not have access to other sources of information such as the internet, TV and radio, meant that offenders' access to information was a big challenge. In Zambia, Mwenya and Chibomba (2019) also reported that some correctional facilities did not have library facilities to support teaching and learning in their educational institutions.

In Malawi, many studies have revealed information poverty amongst incarcerated offenders involved in education, especially at adult correctional facilities (Gama et al., 2020; Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022). Gama et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative study at Mzimba Maximum Security Prison, a model correctional facility in Malawi. Despite the finding that the inmates need information in health, education and spiritual areas, the study concluded that the Mzimba prison library failed to satisfy this need due to poor library services, inadequate information resources and limited library access opportunities. In the study by Kajawo and Nyirongo (2022), many inmate students (61%) acknowledged the availability of libraries at their facilities' schools. However, more than 80% of those who acknowledged the library's availability indicated that the libraries had outdated and irrelevant books for their studies. Worse still, more than 80% also reported never having had access to those libraries.

#### 3.4.2.5 *Lack of proper support system for students in correctional facilities*

As has already been stated, many young offenders enter correctional facilities with a history of negative school experiences of serious absenteeism, withdrawal, discharge and many other kinds of school failure (Jäggi & Kliewer, 2020). These experiences might be coupled with challenges emanating from family dysfunction, mental health, substance use and abuse and poverty (McMahon & Jump, 2017; Lambie & Randell, 2013). Therefore, there are usually high illiteracy rates and low reading competencies among incarcerated young offenders (Jäggi & Kliewer, 2020; O’Cummings et al., 2010). O’Cummings et al. (2010) argue that with what happens in correctional facilities, most incarcerated young offenders are not willing to enrol in schools while serving their sentences or return to their regular schools after their release to earn a certificate.

In many countries, especially in Africa, well-planned rehabilitation is only in policy papers but not on the ground (Ismaila, 2020). There is, therefore, a critical need to educate the incarcerated young offenders and create a conducive and encouraging atmosphere for them to feel welcomed and motivated to enrol and take advantage of the educational opportunities found in the correctional facilities. This is why Dewey et al. (2020), in their study across eight prison administrations in the USA, recommend “...incentivising and celebrating successes to increase motivation as part of individualized education planning that centres prisoners’ diverse and learning styles” (p. 57) as one of the ways of improving correctional education approaches.

Nevertheless, the literature indicates that many countries are putting in place deliberate policies for motivating offenders to engage in various education programmes while incarcerated for their rehabilitation outcomes (Allen, 2016; Harradine, 2014; Ismaila, 2020). Penal Reform International compiled several such policies in various countries in the report entitled “*Global Prison Trends 2016*”, authored by Allen (2016). According to Allen (2016), Saudi Arabia developed and launched new regulations that grant offenders a 5% reduction on their incarceration sentence upon successful completion and passing a school year or equivalent

training courses. The report also cites the re-introduction of 'Second Chance Pell grants to incarcerated offenders in the USA in 2015 as funds provided to inmates to pay for their educational courses, as well as the initiative to guarantee incarcerated offenders a job in Western Australia after completing a training course. Ismaila (2020) also cites Poland as a global best practice in the motivation of offenders since those who acquire education and work skills within prisons can get employed through partnerships with local businesses that offer inmates jobs while incarcerated in penitentiary facilities.

In Uganda, Aheisibwe and Rukundo (2017) report that the courts reduce incarcerated offenders' sentences due to outstanding academic performance. The offenders present their education qualifications while serving their sentences as mitigation factors that they responded positively to the rehabilitation programmes. Additionally, some offenders who do exceptionally well in completing their technical and vocational skills programmes are engaged as instructors of other offenders in technical sections such as tailoring and receive remuneration in the form of commissions, a portion of which they can send to their families' homes. These activities motivate offenders.

#### *3.4.2.6 Gender discriminatory tendencies in educational access*

Data on incarcerated female young offenders is limited partly due to the researchers' failure to report disaggregated data by gender and age (Gunninson et al., 2017). The available data on women and girls show that there has been a dramatic increase in their incarceration all over the world in recent years. More than 700 000 women and girls are incarcerated in correctional facilities worldwide (Penal Reform International, 2021; Walmsley, 2017). This represents a global increase of over 100 000 in one decade (PRI, 2021). Walmsley (2017) argues that since the year 2000, women and girls incarceration population levels have grown by 50% faster than their male counterparts' population levels which have been around 20%; thus, women and girls make up 7% of the global prison population. In Africa, Walmsley (2017) reports that women and girls make up 3.4% of the total prison population which is much lower than the general global proportion and the lowest among all the continents. In Malawi,

Walmsley (2017) and Gauld (2020) report that female inmates in Malawi penitentiary facilities make up around 1% of the total prison population, which is less than the average African rate.

Studies report that the majority of incarcerated women and girls are marginalised in the communities before their imprisonment by a lack of education, poverty, or for not observing acceptable gender social norms (Marcus-Mendoza, 2016). Mallicoat (2019) indicates that there is overwhelming evidence in research that most incarcerated women and girls have experienced emotional, sexual and physical abuse and are the victims of multiple long-term acts of violence. This victimisation leads to offending. Moreover, gender social norms regarding lack of support for their education and family responsibilities such as early pregnancy, childcare and housework put them at an educational disadvantage compared to men (Ryder, 2020). This is coupled with the extreme social and cultural expectations of women and girls, which result in the criminalisation of certain behaviours, beliefs, actions or other socio-economic activities (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

Women and girls incarcerated for offences related to socioeconomic factors often commit them for their families' survival. In South Africa, most black women who are incarcerated after committing economic offences such as shoplifting also have low education levels and lack proper income forms (Dastile & Agozino, 2019). In Brazil, more than 80% of female offenders at 15 female correctional facilities in eight states are incarcerated for theft and drug trafficking, crimes committed for economic survival (Huber, 2015). Huber (2015) also reports that women are incarcerated for sex-related crimes such as prostitution offences which penalise women as service providers leaving out men who assume the role of clients. Many of these women also had low levels of education, with 17% and 45% dropping school at secondary and primary levels, respectively, while 3% were completely illiterate (de Araújo et al., 2020, p. 4).

If these women and girls are incarcerated and, in the words of Simpkins (2015), warehoused or "...stored until released back into society" (p. 26) without any rehabilitation programme, their stay in prison is likely to have a lifelong negative effect

on their lives. This entails that women and girls, just like their male counterparts, should not just be dumped in prisons without any meaningful rehabilitation programmes that include quality education. This is echoed in the court cases in the USA compiled by Mallicoat (2019). Mallicoat (2019) observes that after noting that women's needs had long been neglected in the criminal justice system, several individuals appealed to the courts to challenge the delivery of services for female offenders to remedy the disparities. Women need more attention because they have extra needs that might not be completely satisfied if the authorities use men facility conditions as a standard since "prison facilities were not built with a woman in mind" (de Araújo et al., 2020; Gadama et al., 2020, p. 8).

However, disparities still exist in many jurisdictions. Studies worldwide have reported that significant numbers of women are denied access to education programmes in many correctional facilities (Huber, 2015; Korzh, 2021; Ryder, 2020). Huber (2015) narrates that correctional programmes seldom take care of the gender-specific needs of female offenders. This is because, compared to those opportunities accessible to men, few academic and vocational skills opportunities are accessible to women. Worse still, Huber (2015) argues that those already few existing programmes are usually poorly resourced than those offered to male offenders.

In Ukraine, a qualitative study was carried out by Korzh (2021) at a women's penitentiary facility before the war. In her findings, it was noted that even though Ukrainian laws stipulate that secondary education is compulsory and that the education provided should be of good quality, this constitutional provision was not implemented equally across all prisons in that country. Many women were not motivated to enrol, let alone complete this basic education level, because of a lack of motivation. Korzh (2021) also found that teachers were not as committed to their work as they could teach at their own will; thus, lessons were not regularly accessible to students. It was reported that many days could pass without classes. Teachers' non-commitment was partly because the majority did not want to teach in the correctional facilities. They were compelled to accept the job after failing to secure a teaching post

in mainstream community schools. Korzh (2021) argues that this contributed to most women offenders' overwhelming apathy towards education.

In Pakistan, Achakzai et al. (2015) conducted a study in Balochistan province to determine if incarcerated women were provided with education programmes in the penitentiary facilities for successful community re-entry after release. Although most of the Balochistan province's incarcerated women were illiterate or had little education, the study revealed that the penitentiary facilities did not provide education programmes to incarcerated women and girls. According to Achakzai et al. (2015), this was mainly due to the inadequacy of institutions' finances to fund education, lack of teaching staff and insufficient learning space and facilities. It was also noted that senior correctional officials did not care about the conditions of incarceration of women in the country.

In Africa, studies also reveal that women receive fewer education opportunities than male offenders in correctional facilities. In a study conducted by Allen and Overy (2019) on representatives of five countries, namely, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Nigeria and Gambia, it was reported that even though educational and training programmes were generally reported to have been provided to women and girls in prisons, disparities were observed among the countries. The study generally found that many countries did not provide similar education and skills training opportunities to both men and women. Women were provided with fewer opportunities than men. In South Africa, Johnson (2015) also records disparities in the provision of educational opportunities at male and female correctional facilities. In her interviews with some female offenders, she found that education provision at the female correctional facilities lacked educators' commitment evidenced by their frequent absenteeism and postponement of classes. Dissel (2000) and Agboola (2016) also observed these trends in other South African correctional facilities.

Consequently, the failure to access quality educational opportunities in prisons often results in some women having difficulties in re-entry. In South Africa, Dastile and Agozino (2019) observe that most women incarcerated for petty economic offences



such as shoplifting were also recidivists for similar offences. This points to the correctional system's failure to rehabilitate them as expected.

### **3.5 EDUCATION AS AN INTERVENTION IN COMMUNITY RE-ENTRY**

The majority of young offenders who are about to be released are challenged by many social reintegration issues. These include possible family or community non-acceptance and discrimination, difficulties in returning to formal education, possible unemployment, and homelessness (UNODC, 2018). Unless they are successfully rehabilitated and socially reintegrated, they risk getting caught up in a vicious cycle of incarceration, release and reoffending (Maguire, 2021). The global interest in the engagement of young offenders in educational programmes and other pre-release and post-release interventions on their successful rehabilitation and re-entry outcomes is readily noticeable in literature, predominantly among developed western countries.

#### **3.5.1 Pre-release and transition interventions**

Studies reveal that the serious involvement of incarcerated young offenders in education programmes is beneficial to their re-entry goals. Jäggi and Kliwer (2020) conducted a study on 569 young offenders in the USA to analyse how school motivation and performance in terms of grades as elements of schooling were related to non-reoffending outcomes of the released young people. The study revealed that improved involvement in facility schools, not just performance in grades, predicted increased productive activity (in the form of continuing schooling or working) and reduced criminal behaviour after release. This study concluded that correctional institutions nurture the offenders' future behaviours, thus, the young people's school experiences in the facilities could be an essential part of the intervention.

Blomberg et al. (2011) also did a study in Florida on young people's incarceration and their subsequent provision of education and transition from delinquency. The study concluded that the incarcerated young offenders who were successful in their educational programmes within the correctional facility were more likely to resume

schooling and successfully transition from criminal behaviour after their release. This was because education enhances an individual's rehabilitation through the benefits of obtaining formal certificates and practical skills. Conversely, this implies that young offenders' risk of reoffending in the community increases when they are released from correctional facilities without the necessary education and other soft skills (Lambie & Randell, 2013). This shows that imprisonment of juveniles has a substantial negative effect on their employment and different socioeconomic outcomes when re-entry programmes such as education are not effective or absent.

Studies have also shown that proper transitioning of the released young offenders from correctional schools to community schools or other productive activities can significantly reduce reoffending (Clark et al., 2011; Hancock et al., 2018; Unruh et al., 2009). In a semi-structured interview study aimed at exploring the correctional facility workers' perceptions of their roles in the reintegration processes of offenders', Hancock et al. (2018) found that professional support in preparation for release was paramount to maximise positive outcomes. According to the study, proper offender transitioning requires that the offender secures accommodation before release, the offender can be regularly contacted for continued monitoring, and the offender has completed the pre-release interventions and treatment programmes such as involvement in schooling and work skills training programmes.

Clark et al. (2011) conducted a quasi-experimental study investigating the effect of various transition services provided to young offenders with disabilities at juvenile centres in one of the southwestern states of the USA. The study revealed that young offenders who were provided with enhanced services from transition specialists were 64% less likely to re-offend after release from the penitentiary facilities. Unruh et al. (2009) also explored factors responsible for the reduction of recidivism rates among released young offenders who participated in a re-entry intervention programme. The studies also revealed that re-entry interventions provided by professionals were likely to contribute to reduced recidivism rates. However, this study also revealed that factors that were more likely to contribute to the prediction of recidivism were a set of static demographic and pre-incarceration risks compared to community adjustment

factors such as employment or school enrolment. That is why comprehensive rehabilitation programming that integrates education, psychosocial interventions and other skills training is essential.

However, some studies have revealed that these proper transition mechanisms are scarce in many jurisdictions (Gary, 2014; Schaefer & Erickson, 2016). Based on a study done at Chicago juveniles' incarceration facilities, Gary (2014) found that many young offenders incarcerated in Chicago experience academic setbacks when released from incarceration to their communities and public schools. This was because schools in correctional facilities were usually not linked to local education systems; creating difficulties for ex-offenders to transition successfully back into public schools when released. This also hampered their transition into adulthood later. Gary (2014) found that the disconnect existed because the educational services offered in juvenile correctional facilities lacked the necessary rigour to compete with the public school system due to a lack of qualified teachers and other classroom resources.

In their literature review, Schaefer and Erickson (2016) argue that transitioning from a correctional facility to the community is difficult for both young and adult offenders. This is because they all have to face several challenges upon release, including unemployment, homelessness, lack of social and family support, and stigma and discrimination. Additionally, Lambie and Randell (2013) observe that offenders are likely to continue to feel the effects of their incarceration after their release from the correctional facilities due to the realities of not being part of the community for some time and the criminal record which burden their reintegration process. This is worse for young offenders. Schaefer and Erickson (2016) argue that young offenders face extra challenges related to their inevitable or deferred development of important life skills essential to their successful maturity to adulthood due to the restrictive environment in young offenders' facilities. This is exacerbated if they were not engaged in correctional educational programmes.

### **3.5.2 Post-release or reintegration services versus re-entry outcomes**

Several international instruments emphasise the need for post-release services for former offenders. The Nelson Mandela Rule 90 stipulates that “the duty of society does not end with a prisoner’s release...” since the government and civil society have an extended duty of providing post-release and aftercare services to the released ex-offender (UN, 2015b, p. 27). This is also echoed in the Tokyo Rules, which encourage community participation in the provision of social reintegration interventions as post-release programmes (UN, 1990). According to Tokyo Rule 17.2, the post-release services “...should be regarded as an opportunity for members of the community to contribute to the protection of their society” (UN, 1990, p. 6). The African Union’s Ouagadougou Conference on Penal and Prison Reform in Africa declarations (2002) also stressed the importance of the member states’ deliberate efforts to promote the offenders’ reintegration into society.

In contrast, research has revealed that the chances of a school-going individual dropping out of school after being involved in the juvenile justice system is very high (Lea & Abrams, 2017; Robison et al., 2017). This also increases the chances of that individual experiencing long-term economic failure, especially when there are few or no programmes or support systems to assist them in re-entering community schools (Kubek et al., 2020; Lea & Abrams, 2017; Robison et al., 2017). Maintaining these high-risk young people in school can act as a protective factor in reducing their chances of being carried along the trajectory of serious criminal behaviours (Tan et al., 2019). Therefore, ex-young offenders or juveniles need proper transition support from correctional schools to community schools. They also need family and community support, health care and social security access, and employment or job market re-entry assistance (UNODC, 2018).

Studies have concurred that education programmes for young offenders are more effective when post-release services are included as part of the transition process in a rehabilitation programme (Coker, 2020; Gary, 2014; Hartwell et al., 2010; Shoham et al., 2017). This improves their educational outcomes in community schools upon

their re-entry, which has the prospect of reducing crime and recidivism (Coker, 2020). Many recent studies, therefore, recommend implementing effective re-entry programmes involving interagency collaborative efforts amongst public schools, young offenders' centres and other concerned stakeholders (Gary, 2014; Hartwell et al., 2010; Shoham et al., 2017). Gary (2014) observes that, apart from including educators, counsellors and therapy social workers services for the young offenders' individual social and mental needs, the rehabilitation programmes need also to include activities that monitor their growth before and after their return to the community school system. Shoham et al. (2017) also learned from their study that apart from matching rehabilitation programming to the offender's need, rehabilitation programming needs to include post-release support to be meaningful.

Furthermore, post-release outcomes are likely to be affected by the environment outside the correctional facility. Hartwell et al. (2010) argue that the young offenders' re-entry process is likely to be challenged when they enter the same environment they were arrested in with the same antisocial peer groups. Martinez and Abrams (2013) argue that the peer pressure of old friends of the released juvenile for friendship, belonging, and survival assistance should not be ignored as a key part of their re-entry experience. Young offenders are faced with hard choices to either sustain their goals of criminal desistance or join their old friends, still engaging in their old ways to be accepted. These challenges become worse and thus impede their re-entry outcomes if they are coupled with the juveniles' mental health, attitudes, and behavioural issues, which were not successfully resolved while staying in correctional facilities (Lambie & Randell, 2013).

Dastile and Agozino (2019) concur in acknowledging the importance of proper re-entry programmes for ex-offenders. Based on the South African context, Dastile and Agozino (2019) argue that most women offenders who commit petty offences re-offend several times not only because of the non-effectiveness of the rehabilitation programmes used on them but because some offenders go back to similar environments in which they committed previous crimes due to lack of post-incarceration interventions. This shows that if young offenders are involved in various

rehabilitative and treatment programmes, including education within correctional facilities, gains made are likely to be challenged if they do not include appropriate re-entry strategies, interventions or support systems (Wolfer, 2018).

Likewise, post-release outcomes are likely to be affected by the family support received by the juvenile before and after their release. Family is an important part of indigenous life, especially in African society, since it is where forgiveness and love ought to be derived to support the offenders (Johnson & Quan-Baffour, 2016). Graffam et al. (2004) argue that released offenders with excellent family support do better in their communities than those with little or no support. The parents need to be actively involved in matters of the young offenders during and after their incarceration (Bray, 2010; Hourani et al., 2019). The lack of family and community support coupled with a lack of proper education and other rehabilitation interventions can lead to recidivism, thereby hindering the released young offenders' education success.

Post-release outcomes are also likely to be affected by employment opportunities. Newton et al. (2018) argue that joblessness is associated with offending and recidivism of released offenders. This is because securing employment after their release assists in young offenders' successful re-entry into society, thereby reducing potential recidivism (Hassan & Rosly, 2021; Newton et al., 2018). Osborn and Belle (2018) observe that employment enhances the young offender's social support, socioeconomic status and mental health welfare. Therefore, halting the revolving door of release and incarceration requires that the re-entry programmes include the opportunity for the released individual to secure employment (Batastini et al., 2014). This would enable them to be financially stable, manage their time in a pro-social way and have a sense of achievement after their release.

Consequently, studies have emphasised the significance of the correctional facilities' collaboration with the stakeholders at home, school and community in enhancing the young offenders' education quality and their successful post-release outcomes (e.g. Garfinkel, 2010; Haines et al., 2015; Hourani et al., 2019). In a study by Johnson and Quan-Baffour (2016, p. 14) in South Africa, apart from the support the correctional

officers and agencies accorded them, many offenders recommended the application of more “integrated, holistic, multi-disciplinary, mainstreaming and cross-cutting approaches” in the criminal justice system in which all stakeholders are involved in assisting inmates in the correctional facilities.

### **3.5.3 Pre and post-release services in African penitentiaries**

Research on pre and post-release interventions and services (sometimes referred to as reintegration) is scanty in Africa compared to extensive work done in western countries. Existing studies have revealed shortages and non-existence of reintegration programmes in correctional facilities. It appears that there are no planned re-entry programmes in many African prisons. Based on the study of correctional facilities in Uganda, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana and Tanzania, Quan-Baffour et al. (2022) observe that it was doubtful that offenders were transitioning properly from incarceration to communities in many African penitentiaries. Successful reintegration is dependent on the intrinsic motivation of the individual released offender. Moyo and Muchibo (2015) concur, based on their Zimbabwe study, that successful re-entry or reintegration of offenders into society depends largely on the individuals. According to them, even though the majority of offenders in Zimbabwe were involved in many rehabilitation activities that help them change their behaviours, the conditions in some facilities were harsh to the extent that the offender became hardened and unlikely to see any value in the prison activities meant for rehabilitation.

In South Africa, it is strongly upheld that correctional facilities must have effective post and pre-release support programmes that mentally and socially prepare inmates for release to mitigate the risk of recidivism and, thus, enhance their success in re-entry into their communities (Dissel, 2012; Johnson, 2015). In a study done on 111 parolees by Louw (2013), it was reported that more than 70% of the participants successfully participated in pre-release programmes in preparation for their parole placement. Johnson (2015) reports on aftercare and tracking programmes for released offenders and the use of holistic approaches to correctional education through collaborations with other stakeholders as the country’s efforts toward the

successful reintegration of offenders into society. The authorities ensure that inmates' community and family ties are maintained and encouraged to enhance smooth reintegration (Johnson, 2015).

In Malawi, research on post-release interventions and outcomes is almost non-existent. Studies report that young offenders are allowed access to education and other technical and vocational programmes in correctional facilities (Gama et al., 2020; Kajawo, 2019; Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022, Salima, 2017). However, it was not known if the education programmes were integrated with pre and post-release services as part of their rehabilitation and reintegration process to enhance their successful transitioning from correctional facilities to their communities as advocated by many studies (e.g. Coker, 2020; Gary, 2014; Hartwell et al., 2010; Shoham et al., 2017). A study by Moyokunyenga (2015) investigating the prevalence and causes of recidivism at one of the maximum prisons in Malawi concluded that recidivism rates were caused by a lack of proper rehabilitation mechanisms in prisons. However, the study was silent on pre and post-release programmes and their effects on the released offenders' re-entry outcomes, such as continued school attendance and employment or entrepreneurship. It was unknown if the correctional facilities had those services and qualified staff to run them.

Nevertheless, popular belief and oral evidence on the indigenous knowledge systems indicate that many Malawian communities have had traditional systems of eradicating recidivism of the just-released incarcerated youth. In many Malawian communities, imprisonment had been considered a curse that needed cleansing or purification immediately after the person had been released and was ready to re-enter their communities. This was because, in some communities, criminality was associated with witchcraft. Some communities believed that the offender could be a victim of witchcraft, similar to McCracken's (2012) indigenous explanations of misfortune. Just like the use of *mchape* (cleansing medicine) on those suspected of indulging in witchcraft in McCracken (2012), some released offenders, especially juveniles, partook in cleansing ceremonies to enable them to get rid of the said curses or misfortunes. This practice is sustained in some rural communities even today. This is



because, even though many Malawians have embraced foreign religions such as Christianity and Islam, the majority still harbour some elements of their cultural and traditional belief systems, such as the existence of witchcraft to explain human problems and misfortunes (McCracken, 2012). For some Christians not bent on the indigenous belief system, anecdotal evidence indicates that some released prisoners engage in prayer and counselling sessions with church leaders to get rid of demons and evil spirits that would make them re-offend. They are also encouraged to read the Bible to stay in the faith and to refrain from reoffending.

Even before the prison system was established in Malawi, sources on indigenous knowledge systems and practices suggest that the principles of customary restorative justice were used on those young offenders who had committed crimes to ensure their non-reoffending. This was generally due to the understanding that crimes were committed against the victims and the communities instead of the current perspective of crime as a violation of country laws. This involved mending the relationships between the victim and the perpetrator, as well as their families, usually through mediation by the community elders. In these meetings, apologies would be presented, and compensation would be paid, if necessary, to the victim or the victim's family. In this way, the spirit of *Umunthu* (Ubuntu) which encompasses reconciliation and forgiveness in the communities would be preserved. Literature on restorative justice systems, including the indigenous ways, is also replete with descriptions of practices like these being done in many countries such as South Africa, the UK, the USA, Canada, Ireland, China, Japan, Australia, Thailand and India (Leonard 2010; van Ness & Strong, 2006; Wong & Tu, 2018; Wong & Kwan, 2020). The common practice in many jurisdictions is restorative justice, which is used as an alternative to incarceration, focusing on the victim, community and offender.

All in all, this review shows gaps in the published research literature on young offenders' pre and post-release programming. It is still unclear if young offenders are involved in any planned pre and post-release interventions in many African penitentiaries, including those in Malawi, and if their involvement impacts their re-entry outcomes, such as continued schooling in the community. Penitentiaries are

complex and powerful environments with a powerful influence on incarcerated individuals (National Research Council, 2014). Studies in other jurisdictions reveal that the incarceration period is likely to have an impact on the lives of young offenders. Thus, there is a need to engage them in programmes and interventions that enhance their successful re-entry into their communities upon their release (Clark et al., 2011; Hancock et al., 2018; Lambie & Randell, 2013). This study seeks to address some of these gaps.

### **3.6 GAPS IN THE LITERATURE**

There is extensive literary work on prison or correctional studies. Most of the existing studies are on rehabilitation and education versus recidivism. Most of them have been done in western countries, especially the USA, with a few in Africa. Most African studies have focused on the general correctional facility population, and a few have specifically concentrated on young offenders. Many of the western studies' findings can be generalised and applied in African contexts. However, Boakye (2010) argues against generalising western studies' findings on African contexts especially due to the differences in the social contexts. Moreover, Boakye also cautions against generalising the findings of studies conducted in some African countries to the whole continent since the continent is culturally diverse. Thus, individual countries' studies cannot successfully be used to generalise results to that huge continental diversity (Cole & Chipaca, 2014). Even in the same country, "...not all 'prisons' are created equal" (National Research Council, 2014, p. 158). According to National Research Council (2014), this is because correctional facilities differ in terms of physical layouts, security classifications, resources and correctional philosophy, the existence or non-existence of specific contextual aspects can "significantly determine its effect on the actors within it" (p. 158). Therefore, there is a need for more studies in Africa on the incarceration of young offenders and their access to education for successful re-entry outcomes.

Nonetheless, the existing literature in African studies generally makes greater attempts to justify rehabilitation, including education programmes, in addressing

criminality as a successful endeavour for prisoners' positive recidivism outcomes. It has been noted that even though incarceration is not the best option, countries still incarcerate many young offenders; thus, there is a need for appropriate rehabilitative programmes, including education. Various studies that support education as an integral part of the rehabilitation of young offenders were discussed and cited. It was noted that school-aged incarcerated young people need to be provided with an education that meets the minimal standards of mandatory public education. Issues hindering the quality of correctional education around the world were discussed, including; the negativity of penitentiary facilities' environments, lack of proper student support system, limitations in the choices of education available, gender discriminatory tendencies in educational access, and inadequacy of physical resources and qualified educators. It was also noted that pre-release, transitioning and reintegration programmes, which include education continuation and follow-ups were scarce in many countries, especially in Africa, despite being highlighted in many studies as essential for young offenders' re-entry goals.

Despite the extensive research on young offenders' in some world regions like the USA, Canada and Europe, little is said about how the incarceration of young offenders impacts their rights and access to quality education and post-incarceration outcomes such as schooling and employment. The dearth of research on this phenomenon is worse in Africa. A handful of African studies have examined the effects of incarcerating juveniles in prisons or detention centres, mainly in Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe (e.g. Arthur, 1996; Fambasayi & Moyo, 2020; Igbinovia, 1988; Mujuzi, 2008; Ajah & Ugwuoke, 2018). Incarcerated juveniles' educational experiences are little researched, mainly due to researchers' difficulties in accessing information from offenders and their vulnerability status (Shafi, 2020). Scholars' focus on education or schooling as the main research variable in young offenders' post-incarceration outcomes studies in Africa remains scarce, resulting in limited knowledge on the subject on the continent.

### **3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter brought together the existing research on juvenile offenders' rehabilitation and their rights and access to education. It also explored the effects of incarceration and education on young offenders after their release from prisons. Current trends of juvenile delinquency at global, continental and national levels in crimes commonly committed, factors causing juvenile delinquency and the impact of their incarceration were discussed. The chapter also compared the young offenders' rehabilitation practices worldwide before zeroing in on education as its essential element. The review also explored some best practices in many countries in Africa and overseas regarding educational programming for incarcerated young offenders for their successful post-release outcomes, which Malawi and other developing countries can adopt. The next chapter presents the research methodology and methods used in this study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

#### **4.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

This chapter discusses the research methodology and design used in this study. The chapter presents an overview of the major philosophical paradigms used by researchers and then zeroes in on pragmatism as the paradigm underpinning this study. The mixed-methods research is later introduced as an approach used in this study, utilising a convergent design. A discussion on how the study used both qualitative and quantitative research methods is presented to explain the choice of the mixed-methods research approach in this study. The methodology discussion is followed by a description of the population, sample, sampling techniques, data collection and analysis methods and techniques, issues of trustworthiness, reliability and validity, and ethical considerations.

#### **4.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The terms 'methodology' and 'methods' are inevitably encountered in research. Howell (2013) distinguishes these two terms as he defines 'methodology' as "the research strategy that outlines the way one goes about undertaking a research project, whereas methods identify means or modes of data collection" (p. ix). The methodology has a significant influence on what knowledge, truth and reality ought to be (Howell, 2013). The methodology influences the methods and outcomes of the study. Thus, the methodology provides a theory that underpins the methods (Cohen et al., 2018; Howell, 2013). The core of the methodology is the paradigm to be used with its inherent philosophical assumptions of what counts as reality or truth.

##### **4.2.1 Research paradigms**

Research paradigms are the implied or inherent assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge and how knowledge is constructed (Creamer, 2018). Research paradigms

can be described through their ontology, epistemology and axiology as philosophical assumptions to comprehend a set of worldviews for that particular study (Cohen et al., 2018; Fushimi, 2021). Cohen et al. (2018) argue that ontological assumptions give rise to epistemology and axiology, which influence methodologies. These assumptions eventually determine the instruments and data collection methods to be used. There are three main research paradigms used by educational and social sciences researchers: positivism for quantitative, interpretivism for qualitative, and pragmatism for mixed methods-research studies (Cohen et al., 2018; Muijis, 2004).

Positivism as a paradigm is based on the premise that there is an independent reality driven by stable natural laws that exist and are ready to be discovered (Cohen et al., 2018; Rossman & Rallis, 2017). Therefore, knowledge ought to be developed through careful observation and measurement of the objective reality (Cohen et al., 2018; Creamer, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). On the other hand, interpretivism is based on the premise that human beings construct subjective meanings of reality from their experience or engagement with the world they are interpreting (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In contrast, pragmatism is considered a new paradigm that substitutes the traditional way of looking at various research approaches differently in social inquiry (Morgan, 2014). This study adopted the pragmatic research paradigm. Thus, pragmatism is discussed in-depth in the next sub-section in terms of the ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions of this study.

#### **4.2.2 Pragmatism paradigm**

Pragmatism is premised on the statement that “the meaning and truth of any idea is a function of its practical outcomes” (Muijis, 2004, p. 9). Pragmatists oppose absolutist belief in the existence of definite truth in the world as the “truth is constantly changing and being updated through the process of human problem solving” (Muijis, 2004, p. 7). For pragmatists, the important thing “is not is it true or is it right but does it work” (Muijis, 2004, p. 9). Thus, that which works at the time should be used. The paradigm, therefore, embraces a realist worldview that recognises diversity and complexity (Creamer, 2018). The paradigm, therefore, favours a mixed-methods

research approach. In the current study, the choice of pragmatism as a philosophical lens was based on the notion that the study intended to understand how incarceration impacts on young offenders' rights and access to quality education. It allowed a thorough understanding of these research issues (Feilzer, 2010). Pragmatism as an epistemology permitted the use of quantitative and qualitative methods within the theoretical perspective of this study and provided flexibility in gathering data in both statistics and words expressed in experiences and attitudes (Creswell, 2014).

#### *4.2.2.1 Ontological assumptions on pragmatism*

Ontology is a set of philosophical assumptions that attempt to answer questions regarding reality and its nature (Cohen et al., 2018). On the question of the nature of reality, positivists conceptualize that the reality that is knowable exists within probability which is objective and measurable and discoverable (Creamer, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In contrast, interpretivism believes that reality is socially or personally constructed by people. Thus, multiple subjective realities exist (Cohen et al., 2018; Creamer, 2018; Howell, 2013). In contrast, pragmatists do not want to get more involved in theories about the nature of truth and realities since they focus on what works (Creamer, 2018). That is to say, qualitative data such as emotions and opinions are as real and valuable as quantitative data (Creamer, 2018). In this current study, the researcher was guided by pragmatic non-absolutism assumptions of truth since the focus was put on what would work to carry out this study effectively. The realities in this study included generalisable perceptions of young offenders incarcerated in correctional centres, and the subjective realities of the selected young offenders, educators and ex-young offenders being involved, and that of the researcher from the observations and interpretation of the study findings. The researchers' role was to triangulate the objective and subjective realities.

#### *4.2.2.2 Epistemological assumptions on pragmatism*

Epistemology is about the roots of knowledge in its nature and forms, and how knowledge can be generated and reported to other individuals (Cohen et al., 2018). For positivists, knowledge is "hard, objective and tangible" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 5).

Therefore, the relationship ought to be objective with the existing dualism between the knower (researcher) and the known (the participant). For interpretivists, knowledge is personal, subjective and unique; thus, the researchers and participants can co-construct the social realities (Cohen et al., 2018; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). In contrast, pragmatists believe that “epistemological issues exist on a continuum, rather than on two opposing poles” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 83). According to pragmatism, quality needs to be judged based on the usefulness of the participant’s knowledge (Creamer, 2018). Thus, the researcher in the current study was not completely bent toward one epistemological paradigm’s assumptions since he related with various groups of participants differently to enhance the generation of valuable data for this study (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The researcher interacted with the young offenders and educators within the penitentiaries’ contexts to hear their views and perceptions regarding the quality of education accessible in the facilities. The researcher’s observations and objective data from 38.5% of the young offenders’ population in the real context supplemented the thickness of the information generated. The researcher embraced and interchanged both the positivistic observer role as well as the subjective role of interpretivism in the relationship with the participants to enhance the quality of this study.

#### *4.2.2.3 Axiological assumptions on pragmatism*

Axiology is about the role of values and ethics in research (Makhurane, 2019; Morgan, 2014). For positivists, the inquiry is value-free; thus, values have no place in research objectivity. On the other hand, interpretivism considers inquiry as value-bound (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Thus, to interpretivists, the reality is socially constructed and knowledge is subjective (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Therefore, positivists emphasise formulating methods that can enhance their studies’ internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). In interpretivism, the validity issues are handled using four criteria of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, which correspond to the internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity criteria of positivism, respectively (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 104-105). In this study, the researcher



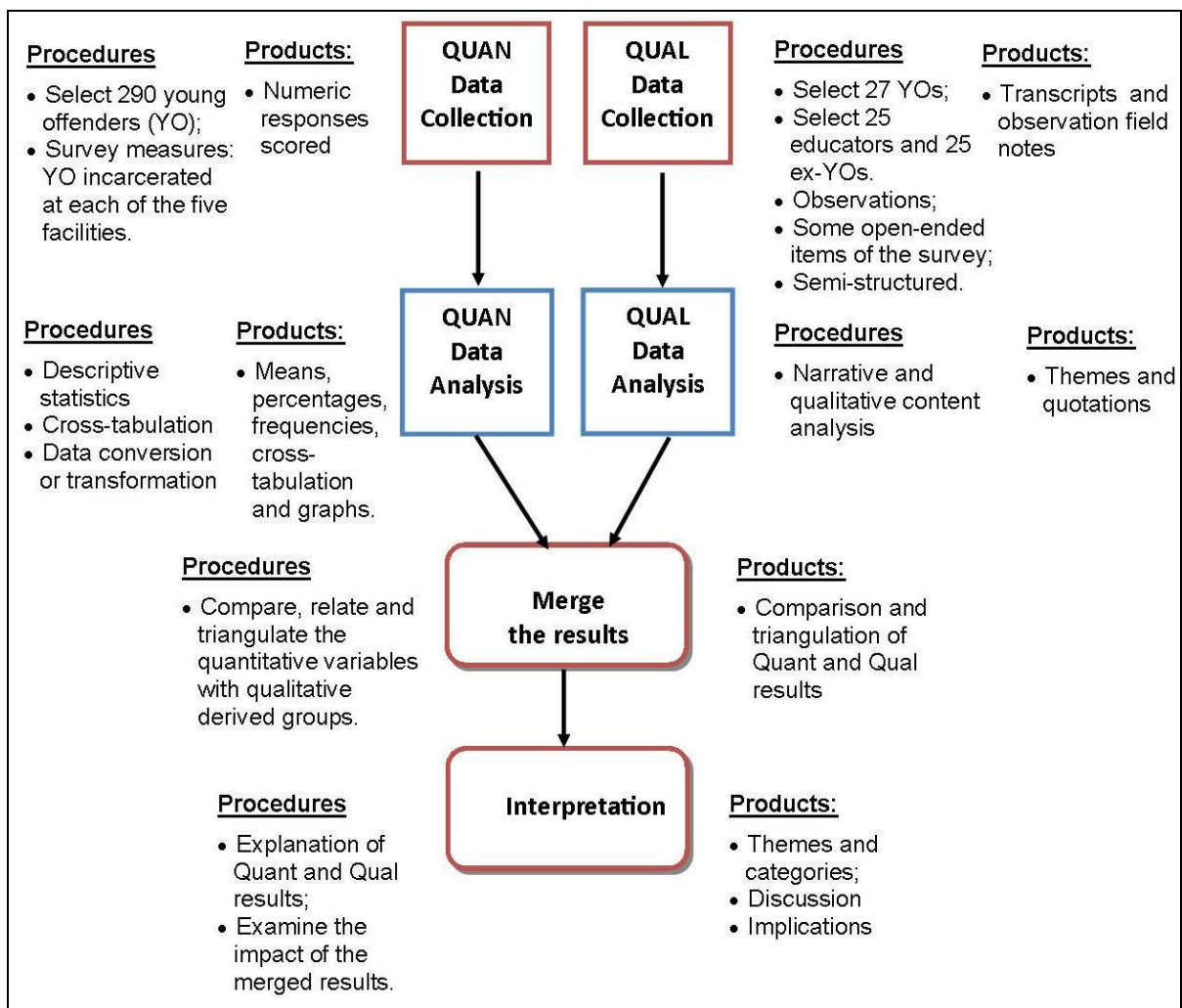
embraced both positivists' validity and interpretivism trustworthiness mainly through triangulation. In fact, the inherent strengths and merits of both approaches (qualitative and quantitative) enhanced the validity of the study's findings and conclusions.

### 4.3 MIXED-METHODS RESEARCH APPROACH

This study adopted a mixed-methods research approach, using a convergent design as illustrated in Figure 4.1 to generate and analyse qualitative and quantitative data.

**Figure 4.1**

*This study's research process using mixed methods convergent design*



Notes: Adapted from Creswell & Plano-Clark (2018). \*Procedures are the means undertaken in the study to produce a particular output "product"

Mixed methods research approach is defined as “the multiple ways to address a research problem” (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018). According to Creswell and Plano-Clark (2018), mixed methods is the research approach in which both qualitative and quantitative data and results are rigorously generated, analysed and integrated in response to research questions. According to Roni et al. (2020), using a convergent design of mixed methods, both data sets are separately generated and analysed and then “compared or aggregated as part of the interpretation of findings” (p. 21). According to Creswell and Plano-Clark (2018), this allows the researcher to have a complete comprehension of the problem and validate and triangulate different components of the findings.

Specifically, the quantitative approach was necessary to collect data on the young offenders’ educational accessibility statistics and analyse patterns and trends of education inside the four walls. This was to ascertain how variables such as incarceration, education accessibility, availability of resources, and other rehabilitation and re-entry activities impact on the quality of education received by young offenders in the facilities and their continued pursuit of their educational or career goals after their release. The quantitative approach was also necessary due to its characteristic of including large samples of research participants to enhance the internal generalisability of the findings (Cohen et al., 2018; Maxwell, 2012; Verma & Verma, 2020). Large samples provide better inferences about the whole population than small samples (Verma & Verma, 2020). This study intended to explore among other things the rates at which young offenders are involved in schooling at a national level from the data collected from this sample. Thus, the results from this quantitative sample were generalisable to the whole young offenders’ population in Malawi (Maxwell, 2012).

Statistical information on young offenders’ perceptions and views regarding their incarceration and education necessitated the collection of aggregated data on patterns and trends, which are better done quantitatively (Cohen et al., 2018). On the other hand, capturing experience, perceptions and observations was better approached using qualitative approaches. The respondents’ experiences represent

human-constructed realities that cannot be fully captured in purely quantitative approaches. This was, therefore, better approached from a qualitative paradigm (Creswell, 2014). Thus, understanding the effects of incarceration on the juveniles' access and right to quality education from the horse's mouth was valuable and yielding to this research when in-depth data backed it.

Qualitative methods were not only necessary to explore the young offenders' in-depth experiences, views, reasons and justifications, but also the experiences and views of the educators and ex-offenders. They also assisted in singling out individual gender voices since they are very few young female offenders in Malawi (Kajawo, 2019). This is to collect data with a wider picture of the juveniles' incarceration and education programming and their impact. Qualitative approaches also necessitated the use of observations on the quality of educational infrastructure and resources available, as well as some correctional system's actions, practices and events, which were useful in the triangulation of information and data collected from various sources.

In this study, qualitative and quantitative components had unequal priority and importance (Creamer, 2018; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Greater emphasis was put on the qualitative strand in addressing the research problem, while the quantitative strand played a complementary role [QUAL + quan]. That is, both quantitative and qualitative data were generated simultaneously; thus, the major component was qualitative with less emphasis on the quantitative component.

Quantitative data collected from statistical findings of the close-ended question items regarding the magnitude of young offenders' access to education and other rehabilitation activities as well as the quality of education offered in correctional facilities were validated with data from various qualitative data sources. These sources were the open-ended parts of the young offenders' questionnaire and the semi-structured interview scripts, which targeted the young offenders, educators and ex-young offenders. Results from this study's quantitative and qualitative components were integrated to expose areas of convergence and discrepancy. Qualitative data also assisted in providing a pragmatic context for the quantitative data.

The choice of mixed-methods design was influenced by the fact that the quantitative methodology is suitable for analysing broad trends and patterns, but it “rarely provides definitive answers to anything” (Connolly, 2007, p. 80). The method does not explain or justify certain decisions. This necessitated further qualitative data investigation to respond to the research questions effectively. Guided by pragmatism, the researcher interacted with the young offenders and educators within the penitentiaries’ contexts to hear their views and perceptions regarding the quality of education accessible in the facilities and how the inmates’ stay affects their continued educational goals. This provided an arena of a highly interactive relationship for these young offenders to respond to complex questions related to their incarceration and education (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). In the same way, the researcher interacted with the ex-offenders to gather their lived incarceration and education experiences. The researcher’s observations and objective data from 38.5% of the young offenders’ population in the real context supplemented the thickness of the information generated.

The researcher embraced both the positivistic observer role as well as the subjective role of interpretivism in the relationship with the participants to enhance the quality of this study. The researcher continuously interchanged the two roles throughout the period this study was done. He assumed the role of a ‘disinterested scientist’ separated from the object of the study when dealing with the quantitative part of this study, thereby eliminating his inherent biases (Cohen et al., 2018). He also assumed a personal and subjective role when handling the qualitative part of this study. There were five young offenders’ facilities in Malawi, and by visiting them, the researcher sought to get close to the source of the reality of the young offenders’ education phenomenon. The visits facilitated the researcher’s access to the whole population of young offenders in Malawi thereby enhancing the generalisation of the young offenders’ perceptions and descriptive statistical data to the entire Malawi context. Moreover, it enhanced the researcher’s closeness with the young offenders and educators targeted for this study for effective interviews. Furthermore, the involvement of the released young people who were once incarcerated also provided

a rich practical reality of the impact of incarceration on young offenders' education, which was apparent in their lives after release.

Further to that, the convergent design also allowed the study to engage in a data transformation procedure. Maxwell (2012) argues that some conclusions of qualitative studies have an inherent quantitative component that necessitates the use of simple numerical calculations. According to him, the appropriate use of quasi-statistics not only enhances testing of the qualitative claims but also allows assessment of the amount of data evidence indicating a particular conclusion. In this study, some of the qualitative findings were quantified by creating new quantitative variables based on the existing and emerging qualitative themes.

This study was, therefore, guided by three research questions, which required both quantitative and qualitative approaches to address them fully. Creswell and Plano-Clark (2018) and Creswell and Creswell (2018) agree that the innovative form of crafting research questions in mixed methods studies is the integration of the quantitative and qualitative strands of the research into one research question. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), the researcher could craft overarching questions that do not indicate specific quantitative or qualitative approaches, or design double-barrelled questions containing two specific parts in each of them that require both quantitative and qualitative approaches to fully address them. Thus, each of the research questions in this study responded to both research strands.

This mixed methods research design was chosen since this study intended to analyse the impact of incarceration and correctional programmes on young offenders' access and the right to quality education. However, above this, the study aimed to analyse how and why correctional facilities provide or fail to provide opportunities for these incarcerated youth's holistic rehabilitation for their continued pursuance of their educational or career goals after their release. The gathering of detailed information on these issues required the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches, which was better provided using a convergent mixed-methods research design (Creamer, 2018; Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018).

## **4.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

Research is usually carried out to analyse the characteristics of a population (Verma & Verma, 2020). In research planning, researchers need to decide whether to have a sample or use an entire population (Creamer, 2018). Dubey and Kothari (2022) define sampling as a procedure that uses a small part of a population to draw inferences regarding the whole population. Sampling decisions are about making choices on the use of techniques for generating data from a representative group of the study's population in such a way that the knowledge acquired gives an accurate picture of the total population (Bachman & Schutt, 2018; Cohen et al., 2018). According to Malawi Prison Service (2021), Malawi has five young offenders' facilities. The population and sampling were based on these five facilities.

### **4.4.1 Population**

The study involved incarcerated young offenders, educators/ officials and ex-young offenders already released from prisons. During this study's data collection period, there was a total of 753 young offenders in all five facilities (748 male and five female). However, it was difficult to estimate the actual population of the ex-offenders released from the five facilities fitting the characteristics targeted in this study due to the archaic ex-prisoners record system used at those facilities. Young offenders and ex-offenders were targeted because they were the beneficiary group of the education programme. Roni et al. (2020) observe that many researchers are now increasingly positioning young people as experts on their issues compared to when data on children and young people were solely collected from parents or teachers as their proxies. According to these authors, young people are a more reliable source of information regarding their issues since they have "their own unique perspectives on their social worlds...[which]...can be essential in order to stringently and accurately interrogate some research problems with quality data" (Roni et al., 2020, p. 26). In this case, the perceptions, views and experiences of young offenders and those already released were valuable.

Regarding educators, there were a total of 49 educators at the five facilities covered in this study. Similarly, educators were targeted because they were directly involved in the implementation of education and other rehabilitation and re-entry programmes that impact on young offenders' lives. Their voices in this study were valuable to assist in triangulating data from the inmates.

#### **4.4.2 Sample, sampling, methods and techniques**

This study identified participants from the populations of young offenders, educators and ex-young offenders.

##### *4.4.2.1 Young-offenders sample*

There were two phases in the data collection process with young offenders as a key respondent group. In the first phase, a simple random sampling technique was used to select 60 young offenders at each of the five facilities for a descriptive survey. With this sampling method, every study population member has "an equal chance of being selected, and the probability of a member of the population being selected is unaffected by the selection of other members of the population" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 215). The sampling frame for simple random sampling was established from the inmates' admission or register books at every facility. In selecting respondents at each facility, each young offender was given a number code written on a piece of paper with a duplicate put in a container stirred for selection. The selection was made by drawing those number codes one by one out of the container until a total sample of targeted respondents at each facility was reached for inclusion in the study at those facilities. Simple random sampling was adopted for this quantitative component of this study to enhance the collection of generalisable data from young offenders (Maxwell, 2012).

Nevertheless, the study managed to involve 290 young offenders (out of the targeted 300) incarcerated at the five correctional facilities. This was because one of the facilities had an inmate population of 45 at the time of the study, which was less than the targeted sample (60 inmates) at each facility. Therefore, the entire population of

45 inmates at that facility was included in this study phase. In addition, the study found that no young female offenders were serving their sentences at four facilities targeted in this study, except at the remaining one facility (The gender-mixed). At this facility, there was an annexe of the facility that lodged female offenders (both adult and young) who were 13 in total. Out of the 13, only five were younger than 26 years of age to qualify for inclusion in this study. The decision to include five young female offenders was made after the sampling procedure was already done for the male young offenders' section, thus, the study involved a total of 65 young offenders as participants of this study at the gender-mixed facility as illustrated in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1**

*Sample of young offenders who participated in the study's Phase 1*

Facility Number	Population of young offenders per facility			Samples of young offenders involved per facility			Sample %
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Facility 1	159	0	159	60	0	60	38%
Facility 2	236	5	241	60	5	65	25%
Facility 3	93	0	93	60	0	60	65%
Facility 4	215	0	215	60	0	60	28%
Facility 5	45	0	45	45	0	45	100%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>748</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>753</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>38.5%</b>

*Source: Research Field Data, August – October 2021*

Therefore, the study involved 38.5% of the young offenders' population in Malawi, which was considered an adequate subset of the targeted population (Dubey & Kothari, 2022). The decision to include a large sample of young offenders in Malawi penitentiaries in this study for this first phase was made to enhance the internal generalisability of the findings (Cohen et al., 2018; Maxwell, 2012; Verma & Verma, 2020). Verma and Verma (2020) observe that large samples are considered more reliable since they provide better inferences about the whole population than small



samples. This study intended to explore the rates at which young offenders are involved in schooling at a national level from the data collected from this sample. This is because young offenders are within the school-going ages since international protocols, such as the Mandela Rules of 2015, oblige the penitentiaries' administrations to provide formal education to all young offenders (UN, 2015b). It might be assumed that all school-going aged inmates are attending school, but this might not be the reality on the ground. Results from this sample were generalisable to the whole young offenders' population in Malawi (Maxwell, 2012). It was, therefore, interesting to explore or reveal the rates at which education is accessible to the group of school-age offenders in prisons and the social and academic characteristics of those not accessing it (if there are any). Therefore, a total sample of 290 young offenders from five facilities was selected using simple random sampling for this study's descriptive survey.

In the second phase, the purposive sampling technique was used to select five young male offenders at every facility and two female offenders found at one facility (from the pool of those initially involved in the survey) for the qualitative interviews. The selection of these young offenders at each facility was based on the predetermined key characteristics observed in the initial survey, such as school attendance versus non-school attendance, gender and age variations amongst the already surveyed young offenders to accommodate respondents' maximum variations (Tracy, 2020; Yin, 2016). At each facility, the researcher examined the list of survey participants to purposively select five participants fitting the characteristics explained above. The researcher made sure that there was a good representation of various characteristics included for participants' inclusion in this second phase of the young offenders' data collection exercise.

The goal of purposive sampling "is to have those that will yield the most relevant and plentiful data—in essence, information-rich" to inform the study (Yin, 2016, p. 93). Ideally, in qualitative studies, the researcher is expected to use the principle of "point of redundancy", in which they are expected only to end the data-gathering exercise when new information barely appears to be generated from more study respondents

(Yin, 2016, p. 98). This is usually unrealistic because it makes it almost impossible to state or estimate the sample size ahead of the study. Therefore, this study was planned to involve a purposively selected sample of five participants at each facility, but it ended up involving five young male offenders at each of the five facilities and two young female offenders who were found at the gender-mixed facility (totalling to 27 for the study). This enabled the collection of adequate in-depth data on their experiences, knowledge and views regarding the availability, accessibility and relevance of education and other rehabilitation programmes offered to them and how their incarceration was impacting (positively or negatively) their education, with gender sensitivity. Therefore, 27 young offenders drawn from the 290 who participated in the survey were purposively selected as a sample from five facilities for the qualitative interviews.

#### *4.4.2.2 Educators and Officials' sample*

Five educators at each of the five facilities in this study were planned to be selected using the purposive sampling technique. However, one facility did not have educators since there was no education offered. Instead, five prison officials were purposively selected to inform the study. The educators and officials were included to validate the findings from other sources regarding incarceration, rehabilitation and schooling of young offenders in their facilities. For the educators, the inclusion/exclusion criteria were their current involvement in the education of young offenders at their respective facilities and the variation in work experience. The five officials involved at Facility 5 in this study were included due to their past involvement in the education of offenders and their current involvement in rehabilitation-related activities. Out of the 25 educators and officials, six had worked in the MPS for less than one year, five had worked for two to five years, seven had worked for five to 10 years, and the rest seven had worked for over 10 years. The purposive sampling enabled the inclusion of educators and officials with variations in age and experience in correctional education (Yin, 2016). A sample of 25 educators at the five facilities was included to collect rich data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Cohen et al. (2018) observe that the sample size in qualitative research needs to be “large enough to generate ‘thick descriptions’

and rich data,” which is not too large and too small to avoid data overload or theoretical saturation, respectively (p. 244). Therefore, a total sample of 25 purposely selected educators participated in the qualitative interviews.

#### 4.4.2.3 *Ex-young-offenders’ sample*

Five ex-young offenders from each of the five facilities were included in this study. This group was composed of young persons who had been released from the targeted facilities within the three years before the study took place. Both quota and snowball sampling techniques were used to select and identify them. Quota sampling “simply involves designating the population into proportions of some group that you want to be represented in your sample” (Bachman & Schutt, 2018, p. 261). On the other hand, snowball sampling is an ideal technique for reaching difficult-to-access populations such as ex-offenders. Using this technique, the researcher initially identifies some participants who fit the study’s criteria and then asks them to suggest other potential participants with similar characteristics (Tracy, 2020).

Combining these two techniques (quota and snowball), reachable ex-young offenders with required predetermined characteristics were identified and contacted using the contacts they usually leave at the facilities when being discharged. Caution was exercised in including participants to avoid skewing one type of group by ensuring that the initial identified group was a quota representing maximum variations (Tracy, 2020). In this case, offences committed, whether they were engaged in education or not while in the facilities, and levels of educational achievements in prison were the required predetermined characteristics. These were used in tracking other young offenders fitting the same criteria through peer referrals. Blending quota and snowball sampling techniques ensure that the snowballing procedure is purposeful and not done out of convenience (Yin, 2016).

To include and involve these released young people in the study, the first step was recruitment and sampling. The researcher requested details of the young offenders who had been released within three years at each facility. These details needed to include their names, dates of birth, nature of the offence committed, dates of release,

the activities they were involved in while at the facility, and last known contact information. From numerous records provided of these released young people at each facility, the researcher constructed a sampling frame of 25 at each station based on the required predetermined characteristics. Only ex-offenders released within three years at each facility were included because this is the crucial period in the life of a released ex-offender for successful community re-entry or reintegration through involvement in various activities such as education and employment (Batastini et al., 2014; Davis et al., 2014; Newton et al., 2018).

Contact details were then used to contact some participants shortlisted for the interviews to ask for their consent and availability to participate in the study. When an individual accepted, the researcher either travelled to meet them at a place suitable for them or sent the consent form for signing to the provided physical postal address. When the potential participant returned the signed consent form, the researcher booked a telephone interview with them. If the researcher had met the participant face to face, he requested them to first sign the consent form after explaining to them the details of the study for their informed decision. The interview was carried out after the consent form had been signed or fingerprinted. In the spirit of snowball sampling, the interviewed participant would be asked if they remembered any names of other released young offenders with the characteristics required for inclusion in the study. When they provided the names, those young people were also followed in the same fashion until five young people have been contacted per facility.

Out of the total list of 125 potential participants contacted for this study through the contact details accessed from both the facilities authorities and from the snowball suggestions, 37 young people were reachable through the given contact numbers. In contrast, for the rest, their contact cell phone numbers did not exist, were not available or were of their relatives who no longer knew their current locations. Out of the 37 participants, only six denied participation in this study because they were not ready or did not see any value in their participation because the researcher did not offer monetary compensation. Out of the remaining 31, the study ended up selecting

25 released young offenders who were best fitting the predetermined inclusion criteria; 14 through face-to-face and 11 through telephone interviews.

**Table 4.2**

*Total number of respondents involved in the study at five facilities*

<b>Population</b>	<b>Sample</b>		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Young offenders	285	5	290
Educators	21	4	25
Ex-young offenders	25	0	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>340</b>

From Table 4.2 above, the study involved 340 participants, of which only approximately 3% were female educators and young offenders. As it can be seen, the study did not involve any released young female offenders because there were no released records for young female offenders at the gender-mixed facility during the time of this study. This was because the study was conducted during the COVID-19 period. These female inmates were transferred from adults maximum prison, where the female dormitories were turned into COVID-19 patients' waiting bays. Thus, there were no release records yet for female offenders. The facility was only originally meant to house only young male offenders. This showed that young female offenders were still mixed with adult ones in the maximum prisons meant for only adult offenders in Malawi.

#### **4.5 INSTRUMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

Data in this study was mainly generated using survey questionnaires, interviews and researcher's observations. The data collection exercise took place from 10th August 2021 and was completed on 26th January 2022. Questionnaires that were prepared beforehand were used to generate quantitative data from young offenders, while qualitative data from educators, ex-young offenders and a small sample of young

offenders were generated through interviews using interview guides that were also prepared beforehand.

#### **4.5.1 Semi-structured survey questionnaires**

A survey questionnaire was used on 290 young offenders to collect quantitative data (see Appendix I). This semi-structured questionnaire contained closed and open-ended questions created using simple and succinct language suitable for young people (Roni et al., 2020). The close-ended question items were based on 5-point Likert-type scale and categorical responses to collect ratings, self-perceptions and attitudes. Using questionnaires with Likert-type scale items is advantageous because it provides variation in the respondents' options (Worrell & Mello, 2007). Even though Likert-type scale items are commonly used scales because of their advantages with reliability in response rates, generating more data and easiness in constructing, Likert-scale items have a major weakness that the total item scores of a participant may not provide clear meaning because they are a combination of several responses (Cohen et al., 2018). To offset this weakness, the questionnaires had some open-ended question items and some spaces that provided opportunities for the respondents to provide qualitative explanations or justifications for some of their Likert-type scale responses.

The researcher and another assistant administered this questionnaire through planned visits to all facilities. The assistant was a bachelor's degree holder who was hired to assist in administering the survey questionnaires on some of the 290 young offenders. The assistant was trained and hired prior to the data collection exercise by the researcher. The questionnaire had two language versions; one for English and another translated into Chichewa (the common vernacular language in Malawi). In this study, most young offenders (more than 80%) preferred to fill out the Chichewa version. At every facility, all young offenders were given questionnaires to complete in the researcher's presence or the assistant. This allowed the respondents to seek clarification where they needed it and minimise errors in returning the questionnaires. In this study, many young offenders (approx. 20%) confessed that they had not yet

learned how to read and write. Therefore, the researcher and the assistant provided support in getting the questionnaires completed.

#### **4.5.2 Interviews**

This study also collected additional qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with the selected young offenders, educators and ex-young offenders using various semi-structured interview guides. Cohen et al. (2018) argue that, while interviews can sometimes be expensive, prone to interviewer bias and inconvenient to the research participants, they can be a powerful tool for a researcher since they can do what is impossible with surveys. The researcher can use interviews “to cast further explanatory insight into survey data” and explore issues in depth (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 506). Interviews can assist the researcher in gathering useful information about an individual’s lived experiences and meanings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Regarding semi-structured interviews, Cohen et al. (2018) observe that, as compared to structured ones in which the already organised question are used, leaving the interviewer with no freedom to make modifications, semi-structured interviews provide flexibility for the interviewer to tailor the wording and sequence of questions to each interviewee. Even though the interview questions are set in advance, in semi-structured interviews, the questions are open-ended, and the interviewer can modify the questions and use prompts and probes for more information based on the responses collected (Cohen et al., 2018).

In this study, the selected 27 young offenders from the previously surveyed participants were interviewed. Specifically, the study involved 25 male (five per facility) and two young female offenders totalling 27 young offenders’ respondents. A semi-structured interview guide was used with the young offenders to substantiate the data provided in the questionnaires (see Appendix J). In this study, the young offenders’ interviews inside prisons focused on collecting in-depth data on their prison experiences and how they perceived the impact of education on their future. The interviews were conducted in Chichewa or English depending on their preference and language proficiency to allow them to confidently tell their stories regarding their

incarceration, education, and other activities aimed at rehabilitation and reintegration. The interviews sought their perceptions and attitudes toward the education programmes provided in prisons and their readiness and perhaps fears regarding their survival outside prisons.

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with the 25 ex-young offenders and 25 educators. The researcher used prepared interview guides. This focused on collecting their perceptions, views and experiences on incarceration's impact on the young offenders' access and right to quality education. For educators' the interviews focused on understanding how the prison system provides education and other rehabilitation activities for young offenders and their views on its quality and accessibility to the targeted beneficiaries (see Appendix K). While for ex-offenders, the interviews were conducted in Chichewa or English, depending on their preference and language proficiency. The focus was to understand through their own experiences how variables such as incarceration, education and other rehabilitation activities impacted their attitude to life and further pursuance of their educational or career goals before and after their release, and how they were benefiting or not from their acquisition of education during incarceration (see Appendix L).

All interviews took place in private spaces within the facilities' setting, such as in the educators' or other staff offices and empty classrooms. The interviews were all audio-recorded apart from the taking of field notes. The interviews were audio-recorded to enhance the quality of the qualitative data collected thereby ensuring 'rigour and validity' (Seale & Silverman, 1997, p. 380). This is because audio-recording prevented the loss of some important data which was likely to occur if the research was solely relying on written interview scripts from brief notes and or his memory (Rutakumwa et al., 2019). Prior to the commencement of each interview session, the participants were provided with copies of the participant information sheet and consent form to read before signing (copies in English and Chichewa languages were available). At this point, each participant was informed of their right to participate or withdraw at any time in the study. Each participant was also informed that the interview would be audio-recorded; thus, they were asked whether they were



comfortable with the arrangement or not. For those who could not read and write, the researcher read and explained the contents in their language of communication and provided ink for them to stamp the signing area of the consent form with their fingerprints.

### **4.5.3 Observations**

This study also involved the researcher's observation method. Muijjs (2004) argues that the observation method allows the researcher to observe situations extensively in different ways. Observation provides an opportunity for the researcher "...to gather first-hand, 'live' data in situ from naturally occurring social situations" instead of just relying on the reported data (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 542). Its unique strength lies in its face validity. According to Cohen et al. (2018), observation can provide very rich data in a context that can divulge "mundane routines and activities, and can offer an opportunity for documenting those aspects of life-worlds that are verbal, non-verbal and physical" (p. 542).

The semi-structured observation guides are usually prepared beforehand by the researchers which carry an agenda of issues to observe for their study. Thus, observations are done to generate data that "illuminate these issues in a far less predetermined or systematic manner" (Cohen et al., p. 543). In this study, the researcher used an observation checklist to collect data on the school ethos, resources, physical facilities and equipment used for educational activities in the study settings, the processes and policies used in the education of young offenders and examination results as its outcomes (see Appendix M). The researcher also requested copies of the school curricula and rehabilitation path used in YORCs to appreciate. The observations were done only by the researcher who was accompanied by a prison officer during a brief tour of each facility. The researcher collected field notes on all the issues observed. However, the researcher was not allowed to take pictures in the facilities.

Data from observations generally helped in triangulating and supporting other data sources. Through observations, the researcher collected information that was never

revealed in other data collection methods. This concurs with Cohen et al. (2018) who state that people might choose to report or say different things in the interviews and surveys; thus, observation provided a reality check in this study. Observation also helped the researcher scrutinise valuable, routine, everyday happenings and practices that were least expected and would have easily gone unnoticed.

#### **4.5.4 Pilot study**

In ensuring the instruments' reliability, a pilot study was conducted at one of the maximum security prisons not included in this study on similar groups of respondents to test the data collection instruments. Delport and Roestenburg (2011) indicate the importance of a pilot study. Apart from checking the wording of the questions to reduce ambiguity, they observe that it also helps improve the face and content validity of the data collection instruments and the estimation of the response rate of the questionnaire. In this initial phase of the study, all instruments, namely, the survey questionnaire for young offenders, semi-structured interview guides for young offenders, educators and ex-young offenders, and the observation checklist used in the semi-structured observations, were piloted. The study used the "test-retest method", which involves administering the same test twice to the same groups after a certain time interval (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, p. 155). The instruments were administered in the initial phase and re-administered after two weeks. Minor issues and errors noted in the instruments' first administration were rectified after the consultation and approval of the supervisor to enhance their reliability. The pilot study was conducted by the researcher.

The pilot study helped in correcting minor errors and issues on the two data collection instruments: the survey questionnaire and the interview questions for educators. On the survey questionnaire for young offenders, it was noted that one potential qualification acquired in basic education (the JCE) was skipped on Question 5, since only the PSLC and MSCE were included. Therefore, the entry for JCE was added. Secondly, it was also noted that Question 11, as a follow-up question from Item 10, apart from having the YES or NO options, needed to include N/A as an option for

those who would indicate that they were not involved in any kind of rehabilitation programmes in the previous question. Finally, it was noted that the term “excluding education” was repeated in Question 17, which created redundancy and was likely to create ambiguity. The repetition was, therefore, deleted.

On the interview questions for educators, a new question item (Item 8) was added, which read, “What is the total population of young offenders at this facility (Grand total)? How many are females? Furthermore, how many of them are attending formal education? And how many are females?” This was to enable the study to collect disaggregated data on the total number of young offenders (male versus female) engaged in education versus the whole facility population (male and female). Furthermore, an ambiguity in the wording of Question 15 was noted; thus, the item was edited to “What do you think are challenges faced by the education section? Probe challenges faced by educators, the school, and inmates”.

## **4.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis is the crucial stage in every research project. In this study, data was analysed based on the convergent design tenets of the mixed-methods research approach (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018). Through this approach, qualitative findings and statistical (quantitative) data were analysed separately, compared and merged to assist in a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

### **4.6.1 Quantitative data analysis**

The quantitative data was generated from the close-ended parts of the young offenders’ semi-structured questionnaire and some parts of the observation checklist. Moreover, some open-ended parts of the questionnaire were engaged in a data transformation procedure in which the identified codes (some qualitative claims) were tabulated and quantified to assess the amount of data evidence indicating a particular perception or contribution in descriptive statistics (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018; Maxwell, 2012). Creswell and Plano-Clark (2018) indicate that qualitative findings can

be quantified by creating new quantitative variables based on existing and emerging qualitative themes.

This quantitative data was analysed using the descriptive statistical tools found in the SPSS version 22.0 and Microsoft Excel packages. George and Mallery (2020) observe that descriptive statistics provide information regarding the distribution of variables using the measures of central tendency, variability around the mean and deviation from normality, and information concerning the spread of the distribution and stability or sampling error of certain measures. The researcher tabulated the data into the SPSS. Data cleaning was then done prior to the analysis. The study used descriptive statistics such as means, percentages, frequencies, and cross-tabulation analysis to summarise, compare and manipulate the data.

#### **4.6.2 Qualitative data analysis**

Qualitative data was generated from the 27 participating young offenders, 25 educators and 25 ex-young offenders, as well as from the researcher's observation field notes. In modern times, researchers can use a wide range of approaches to analyse qualitative data, including the use of data analysis software packages. Maher et al. (2018) observe that many scholars recommend using digital analysis software packages such as Atlas-ti and NVivo since they offer data organisation and retrieval facilities that support conventional data analysis, interpretation and reporting, especially when large volumes of data are involved. However, they still note that they "do not fully scaffold the analysis process" when one is using traditional manual analysis methods (Maher et al., 2018, p. 12). Therefore, the manual analysis approach using narrative and content analysis methods was preferred in this study because the volume of data for this study was considered doable manually by the researcher with the use of the Microsoft Word and Excel packages to enhance the quality of the research outcomes.

#### *4.6.2.1 Qualitative data from interviews using narrative analysis*

Narrative analysis was used as the primary analysis method for all data generated from interviews with the participants. Riessman (2008) argues that the term 'narrative' is complex, diverse and multifaceted in meaning and use. A narrative can be either a life story constructed from interviews, observations and documents or "a discrete unit of discourse, an extended answer by a research participant to a single question" (Riessman, 2008, p. 539). According to Cohen et al. (2018), a narrative is a story written with a human element processed and condensed to produce an intricate and comprehensive picture of social life. Narrative researchers share interest and commitment in the people's stories and the idea that through creating their narratives, people are given an opportunity to define and organise themselves, thereby bringing meaning to their experiences (Flick, 2014). Therefore, narrative analysis constructs a unity out of tiny pieces of emotional and aesthetic elements that result in a story (Cohen et al., 2018).

Flick (2014) observes that narrative researchers are categorised based on their primary concerns, such as content, structure or form. Cohen et al. (2018) distinguish these categories using the terms 'narrative analysis' or 'analysis of narratives. Josselson (2011) distinguishes them as the hermeneutics of faith (preserves literal meaning) and the hermeneutics of suspicion (interprets concealed meanings) of the texts. Narrative analysis is also categorised as 'holistic versus categorical' (Flick, 2014). In holistic analysis, Flick (2014) argues that the emphasis is largely on "holism rather than the connecting nature of the analysis" (p. 27). That is, the individual's life story is engaged as a whole, and parts of the text are interpreted in the context of other segments of the narrative. Nonetheless, all narrative analyses are based on the theoretical premise that the creation of narratives is essential to the human experience since it allows them to make connections in events and interpret them meaningfully (Flick, 2014).

Narrative research relies on other analysis approaches to support qualitative analysis. Narrative analysis can use thematic, discourse, structural, performance and visual

analysis (Cohen et al., 2018; Josselson, 2011; Riessman, 2008). Josselson (2011) argues that even though narrative analysis relies on other analysis frameworks, it is still unique in that it endeavours to explore the whole story rather than breaking it into small pieces or thematic categories. This is because “it is not the parts that are significant in human life, but how the parts are integrated to create a whole – which is meaning” (Josselson, 2011, p. 226). Narrative analysis is distinguished from mere coding due to the approach’s more holistic and interpretive emphasis on analysis (Flick, 2014). It reports the individuals’ experiences or observations in an omniscient and authorial voice (Riessman, 2008). Therefore, narrative analysis primarily aims to discover the themes that unify the story and the unique voices that “carry, comment on, and disrupt the main themes” (Josselson, 2011, p. 226).

In this study, a substantive volume of data was generated from the semi-structured interviews which were conducted with the young offenders, educators and ex-young offenders. In all the interviews, the researcher took notes and audio-recorded the interviewees. In this study, thematic analysis was used to enhance the narrative analysis as suggested by Riessman (2008). Riessman observes that narrative analysis can use thematic features to identify categories and themes as a tool for analysis. In transcribing, the researcher carefully translated the original Chichewa interview scripts into English. In translating, the researcher was sensitive to some Chichewa language nuances that could not adequately be translated into English. Even though he was fluent and knowledgeable in both languages, he made an effort to understand the lived socio-cultural and spoken language contexts of the participants to ensure the narratives’ original and intended meanings were not lost. (Esin et al., 2014; Flick, 2014). The researcher had to go through all the transcripts again after they were completed to clean the data from any transcription errors.

This was followed by the researcher reading the transcripts several times to gain an overall sense of the texts’ meaning. Each participant’s transcript was individually analysed to enable the researcher to make sense of their incarceration experiences and correctional education perceptions. The researcher used both holistic and categorical narrative analysis approaches which involved thematic analysis of the

interview scripts, starting with the young offenders, the educators and then the ex-young offenders. The themes in the holistic approach created a rich picture from the stories of multiple groups of respondents on juveniles' incarceration, the effects of education and other activities on their re-entry outcomes, such as continued pursuance of their educational goals and employment. The focus was on analysing the narratives' similarities and differences amongst respondents from the same and different YORCs in Malawi. Thus, different themes could make sensible patterns that enhance their coherent unity.

In order to weave an accurate narrative from multiple stories derived from these 77 transcripts, categorisation was also valuable. This is also acknowledged by Flick (2014), who argues that the narrative analysis does not rely solely on contiguity. The researcher, therefore, combined a holistic approach with functional coding and categorisation advocated by Mishler (1986). Functional categories helped provide a set of codes for categorising the narrative functions of various parts of individual accounts, as depicted in the transcripts. This kind of categorisation complements holistic analysis (Flick, 2014). Therefore, emerging and already anticipated themes (from the concepts explicitly included in data collection) were created and used. This was done while considering the relevance of each theme to the research question and the whole dataset generated (Ayres, 2008). The coding facilitated the creation of themes throughout this analysis process. Themes, codes and categories were organised manually in a Microsoft Word package using different colours and highlights.

Finally, to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings from the interview transcripts data, the results were compared with the interview notes taken by the researcher. Moreover, the important concepts and processes identified and their predominant patterns of experiences, perceptions and observations from this narrative analysis of interviews were engaged in a conversation with the results from other data sets in this study, such as those from the observations and quantitative descriptive statistical findings from the questionnaires in the spirit of mixed methods research approach. The results were also brought into alignment with the existing scholarly literature so

that the researcher could “remain sensitive to nuances of meanings expressed and the different contexts into which the meanings may enter” (Josselson, 2011, p. 228), to produce something new to academia.

#### *4.6.2.2 Qualitative data from the questionnaire through content analysis*

The semi-structured questionnaires, which were completed by all young offenders contained open-ended questions and some spaces that provided opportunities for the participants to provide explanations or justifications for some of their Likert-type scale responses. The data generated from this qualitative part of the questionnaire were analysed using the content analysis method. Qualitative content analysis is the kind of analysis that allows researchers to study individuals’ perceptions, experiences and behaviour in an indirect way through their communications (Fraenkel et al., 2012). It is a “strict and systematic set of procedures for the rigorous analysis, examination, replication, inference and verification of the contents of written data” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 674). It is also understood as a logical process of categorising textual data into clusters of similar units to detect consistent patterns and relationships amongst variables or themes (Julien, 2008). In its simplicity, Cohen et al. (2018) observe that content analysis also involves the numerical counting of words or happenings in documents and reporting them in tabular form.

Content analysis, apart from being used for several purposes, can be used for analysing the open-ended questions in survey questionnaires (Cohen et al., 2018; Fraenkel et al., 2012; Julien, 2008). This is because it is effective in reducing data as it assists in organising and making sense of large amounts of descriptive data, thereby assisting in the formulation of themes (Fraenkel et al., 2012; Julien, 2008). It is useful when the researcher seeks to obtain information that describes an issue or to check or validate other research findings collected using other research methodologies in mixed methods research (Fraenkel et al., 2012).

Using the qualitative content analysis, the researcher started by transcribing all the open-ended responses of each questionnaire based on the already anticipated categories within the question items they were falling into. This was followed by the



reading and rereading of the data in the transcripts for the researcher to get familiar with them. This involved the researcher marking interesting patterns and unique or unexpected issues and noting apparent inconsistencies in the texts. The researcher applied content analysis both deductively and inductively (Julien, 2008). Deductive analysis was used to produce frequencies of some items, categories or values associated with particular themes or codes, while inductive analysis was used in deep reading of transcripts' texts to uncover the subjective and unique contextual issues. This was followed by the individual analysis of each of the transcripts using the qualitative content analysis stages and mechanics and tenets of content analysis outlined by Cohen et al. (2018). The open-ended responses provided justifications and explanations for their options in the close-ended question items complementing them. The codes were created from the open-ended responses in the transcripts, which help analyse their reasons for their Likert-type scale options.

Content analysis assisted in analysing the detailed explanations or justifications that young offenders indicated in support of the Likert-type scale items' options. These open-ended justifications provided individual subjective voices and triangulation sources for the descriptive statistical findings of this study. Content analysis embraced the subjectivity belief in pragmatism that text is open to multiple meanings depending on the context of the individual (Julien, 2008). Secondly, content analysis added value in further creating an understanding and description of the voluminous 290 transcripts through the existing themes and in further creating the emerging ones. Cohen et al. (2018) observe that the systematic and rule-governed nature of content analysis enables it to be effective in analysing large quantities of text. The outcome of this process also helped check and validate the close-ended descriptive statistical results and other findings from the interviews and observations.

#### *4.6.2.3 Qualitative data from observations using narrative and content analysis*

Observation field notes were generated on the school environment, infrastructure, teaching and learning resources, processes and policies and on essential documents such as school curricula and rehabilitation paths. Narrative and content analysis

methods were used to analyse the field notes on the observations. Riessman (2008) recommends narrative analysis for fieldwork observation notes. Riessman argues that narrative analysis on observations can convey fresh insights to often familiar situations since new meanings can be constructed through observations. This is because the narrative analysis is also rooted in the social constructivist belief that behaviours and their meanings are socially situated and interpreted. Therefore, observation of the situation can add value to a mixed-methods research study. Fraenkel et al. (2012) also recommend content analysis as an effective technique for analysing educational documents such as schooling trends, policies, publications and curricula in educational research.

In analysing the narratives from the observations of the school and all the prison facilities' environments and ethos as well as other school processes, the researcher examined the content of the field notes and compared it with what had been reported in the other data sources. Data from observations were also read and checked to help the researcher develop familiarity with their contents. The narratives from the observations supported the existing themes from the interview data and helped create emerging themes. In this way, the researcher was able to analyse the common features found in the analyses of other data sets and those which were uniquely found in the observation field notes, thus creating a triangulated base for the researcher's judgements on the conclusions of this study (Cohen et al., 2018).

Similarly, content analysis was used to analyse data collected from the observations including field notes on the young offenders' resources and policies and on essential documents such as school curricula and rehabilitation paths. This helped in ascertaining the level of quality of the education provided in those facilities. This method helped the researcher to check and validate the findings from the open-ended parts of the survey questionnaire and the interview narratives of young offenders, ex-young offenders and educators on the quality of education and rehabilitation programmes in Malawi YORCs. Fraenkel et al. (2012) observe that content analysis enables researchers to validate other study findings. It also assisted in describing trends and patterns in national examination results for the past five

years for those facilities as an element of investigating school system outputs and outcomes as demanded by systems theory.

#### **4.7 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY/CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Some researchers argue that neither the quantitative nor the qualitative approaches can address some research problems adequately when used in isolation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Roni et al., 2020; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). To increase the credibility or validity of research findings, both positivism and interpretivism should be combined into one paradigm. This is the major reason for the use of mixed methods in a research project (Quan-Baffour, 2022). Reliability and validity issues are dealt with differently in quantitative and qualitative studies (Maxwell, 2012). In quantitative studies, reliability and validity concentrate on measurements and adequacy of the measures, while trustworthiness and credibility are associated with qualitative data. Nevertheless, they are vital matters that help to check the quality of the data and the results and their interpretation by researchers, without which research could be worthless (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Romm, 2018).

##### **4.7.1 Reliability and validity in quantitative studies**

In quantitative methods, validity signifies that the scores obtained from research respondents are significant indicators of the construct being measured, while reliability denotes that those scores are consistent and constant (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Reliability is the extent to which a study is repeated and capable of producing the same results (Howell, 2013). Validity is concerned with whether researchers are measuring what they intend to measure in a particular research (Muijis, 2004). Muijis (2004) describes several kinds of validity as used in research, such as content, concurrent, predictive, face and criterion, predictive and concurrent validity. Nonetheless, validity is generally categorised in quantitative research as internal and external validity. Internal validity is about how far changes in the dependent variable can be attributed to the particular variable and not others. Thus, variable control and random selection of samples are the major issue in internal validity (Muijis, 2004). External validity implies the possibility of allowing

generalisation or inference of the particular sample findings to its general population (Fraenkel et al., 2012).

#### **4.7.2 Credibility and trustworthiness in qualitative studies**

In qualitative research, the issues of reliability and validity are less relevant (Maher et al., 2018). Howell (2013) argues that reliability is difficult to measure in qualitative studies because of the possibility of multiple interpretations of the same phenomenon. As a result, certain qualitative researchers reject any attempts to determine the validity of their studies since they believe doing this is likely to counter the very essence of subjective interpretive work (Miller, 2008). Thus, to them, the validity of a study cannot be achieved through the application of specific standards and criteria but when the study is conducted properly in an individualised contextualised manner. Most social constructivists consider the validity of studies as relying on the resonance of their findings with the common discourse in the participants' societies (Miller, 2008). Therefore, qualitative studies have four methodological criteria or determinants of trustworthiness. They are credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability (Fushimi, 2021; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In qualitative studies, these criteria replace the quantitative criteria such as internal validity, external validity and reliability (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). The four criteria of trustworthiness are addressed in the following paragraph.

Credibility ensures that the study is measuring what it intended to measure, thus, accurately representing the social realities of the participants. It seeks to establish whether the findings are convincing or believable plausible information obtained from the participants (Maher et al., 2018). In this study, credibility was achieved through triangulation of data from various sources such as young offenders, educators and ex-offenders. Transferability concerns how the study's results can be transferred and applied or generalised to other contexts or settings, which can be achieved through the thick description of the study context. In this study the inclusion of all five YORCs which were currently available enabled the results to be transferable in the Malawian context.

Dependability is concerned with making sure that the research process is described in sufficient detail to enhance the potential repetition of the work by other researchers. It relates to the consistency, stability or reliability of the findings over time (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To achieve dependability of the findings the researcher should ensure that the data collected are accurate without biases and weaknesses. At the same time, confirmability is the degree to which the findings can be confirmed by other researchers if the work was to be repeated (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). It concerns the efforts to reduce the researcher's bias by acknowledging the researcher's inclinations. In this study, the use of audio-recorders to record young offenders, educators/officials and ex-offenders' interviews as well as the use of multiple data collection such as interviews, observations and open-ended sections of the questionnaire survey enhanced the dependability and confirmability of the findings.

#### **4.7.3 Reliability, validity and trustworthiness issues in this study**

In this mixed-methods study, the trustworthiness of data was gauged mainly through the triangulation of multiple sources and data collection strategies (Maxwell, 2012; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Denzin and Lincoln (2018) argue that triangulation provides an alternative to validity in qualitative research. It is characterised by the use of multiple data sources and methods in a single study. This study involved young offenders, educators and young offenders who had been released from penitentiaries no more than three years before the study was conducted. Since the primary respondent group in this study was the current inmates in young offenders' facilities, data analysis first involved cross-checking qualitative and quantitative data collected from open and close-ended question items of the questionnaire. Open-ended explanations helped in providing clarifications of and justifications for the respondents' Likert-type scale responses. This data was later compared with qualitative interview data collected from the 27 purposively selected young offenders. Young offenders' data was also triangulated with data from educators and those ex-inmates already released from young offenders' facilities. The blending of data

collection strategies such as interviews, surveys and observations also strengthened the trustworthiness of the qualitative data.

The validation and comparison of data collected from various targeted populations enabled the study to obtain the quantitative criterion-related validity called “evidence of concurrent validity” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, p. 152). Moreover, in this study, sampling for the young offenders’ quantitative survey included 38.5% of the total population of the young offenders incarcerated in Malawi penitentiaries using simple random sampling, which is representative enough for the generalisation of the results of the target population and the intended  $p < 0.05$  level of significance. To ensure the reliability of the data collection instruments, a pilot study was conducted at one of the maximum security prisons not included in this study on similar groups of respondents, as explained in sub-section 4.5.4, to test the data collection instruments (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The reliability test for the young offenders’ questionnaire constructs found that all constructs were within the acceptable and good reliability range [ $0.62 \leq \alpha < 0.94$ ] (Cho & Kim, 2014; Emerson, 2019). All data collection instruments were also checked by other researchers, including the supervisor, before their use. Using these strategies, this study ensured that both quantitative and qualitative findings remained trustworthy and valid.

#### **4.8 RESEARCH ETHICS**

Field studies with human participants usually require prior approval from authorities (Yin, 2016). Since prison or correctional institutions are extremely regulated facilities for safety and security reasons, ethical matters need to be taken seriously in research studies (Johnson, 2015). In this study, ethical clearance was applied and sought from UNISA according to the university’s Research Ethics Policy of 2012 (see Appendix A). Similarly, ethical clearance and study approval was sought from MPS authorities in line with the MPS protocols (see Appendix B). Data collection took place from Data collection only started after the UNISA’s ethical clearance and after getting approval from the Chief Commissioner of MPS. Additionally, before data collection, all study respondents were briefed regarding the current study’s purpose, procedure and

ethical issues (see Appendix C). They were informed that they had the right to participate or not or stop participating at any time. Research consent forms were designed and explained to the respondents and signed for the same purpose by the interview respondents (see Appendices C, D, E & F). Permission was requested for the use of audio recorders in interview schedules. This was one way of ensuring that the respondents are protected while participating in this study (Yin, 2016).

The researcher also ensured participants' safety by not indicating their names on any data collection instrument or in the report to ensure their anonymity and confidentiality. In the presentation and discussion of the findings for both quantitative and qualitative segments of this study, all research participants were identified using codes. The facilities involved in this study were identified by numbers (from Facility 1 or F1 to Facility 5 or F5) which were not in any logical order. Additionally, the researcher allocated names reflecting the unique characteristics of individual facilities to ease the readers' identification of the issues with particular facilities. The names were NGO-supported (F1), gender-mixed (F2), modern-built (F3), city-situated (F4) and pure-farming (F5). Young offenders were identified using the code "YO" combined with their respective facility code and their given unique respondent numbers (e.g. F4/YO/17). The educators and ex-young offenders were identified using the letters "EDU" and "Ex-YO" plus their facility codes and respondent number.

During data collection, COVID-19 protocols such as social distancing, use of masks, shields and sanitisers, and disinfection of research instruments before further use were strictly observed to ensure the safety of the respondents as well as the researcher and his assistant (Rafeemanesh et al., 2020; Roberts et al., 2021). Each participant was provided with a face mask for use and was required to hand sanitise during the time they were involved in this study. Finally, all data gathered in this study have been protected; hard copies have been stored in a safe, while soft copies have been encrypted to limit access.

#### **4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed the research methodology and design used in this study. The chapter discussed research paradigms and their ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions, which influence methodologies. It explained the inherent challenges in each of the paradigms and provided reasons for adopting pragmatism as the paradigm underpinning this study, leading to the use of a mixed-methods research approach with a convergent design using both quantitative and qualitative methods to benefit from each of their advantages. Research methods were also discussed to illustrate how the research was carried out and analysed data. The next chapter presents the results of this study.



## CHAPTER 5

### QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 5.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This study was aimed at investigating how the incarceration of young offenders in Malawi impacts on their rights and access to quality education. This chapter presents a discussion and an analysis of the descriptive quantitative data collected from the survey and semi-structured observations. The descriptive survey was composed of both close-ended and open-ended questions. Thus, some qualitative data from the open-ended parts were converted into descriptive statistics. The quantitative data presented in this chapter was analysed using the descriptive statistical tools found in the SPSS version 22.0 and Microsoft Excel packages. The chapter is, therefore, organised based on the three research questions of this mixed-methods research study presented and stated in Chapters 1 and 4 which are also restated below:

- To what extent are young offenders engaged in meaningful rehabilitative activities, including education, during their incarceration at the five young offenders' rehabilitation centres in Malawi?
- How do the availability of resources and the environment in the penitentiary systems affect the young offenders' rights and access to quality education at the five young offenders' rehabilitation centres in Malawi?
- What are the effects of education provided to the young offenders on their continued pursuance of their educational or career goals after their release from the young offenders' rehabilitation centres in Malawi?

The chapter initially presents information on the study respondents' background characteristics. This is followed by an exploration of the activities that young offenders were involved in to ascertain if they were engaged in meaningful

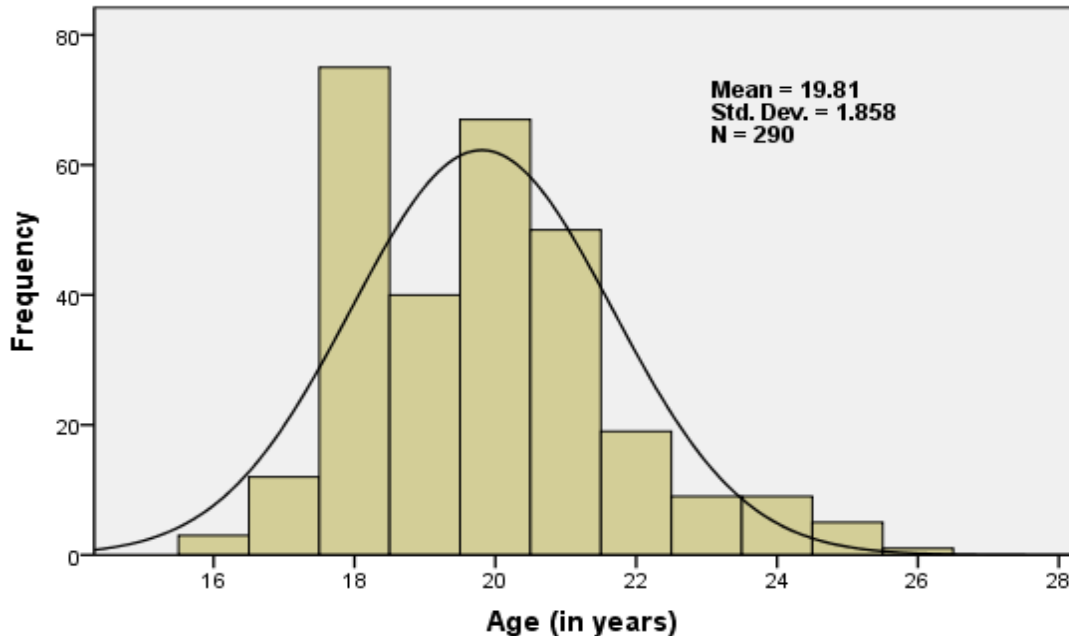
rehabilitative activities in general, and educational ones in particular. The chapter then presents an analysis and interpretation of the effects of the correctional system's environment, services and resources on the young offenders' rights and access to quality education. The last part examines the effects of education on young offenders' lives in prison and after their release. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings of the data collected using the quantitative method. The quantitative descriptive survey and analyses presented in this chapter are based on respondents' actual responses. All non-applicable (N/A) responses in all the survey questions were re-coded as missing data to allow the analysis to capture only the expressed perceptions of the study respondents.

## **5.2 SUMMARY OF SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS**

This survey targeted the young offenders in Malawi's five YORCs. The survey involved both male and female inmates as respondents. Out of the 290 respondents, 98% were male, while only 2% were female. Out of the five facilities involved in this study, 60 young male offenders were randomly selected from their populations at each of the four facilities. While at the remaining facility, all 45 male young offenders incarcerated at the facility during the period of this study were included. The only five young female offenders found at the gender-mixed facility were simply included as respondents in this survey (2%, n=290). Thus, a total of 290 young offenders involved in this study represented 38.5% of the young offenders' population in the five YORCs in Malawi, as explained in Chapter 4. Figure 5.1 shows their age distribution.

**Figure 5.1**

*Participating young offenders' ages in years*



The above histogram (Figure 5.1) shows the ages of the young offenders involved as relatively normally distributed; however, it is positively skewed with a mean of 19.8 years, mode of 18 years, and standard deviation of 1.858. This means that most of the young offenders were of the age of 19 and above. A Shapiro-Wilk's test ( $p < .05$ ) and the normal Q-Q plot further confirmed the relative normal distribution result. The young offenders as a respondent group offered a vantage point for examining the impact of incarceration on their access to quality education since they were mature enough to be a reliable source of information on the issues directly affecting them (Roni et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the graph shows that at least 4% of young offenders who were incarcerated at these centres were between the ages of 16 and 17 (classifying them as minors), and 2% were between the ages of 25 and 26 years adults according to the Malawi Constitution (GoM, 2018b). This shows that the YORCs in Malawi were mixing minors with adults, contrary to the segregation provision for offenders in the Nelson Mandela Rules (UN, 2015).

**Table 5.1***Demographic characteristics of survey respondents (n=290)*

<b>Characteristics</b>		<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std.Dev</b>	<b>P-value</b>
<b>Gender</b>				1.02	0.130	0.000
	Male	285	98.3			
	Female	5	1.7			
<b>Offending status</b>				1.09	0.281	0.001
	First offender	265	91.4			
	Recidivist	25	8.6			
<b>Offence(s) committed</b>						0.001
	Theft/ Robbery/ Fraud	159	54.8			
	Rape/ defilement	79	27.2			
	Murder/ Manslaughter	25	8.6			
	Violence/Common assault	20	6.9			
	Wild-life poaching	2	0.7			
	Child abuse	2	0.7			
	Narcotics	1	0.3			
	Household delinquency	1	0.3			
	Abortion	1	0.3			
<b>Education level before incarceration</b>						0.001
	Never attended school	8	2.8			
	Primary: Standard 1-4	15	5.2			
	Primary: Standard 5-8	60	20.7			
	Secondary: Form 1-2	20	6.9			
	Secondary: Form 3-4	12	4.1			
	Tertiary	1	0.3			
	Dropped-out	174	60.0			
<b>Current highest educational qualification</b>						0.000
	None	204	70.3			
	PSLC	58	20.0			
	JCE	19	6.6			
	MSCE	9	3.1			

*Note: p-values measured using one-sample chi-square and binomial tests.*

As is displayed in Table 5.1, the study involved young offenders with varying characteristics in terms of their self-reported offending statuses, crimes or offences that landed them in the penitentiaries, their education levels before incarceration and their current highest educational qualifications. As illustrated in the table, the majority

of these young offenders (91%, n=290) self-reported that they were first offenders, while the remaining 9% admitted to being recidivists. It is also notable that the majority of young offenders were incarcerated for serious crimes such as murder, rape, defilement, theft and robbery; the majority (more than 90%) did not have any secondary school education qualification, and 60% had dropped out of school even before their arrest and subsequent incarceration.

### **5.3 YOUNG OFFENDERS' REHABILITATION ACTIVITIES AND EDUCATION**

This section focuses on the first question of the study which assessed the extent to which the young offenders were engaged in meaningful rehabilitative activities, including education, during their incarceration. The section is organised based on a series of survey questions on activities that young offenders were involved in at the correctional facilities. The presentation begins with an examination of the first activity that the respondents were involved in after their entry or admission into the correctional facilities, followed by their current activities and educational programmes. The section ends with an exploration of the mode of enrolment of young offenders into education programmes to ascertain if everyone has an opportunity to enrol.

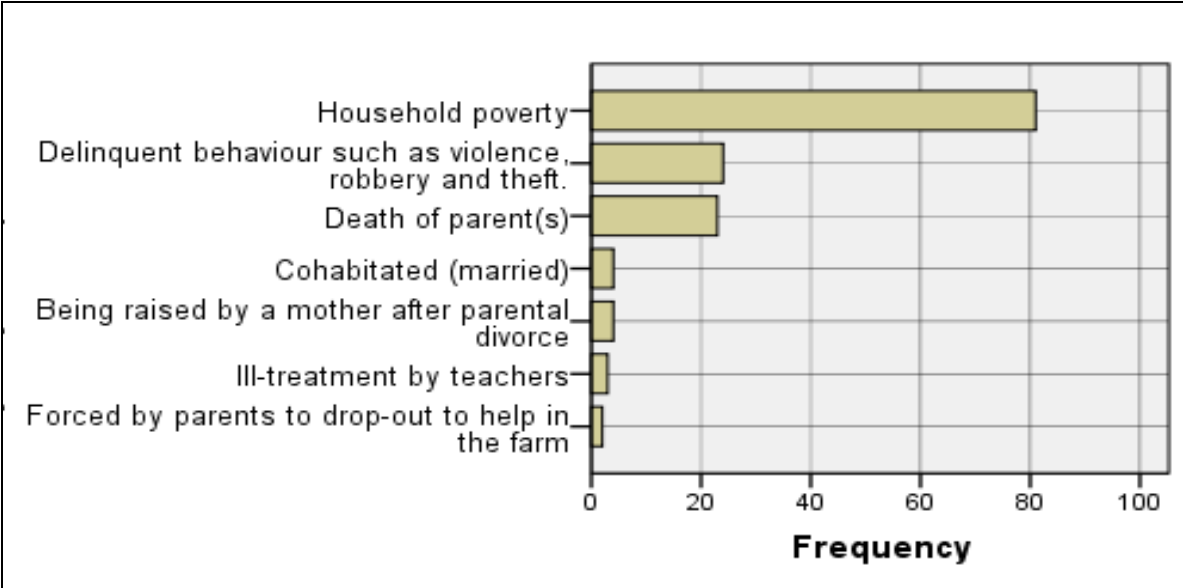
#### **5.3.1 The first programmes young offenders were engaged in after admission**

From the demographic data in Table 5.1 above, it is noted that most young offenders incarcerated in Malawi correctional facilities are uneducated and have unstable economic backgrounds, leading to their committing economic crimes. The table also shows that 60% of the young offenders in this study (n=290) had already dropped out of school before their incarceration; 3% had not been to school at all; 26% had been in primary school; 11% had been in secondary school; while only one young offender (0.3%) had been at tertiary education level before their incarceration. Before finding out about the first programme these young offenders were engaged in just after they entered the correctional facility, the researcher was interested to find out more about those who dropped out of school before their incarceration (60%, n=290). Out of those who indicated that they dropped out before their incarceration, the study found that 81% (n=174) dropped out at the primary school level, 18% at the secondary

school level, while only one young offender (0.6%) dropped out at the tertiary level. The respondents were then provided with space in the questionnaire to mention why they dropped out of school before their incarceration. Figure 5.2 illustrates their responses after being transformed and tabulated.

**Figure 5.2**

*Young offenders' reasons for dropping out of school before incarceration*



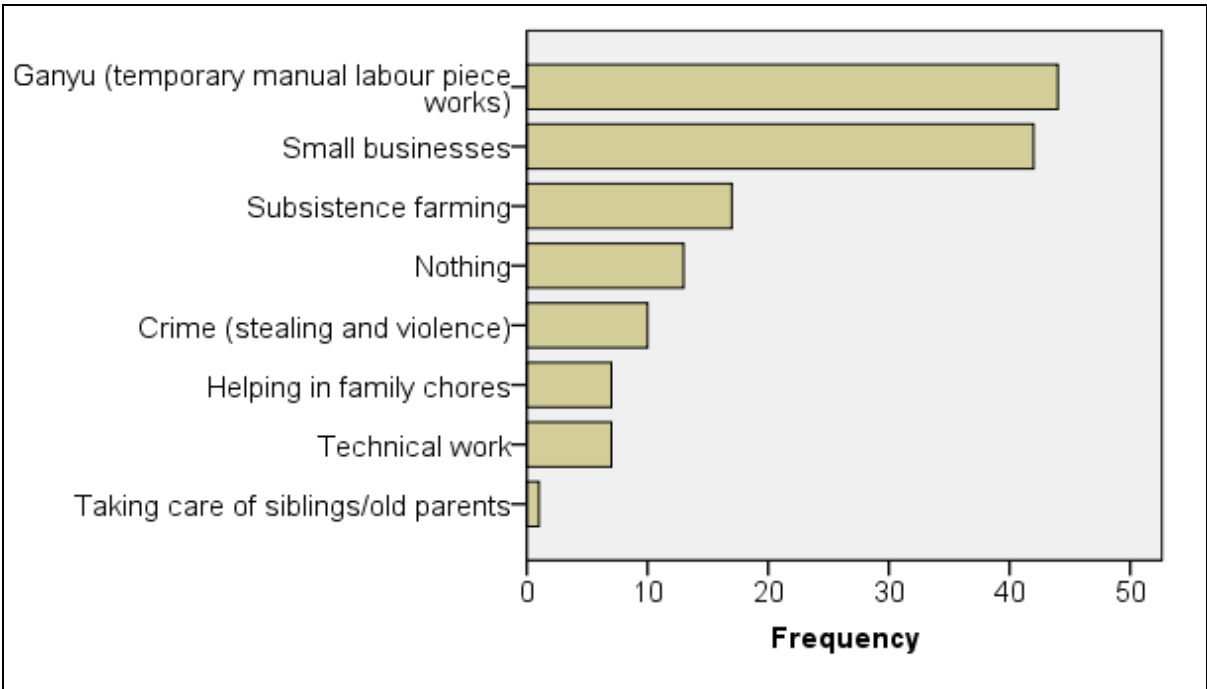
From Figure 5.2, economic hardship at the household level was the reason most cited by young offenders for their school dropout. Out of the 141 young offenders who responded to this question, 80% cited poverty-related reasons for dropping out of school, such as general household poverty which made their parents fail to provide resources for their education. Some young offenders mentioned the lack of resources caused by the death of one or both parents and being raised by a single parent (predominantly single mothers) after parental divorce as the reasons for their dropping out of school. It was only 17% who admitted that they dropped out of school due to their delinquent behaviour, such as violence at school or in the community and joining bad peer groups that introduced them to a life of crime, while another 3%

dropped out after marrying and cohabitating with their girlfriends who were usually minors.

The next question was about what they were doing after dropping out of school before their incarceration. Figure 5.3 illustrates the responses of 141 young offenders.

**Figure 5.3**

*Activities that the school drop-outs were you doing before incarceration*



Note: (n=141)

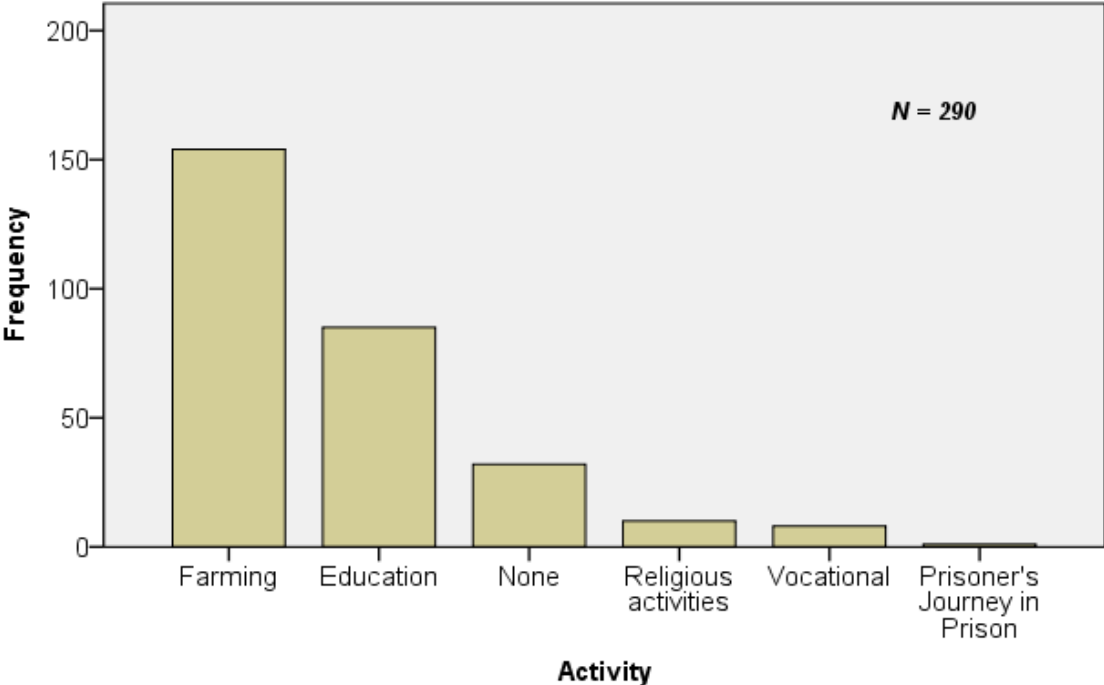
As illustrated in Figure 5.3, most of those who dropped out of school (61%, n=141) reported having been engaged in *ganyu* (temporary piece work) and petty trading in the streets, markets and bus depots in the townships and cities. These were the same activities that contributed to their crimes and subsequent incarceration for most of them. Moreover, 7% (n=141) reported having been involved in criminal enterprises such as stealing and violence, resulting in arrest and admission into the penitentiary system. It is worth noting that 9% admitted to living an idle life after dropping out of school, while the rest were helping their families and were involved in some technical

work such as carpentry, plumbing, electronics and bricklaying as apprentices with a few as technicians. These findings concur with what other studies found that most young offenders are admitted into correctional facilities without education and other life skills, thereby being socially disadvantaged (Byrd & McCloud, 2021; Hunt & Nichol, 2021; Nkoana et al., 2020; Nowak, 2019). They thus need rehabilitation for them not to re-offend after their release as advocated by GLM and RNR rehabilitation models (Andrews et al., 2011; Durrant, 2018; Farley & Pike, 2018; Forsberg & Douglas, 2022; Ward et al., 2012b).. These responses indicate the importance and value of the first activity the delinquent youth are involved in for their successful rehabilitation journey in correctional facilities.

Table 5.3 displays their responses to the question about the first programme or activity they were involved in after they entered the penitentiary facility.

**Figure 5.4**

*The first activity that young offenders were involved in*



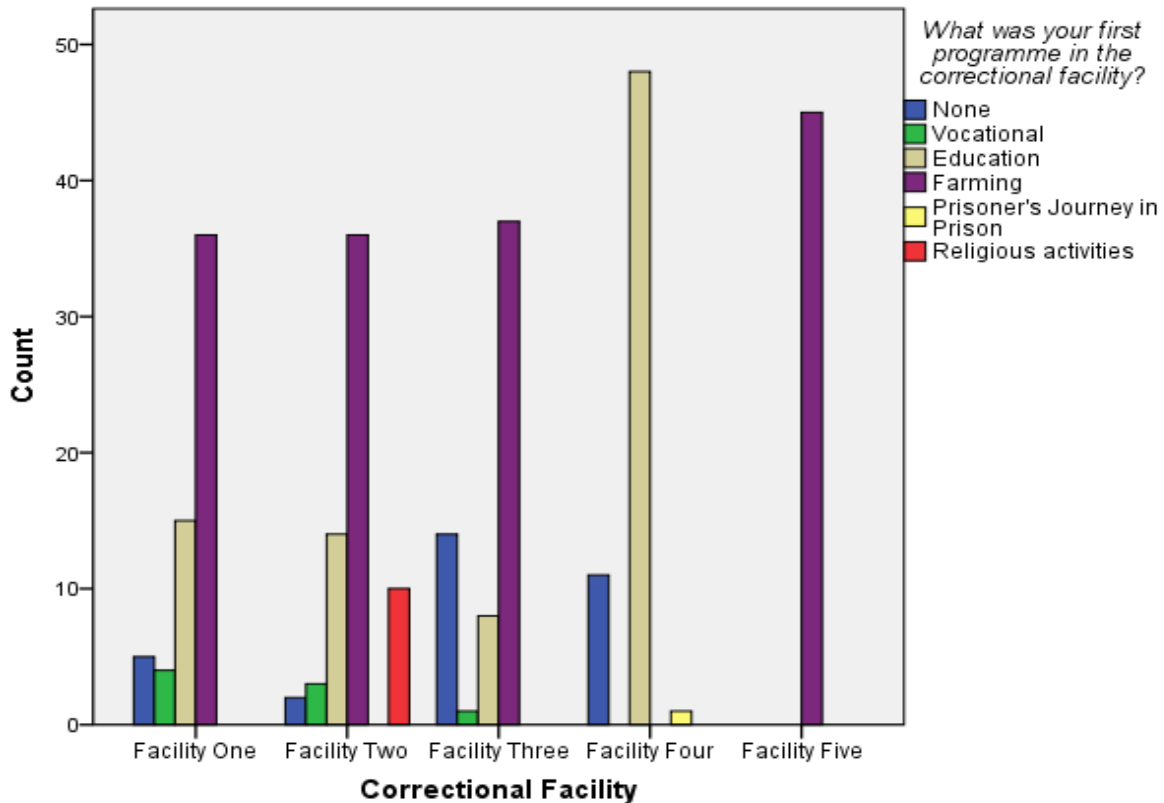


As illustrated in Figure 5.4, most young offenders involved in this study (53%, n=290) indicated farming as the first activity they were involved in after being admitted to the YORC. In comparison, another 29% indicated education, and 11% specified that they had not been involved in any programme or activity since their admission into the facilities. Moreover, 3% (n=290) reported having been engaged in vocational and technical skills such as carpentry, plumbing and bricklaying. However, most of them were the same individuals who reported already having the skills before they entered prison; thus, they were placed in those activities as work parties. The remaining 4% reported religious activities and a specific religious programme called “Prisoners’ Journey in Prison” found in most Malawian prison facilities. Involvement in farming was coercive compared to education and religious activities which were generally voluntary. From the descriptive responses, there were no formal placement tests conducted to determine the young people’s fitness for various activities apart from haphazard, brief oral assessments conducted by education coordinators at two facilities upon the inmate’s admission.

The results for this question are interesting in cross-tabulation among the YORCs, as shown in Figure 5.5. The cross-tabulated results show that farming was the highest reported as the first activity by young offenders at four facilities, excluding the city-situated facility. At the city-situated facility, the majority reported education as the first activity they were introduced to after their admission into the facility. At the pure-farming facility, farming was the only activity reported by all respondents as their first activity (100%, n=45). This is illustrated in Figure 5.5.

**Figure 5.5**

*Cross-tabulation of the first programme by facilities*



The cross-tabulated results in Figure 5.5, therefore, show variations in activities that young offenders were involved in among the five facilities. This implies that there was no consistency in the way young offenders were handled at the five YORCs in Malawi. Newly admitted young offenders were assigned to activities that were conveniently available at the respective facility, with all inmates at facility five (pure-farming) being involved in farming and the majority at facility four (city-situated) involved in education as their first activities or programmes.

### **5.3.2 The admission process versus rehabilitation values and standards**

The GLM advocates for the practitioners to work together with offenders to develop a rehabilitation plan for use during their stay in the facilities (George, 2016; Ward & Gannon, 2006; Ward et al., 2012b). The development of the rehabilitation plan is to

minimise the risk of reoffending after their release and enable them to acquire their primary goods through pro-social methods through the implementation of several phases of the programme. The initial phases, according to GLM, involve evaluating the criminogenic needs of each offender (Ward & Gannon, 2006). This activity is an attempt, with the support of clinical psychologists, to isolate the primary good(s) that the offender previously strived unsuccessfully to acquire that made them engage in their criminal activities (Ward & Gannon, 2006). This process results in the development of a Good Life Plan (rehabilitation plan).

Therefore, the analysis in this section follows the GLM approach to ideal offender rehabilitation. The survey included several Likert-type scale question items which depicted processes expected for an offender to pass through in their initial admission days for their successful rehabilitation process in the correctional facility. The respondents were expected to choose one option from “strongly agree” (1) to “strongly disagree” (5) that best describes their perceptions as to whether they were involved or not in what was stated as displayed in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2**

*Descriptive statistics: Participants’ perceptions of the admission process*

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower bound	Upper bound		
<i>I was welcomed and got my personal information entered</i>								
NGO-supported	60	1.40	.643	.083	1.23	1.57	1	4
Gender-mixed	65	1.03	.174	.022	0.99	1.07	1	2
Modern-built	60	1.23	.465	.060	1.11	1.35	1	3
City-situated	60	1.22	.613	.079	1.06	1.38	1	5
Pure-farming	45	1.20	.457	.068	1.06	1.34	1	3
Total	290	1.21	.509	.030	1.16	1.27	1	5
<i>I was engaged in the rules &amp; regulations induction process</i>								
NGO-supported	60	1.63	1.057	.136	1.36	1.91	1	5
Gender-mixed	65	1.06	.242	.030	1.00	1.12	1	2
Modern-built	60	1.38	.613	.079	1.22	1.54	1	4
City-situated	60	1.22	.613	.079	1.06	1.38	1	5
Pure-farming	45	1.27	.539	.080	1.10	1.43	1	3
Total	290	1.31	.691	.041	1.23	1.39	1	5

From Table 5.2, the results show that almost all young offenders acknowledged that on admission, they were welcomed, got their personal information entered ( $m=1.21$ ,  $sd=0.51$ ) and were oriented regarding the facilities' rules, regulations and services ( $m=1.31$ ,  $sd=0.69$ ). One-way ANOVA was used to explore if there were significant differences across the five facilities on their perception regarding how they are handled on admission. Tables 5.3 and 5.4 present the results.

**Table 5.3**

*ANOVA: I was welcomed and got my personal information entered*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.895	4	1.724	0.92	0.453
Within Groups	533.881	285	1.873		
Total	540.776	289			

**Table 5.4**

*ANOVA: I was engaged in the rules & regulations induction process*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.568	4	2.642	1.42	0.227
Within Groups	530.208	285	1.86		
Total	540.776	289			

As illustrated by the ANOVA results in Tables 5.3 and 5.4 above for the five facilities involved in this study, no significant difference was found for both perceptions variables ( $F(4,285) = 1.724$ ,  $p>0.05$  &  $F(4,285) = 1.420$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). Thus, the results suggest that young offenders' views on the correctional service's practices of welcoming and orienting the newly admitted inmates did not differ significantly in the five facilities. This lack of variation indicates that personal record profiling and orientation to rules and regulations were among the practices carried out with each offender when admitted. The rules and regulations were uniformly applied.

However, most young offenders reported that they were never involved in the standard procedures of the ideal rehabilitative environment in the initial phases of admission. Table 5.5 illustrates their responses.

**Table 5.5***Young offenders' involvement in the rehabilitation planning process*

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower bound	Upper bound		
<i>I had sessions with a psychologist or any social worker regarding my offence and/or how I related with my community, family, friends and teachers at school</i>								
NGO-supported	60	4.00	1.302	.168	3.66	4.34	1	5
Gender-mixed	65	4.45	1.132	.140	4.17	4.73	1	5
Modern-built	60	3.82	1.308	.169	3.48	4.15	1	5
City-situated	60	4.72	.865	.112	4.49	4.94	1	5
Pure-farming	45	4.91	.358	.053	4.80	5.02	3	5
Total	290	4.35	1.147	.067	4.22	4.48	1	5
<i>I was involved in therapy or counselling and guidance sessions</i>								
NGO-supported	60	4.20	1.117	.144	3.91	4.49	1	5
Gender-mixed	65	4.89	.359	.045	4.80	4.98	3	5
Modern-built	60	4.28	.524	.068	4.15	4.42	3	5
City-situated	60	4.97	.181	.023	4.92	5.01	4	5
Pure-farming	45	4.91	.358	.053	4.80	5.02	3	5
Total	290	4.64	.693	.041	4.56	4.72	1	5
<i>I have a correctional rehabilitation or intervention plan</i>								
NGO-supported	60	4.37	.991	.128	4.11	4.62	1	5
Gender-mixed	65	4.91	.341	.042	4.82	4.99	3	5
Modern-built	60	4.25	.600	.077	4.09	4.41	2	5
City-situated	60	4.98	.129	.017	4.95	5.02	4	5
Pure-farming	45	4.93	.330	.049	4.83	5.03	3	5
Total	290	4.68	.648	.038	4.60	4.75	1	5
<i>All activities and programmes I have been involved in are within my correctional rehabilitation or intervention plan</i>								
NGO-supported	60	4.28	.993	.128	4.03	4.54	1	5
Gender-mixed	65	4.92	.322	.040	4.84	5.00	3	5
Modern-built	60	4.23	.621	.080	4.07	4.39	2	5
City-situated	60	4.98	.129	.017	4.95	5.02	4	5
Pure-farming	45	4.76	.773	.115	4.52	4.99	1	5
Total	290	4.63	.709	.042	4.55	4.72	1	5

The results in Table 5.5 show that 88% of young offenders ( $m=4.35$ ,  $sd=1.15$ ) indicated 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' with the statement that they had sessions with professional counsellors or psychologists, an aspect that is considered crucial in case management within the unit management model that Malawi Prisons Service claimed to be using (MPS, 2016; 2021). These young offenders also disagreed that they had been involved in counselling and guidance sessions as part of their rehabilitation programming (96%,  $m=4.64$ ,  $sd=0.69$ ), having a correctional

rehabilitation plan (94%,  $m=4.68$ ,  $sd=0.65$ ) and the statement that all activities and programmes they were involved in were within their correctional rehabilitation plan (94%,  $m=4.63$ ,  $sd=0.71$ ). The findings suggest that Malawi's young offenders were generally not involved in initial preparatory rehabilitation activities as advocated by many rehabilitation theories, including GLM and RNR model (Durrant, 2018; Mallion & Wood, 2020; McMahon & Jump, 2017).

### 5.3.3 Programmes and activities in young offenders centres

The study further explored the activities and programmes that young offenders were involved in to ascertain their meaningfulness in their rehabilitation goals. The respondents were requested to list all programmes or activities which were later quantified to statistical data in the SPSS. Table 5.6 displays the results.

**Table 5.6**

*Cross tabulations: Activities involving young offenders*

Facility	None	Education	Farming	Vocat/ Tech	Religious activities	Others	Total
NGO-supported: <i>Count</i>	2	36	47	12	5	6	108
<i>% within the facility</i>	1.9%	33.3%	43.5%	11.1%	4.6%	5.6%	100.0%
Gender-mixed: <i>Count</i>	1	37	49	9	27	5	128
<i>% within the facility</i>	0.8%	28.9%	38.3%	7.0%	21.1%	3.9%	100.0%
Modern-built: <i>Count</i>	15	16	39	6	-	1	77
<i>% within the facility</i>	19.5%	20.8%	50.6%	7.8%	-	1.3%	100.0%
City-situated: <i>Count</i>	12	48	-	-	1	3	64
<i>% within the facility</i>	18.8%	75.0%	-	-	1.6%	4.7%	100.0%
Pure-farming: <i>Count</i>	-	-	45	1	1	1	48
<i>% within the facility</i>	-	-	93.8%	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%	100.0%
Total <i>Count</i>	30	137	180	28	34	16	425
<i>% of total</i>	7.1%	32.2%	42.4%	6.6%	8.0%	3.8%	100.0%

*Note: \*Others include sports, Prisoners' Journey, cleaning and drama*

From Table 5.6, many young offenders reported having been engaged in farming. Farming was followed by education. Out of 425 counts, 42% indicated farming while

32% indicated education. Among those who indicated education (n=137), 74% were enrolled in primary school, 26% in secondary school and none in tertiary education. Nonetheless, as already reported, education programmes were not available at the pure-farming facility since it was a farming prison. Thus, all young offenders at the facility were involved in farming activities. Similarly, no young offender indicated farming as their activity or programme at the city-situated facility because the facility did not have farms.

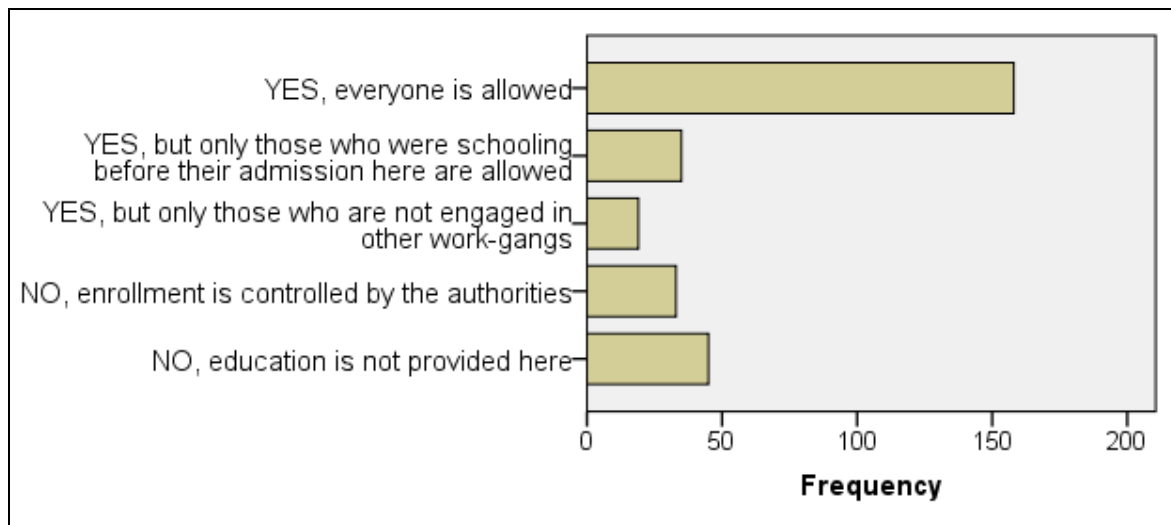
When they were asked to pick their favourite and most helpful programme in the next question, 49% (n=290) indicated 'none', meaning they did not see any programme or activity as favourite or helpful to them. Nevertheless, 36% (n=290) indicated 'education' as their favourite programme, while few indicated 'farming' (6%), religious activities (6%), vocational and technical skills training (2%), and sports (1%). This shows that most young offenders did not perceive the activities they were involved in as helpful. Comparing the distribution of young offenders' responses versus those who indicated 'education' as their current programme, it was noted that 73% of those in school (n=129) also picked education as their favourite programme out of the list they indicated. In contrast, the majority of those who reported 'farming' as one of the activities they were currently involved in (52%, n=180) were the ones who reported that there was no activity or programme that was favourite or helpful to them, while 26% reported 'education' as the programme they wished they were accessing in the correctional facility. This disparity shows that most young offenders (even those not enrolled) consider education as an important aspect of their rehabilitation.

#### **5.3.4 Accessibility of education to the incarcerated young offenders**

Exploring further the accessibility of education to the young offenders in Malawi, the respondents were asked to choose amongst the provided response options to the question, "does every inmate who want to enrol for schooling or education allowed to do so at this institution?" The results are presented in Figure 5.6.

**Figure 5.6**

*Accessibility of education opportunities to young offenders*



The results in Figure 5.6 show that the majority (73%) of young offenders (n=290) were affirmative to the statement that education was accessible at their facilities, though with some conditions. It was only 11% that reported that the school was not completely accessible since the prison authorities controlled the decision for someone to enrol; the majority were from the pure-farming facility (prison farm) which did not have education programmes. The only core activity at the pure-farming facility was working on the farms.

Even though the majority reported that education was accessible, ironically, only 47% of young offenders (n=290) reported being enrolled in the education programme at the targeted five facilities. Chapter 6 sheds more light on factors contributing to the low enrolment rates from the qualitative data.

#### **5.4 EFFECTS OF RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT ON EDUCATION**

This section presents the results of the analysed data collected from the quantitative part of this study on the second research question: “how does the availability of resources and the environment in the correctional systems (inputs) impacts on the young offenders’ rights and access to quality education?” The section used the



systems theory's concepts of inputs, processes and output to examine the quality of education provided to young offenders in Malawi correctional facilities. This is because the attainment of education quality requires synchronisation or a mix of adequate inputs working in harmony, such as the existence of quality school buildings in the presence of adequate qualified teachers with adequate instructional materials and textbooks (UNICEF, 2000). This is also postulated by the systems theory (Garira, 2020; Lai & Lin, 2017). The correctional facilities' environments were examined through the perceptions and opinions of the young offenders, the main clients of the service, to check their conduciveness to the provision of education. The section further analyses the inputs and processes regarding teachers, infrastructure, teaching and learning resources to determine the quality of education accessible to the incarcerated youth in Malawi.

#### **5.4.1 Quality of human resources in young offenders facilities' schools**

Young offenders in this study were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements regarding the quality of human resources such as teachers and school counsellors in their respective correctional facility schools. The young offenders' responses were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree). Their responses are shown in Table 5.7.

**Table 5.7***Descriptive statistics: Adequacy and quality of teachers*

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower bound	Upper bound		
<i>This institution has adequate teachers</i>								
NGO-supported	38	3.61	1.405	.228	3.14	4.07	1	5
Gender-mixed	34	4.24	1.350	.231	3.76	4.71	1	5
Modern-built	16	2.31	1.401	.350	1.57	3.06	1	5
City-situated	49	5.00	0.000				5	5
Total	137	4.11	1.392	.119	3.87	4.34	1	5
<i>Teachers teach effectively</i>								
NGO-supported	38	3.66	1.438	.233	3.19	4.13	1	5
Gender-mixed	34	2.94	1.841	.316	2.30	3.58	1	5
Modern-built	16	2.31	1.537	.384	1.49	3.13	1	5
City-situated	49	4.71	.913	.130	4.45	4.98	1	5
Total	137	3.70	1.638	.140	3.42	3.98	1	5
<i>Teachers are well motivated</i>								
NGO-supported	38	3.37	1.584	.257	2.85	3.89	1	5
Gender-mixed	34	3.29	1.818	.312	2.66	3.93	1	5
Modern-built	16	2.38	1.500	.375	1.58	3.17	1	5
City-situated	49	4.71	.913	.130	4.45	4.98	1	5
Total	137	3.72	1.636	.140	3.44	3.99	1	5

Overall, in Table 5.7, the results of the four facilities providing education programmes indicate that young offenders who were in school during the study generally perceived that their schools did not have adequate and quality teachers. From the results, the majority of these inmate students disagreed that their institutions had adequate teachers ( $m=4.11$ ,  $sd=1.39$ ), who taught effectively ( $m=3.7$ ,  $sd=1.64$ ) and that were well-motivated ( $m=3.72$ ,  $sd=1.64$ ). Nevertheless, there were differences across facilities. Inmate students at the city-situated facility strongly perceived their teachers as not adequate ( $m=5.0$ ,  $sd=0.00$ ), competent ( $m=4.71$ ,  $sd=.913$ ), and motivated ( $m=4.71$ ,  $sd=.913$ ) while young offenders at the modern-built facility were generally non-committal ( $m=2.38$ ,  $sd=1.50$ ) on their teachers being adequate, competent and motivated to work and deliver lessons effectively.

Regarding whether the schools in correctional facilities had school counsellors to guide and counsel students for their educational goals' attainment as required, 79% ( $n=137$ ) of respondents disagreed ( $m=4.51$ ,  $sd=1.09$  with the 95% confidence interval

for mean between 4.33 and 4.69). Moreover, a one-way ANOVA was calculated to compare the means of young offenders' perceptions of the availability of school counsellors at their institutions across facilities one to four. The results of the ANOVA are presented in Table 5.8.

**Table 5.8**

*ANOVA: Availability of school counsellors in four facilities*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	27.219	3	9.073	6.681	.001
Within Groups	180.621	133	1.358		
Total	207.839	136			

With the one-way ANOVA, the results were that there was a significant difference in the perceptions of inmate students in the four young offenders' schools regarding the availability of school counsellors at their institutions ( $F(3,133) = 6.7, p < .05$ ). The perceptions of young offenders on the availability of school counsellors were significantly different across the four facilities. This could be because some young offenders failed to differentiate between HIV and AIDS counsellors, who are readily available in the facilities and actual school counsellors, who were not yet available in the correctional facilities in Malawi.

#### **5.4.2 Quality of physical resources in young offenders' facilities schools**

The study further examined students' perception in the four YORCs that provided education programmes regarding the availability and quality of physical resources such as school infrastructure, teaching and learning resources and technological equipment. The young offenders' responses were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The results across the four facilities are presented in Table 5.9.

**Table 5.9***Descriptive statistics: Physical resources in young offenders' schools*

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower bound	Upper bound		
<i>We learn in proper classrooms with good desks and chairs</i>								
NGO-supported	38	2.37	1.478	.240	1.88	2.85	1	5
Gender-mixed	34	4.74	.864	.148	4.43	5.04	1	5
Modern-built	16	4.25	1.183	.296	3.62	4.88	1	5
City-situated	49	4.86	.707	.101	4.65	5.06	1	5
Total	137	4.07	1.501	.128	3.81	4.32	1	5
<i>We usually have enough learning materials</i>								
NGO-supported	38	4.24	.971	.157	3.92	4.56	2	5
Gender-mixed	34	4.24	1.304	.224	3.78	4.69	1	5
Modern-built	16	4.25	1.183	.296	3.62	4.88	1	5
City-situated	49	3.86	1.458	.208	3.44	4.28	1	5
Total	137	4.10	1.268	.108	3.89	4.32	1	5
<i>We have enough prescribed text-books</i>								
NGO-supported	38	4.45	.724	.117	4.21	4.69	2	5
Gender-mixed	34	4.71	.871	.149	4.40	5.01	1	5
Modern-built	16	4.25	1.000	.250	3.72	4.78	1	5
City-situated	49	4.94	.429	.061	4.82	5.06	2	5
Total	137	4.66	.750	.064	4.54	4.79	1	5
<i>We have a library at this facility</i>								
NGO-supported	38	2.08	1.343	.218	1.64	2.52	1	5
Gender-mixed	34	3.74	1.814	.311	3.10	4.37	1	5
Modern-built	16	3.63	1.628	.407	2.76	4.49	1	5
City-situated	49	4.10	1.489	.213	3.67	4.53	1	5
Total	137	3.39	1.750	.150	3.10	3.69	1	5
<i>Multi-media equipment is available and accessible</i>								
NGO-supported	38	4.53	.762	.124	4.28	4.78	1	5
Gender-mixed	34	4.85	.558	.096	4.66	5.05	2	5
Modern-built	16	4.31	1.014	.254	3.77	4.85	1	5
City-situated	49	5.00	.000				5	5
Total	137	4.75	.639	.055	4.64	4.86	1	5

The results in Table 5.9 show that out of the 137 responses of students in the four facilities' schools, 103 of them perceived that their facilities lacked various physical resources for quality learning. Regarding the availability of proper classrooms with furniture such as desks and chairs, more than 75% of 137 respondents ( $m=4.1$ ,  $sd=1.5$ ) disagreed with the statement, meaning that they opined that their facilities did not have proper classrooms for effective learning. However, the respondents' perceptions of the availability of proper classrooms varied across the facilities. According to Table 5.9, respondents from the NGO-supported facility differed from

other respondents from the remaining three facilities. More than 65% of the NGO-supported facility respondents indicated that their facility had proper classrooms with proper furniture ( $m=2.37$ ,  $sd=1.48$ ). In contrast, more than 90% of respondents in the remaining three facilities indicated that their facilities did not have proper classrooms ( $m=4.74$ ,  $m=4.25$  &  $m=4.86$ ). This shows discrepancies in the availability of classrooms at various young offenders' facilities.

As to the availability and accessibility of teaching and learning materials such as books, pens, notebooks and mathematical instruments in these young offenders' centres, 77% of the students from all four facilities ( $n=137$ ) were of the view that they did not have adequate teaching and learning materials ( $m=4.10$ ,  $sd=1.268$ ), and 95% indicated that their facilities lacked relevant prescribed textbooks ( $m=4.66$ ,  $sd=0.75$ ) for their educational use. Furthermore, 97% disagreed on the availability and accessibility of technological or multi-media equipment such as projectors and computers for academic purposes at their facilities ( $m=4.45$ ,  $sd=0.639$ ). This was consistent in all facilities, as illustrated in Table 5.9. For instance, at the city-situated facility, all respondents ( $n=49$ ) indicated 'strongly disagree' with the statement that the facility had multi-media equipment ( $m=5.00$ ,  $sd=0.00$ ). This suggests that the YORCs' schools in Malawi generally lacked teaching and learning resources, including multimedia and technological equipment such as projectors and computers.

Regarding the availability of libraries at their respective facilities, the respondents' views varied across the facilities. More than 75% of the students at the NGO-supported facility agreed with the statement that there was a library within the facility campus ( $m=2.08$ ,  $sd=1.343$ ). This was in contrast to the views of around 70% of young offenders at each of the remaining three facilities who disagreed with the statement, which shows that three young offenders' centres generally lacked library services to enrich the students' studies, as the sensible library services were only available at one facility. Moreover, it was only students at the NGO-supported facility (75%,  $n=16$ ) who indicated that they had access to library services in a large number since only one respondent at each of the remaining three facilities indicated access to library services. However, on the issue of the relevance of the library in terms of

books stocked, 90% of students from the NGO-supported facility indicated that the libraries did not have enough relevant books for the levels of their studies. These findings suggest that YORCs' schools were not well-resourced with teaching and learning materials as expected at a typical school as reported by many studies conducted in African countries (Ajah & Ugwuoke, 2018; Bella et al., 2010; Ismaila, 2020; Rupande & Ndolo, 2014).

#### **5.4.3 Correctional facility environment versus quality education**

The study was also interested in examining the effect of the incarceration environment on the quality of education offered to young offenders. The respondents were initially asked to indicate how their facility's general environment affected their rights and access to quality education. In their response, 93% of inmate students (n=137) indicated 'yes' that the environment affected the quality of their education. Since most students had schooling experience in their communities, the study requested them to compare the quality of correctional education with the education provided in the communities outside the facilities. The results were that 87% of inmate students (n=137) indicated that the education at their respective facilities was not of good quality. The one-way ANOVA results affirmed that there was no significant difference in the perceptions of inmate students in the four young offenders' schools regarding their opinion ( $F(1,135) = 1.47, p > .05$ ).

Furthermore, the perceptions of young offenders were examined on five specific variables related to the school environment. The young offenders were asked to state their level of agreement on how the correctional environment, accommodation, diet, and daily correctional schedules impacted on their access and right to education. They were also asked to describe the support they received from educators, fellow inmates (non-school-going) and correctional officers (non-educators). A 5-point Likert-type scale was also used to capture young offenders' level of agreement or disagreement. The results across the four facilities are presented in Table 5.10.

**Table 5.10***Descriptive statistics: Incarceration environment and education*

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower bound	Upper bound		
<i>The school environment is not polluted with noise</i>								
NGO-supported	38	3.45	1.606	.260	2.92	3.98	1	5
Gender-mixed	34	4.15	1.459	.250	3.64	4.66	2	5
Modern-built	16	2.81	1.797	.449	1.85	3.77	1	5
City-situated	49	4.49	1.244	.178	4.13	4.85	1	5
Total	137	3.92	1.567	.134	3.65	4.18	1	5
<i>We sleep in good hostels with proper beds and blankets</i>								
NGO-supported	38	2.68	1.596	.259	2.16	3.21	1	5
Gender-mixed	34	4.82	.576	.099	4.62	5.02	2	5
Modern-built	16	3.25	1.732	.433	2.33	4.17	1	5
City-situated	49	4.53	1.157	.165	4.20	4.86	1	5
Total	137	3.94	1.547	.132	3.68	4.20	1	5
<i>We are given well balanced diet</i>								
NGO-supported	38	4.37	1.101	.179	4.01	4.73	1	5
Gender-mixed	34	4.88	.537	.092	4.69	5.07	2	5
Modern-built	16	4.31	1.195	.299	3.68	4.95	1	5
City-situated	49	5.00	.000				5	5
Total	137	4.72	.804	.069	4.58	4.85	1	5
<i>We usually have enough lesson or class time to cover the school and examination syllabuses</i>								
NGO-supported	38	3.97	1.219	.198	3.57	4.37	1	5
Gender-mixed	34	4.35	1.152	.197	3.95	4.75	1	5
Modern-built	16	4.06	1.181	.295	3.43	4.69	1	5
City-situated	49	4.86	.645	.092	4.67	5.04	1	5
Total	137	4.39	1.080	.092	4.21	4.58	1	5
<i>We are supported in our studies by the prison officers who are not educators</i>								
NGO-supported	38	3.79	1.492	.242	3.30	4.28	1	5
Gender-mixed	34	4.35	1.300	.223	3.90	4.81	1	5
Modern-built	16	3.13	1.746	.437	2.19	4.06	1	5
City-situated	49	4.00	1.620	.231	3.53	4.47	1	5
Total	137	3.93	1.551	.133	3.66	4.19	1	5

The aggregated results of four facilities show that young offenders generally did not perceive the environment in the correctional facilities as conducive and supportive to their educational endeavours. As per Table 5.10, young offenders' overall perceptions of the school environment as free of noise from other non-schooling inmates was negative ( $m=3.92$ ,  $sd=1.57$ ). More than 70% of young offenders strongly disagreed that the environment was noise-free for their studies. However, the perceptions varied across the four facilities with the city-situated facility disagreeing

more ( $m=4.49$ ,  $sd= 1.24$ ) than the others, and the modern-built facility disagreeing less ( $m=2.81$ ,  $sd= 1.80$ ). One-way ANOVA also found significant differences among the four facilities ( $F(4,132) = 3.79$ ,  $p <.05$ ). This shows that there was a significant difference in the perceptions of inmate students across the four facilities on the noise situation in the school areas of the young offenders' facilities in Malawi. It can be deduced that many students considered the environment polluted with noise except the majority at the modern-built facility (54%) and a few within the remaining facilities.

Regarding the accommodation and living units, 75% of young offenders ( $m=3.94$ ,  $sd=1.55$ ) disagreed with the statement that inmates slept in good living units with beds and blankets. However, their views varied across correctional facilities. The majority (55%) of the NGO-supported facility respondents ( $n=38$ ) indicated that they slept in good living units with proper beds and blankets ( $m=2.68$ ,  $sd=1.60$ ). In contrast, respondents from the remaining three facilities indicated that their accommodation was not conducive enough for their evening and night studies. The reasons for their views are presented in the next chapter (Chapter 6).

Regarding the issue of the food provided to students in the YORCs in Malawi, 96% of young offenders in all facilities ( $n=137$ ) strongly disagreed with the statement that they were provided with an adequate and well-balanced diet ( $m=4.72$ ,  $sd=.80$ ). This perception was observed in the responses across all four facilities ( $m=4.37$ ,  $m=4.88$ ,  $m=4.31$  &  $m=5.00$ ), to the extent that 100% of respondents at the city-situated facility ( $n=49$ ) indicated 'strongly disagree' ( $m=5.00$ ,  $sd=.00$ ).

On whether they were provided with enough lessons or class time to cover the school and examination syllabuses, students who were incarcerated at all four facilities generally disagreed with the statement. As depicted in Table 5.9, more than 85% of respondents ( $m=4.39$ ,  $sd=1.08$ ) at all four facilities ( $n=137$ ) strongly disagreed with the statement that they had enough time to learn and cover the syllabuses. Moreover, 83% of the respondents ( $n=137$ ) added that they were not given enough time for other study activities such as group discussions and studying during the daytime



( $m=4.23$ ,  $sd=1.28$ ). This shows that the environment did not provide enough time for proper studies.

Following up on this issue, the survey also included an item to find out if inmates who were enrolled in education programmes were also involved in other work parties such as farming. The results indicate that the majority of young offenders at three facilities; the NGO-supported facility (81%,  $n=38$ ), the gender-mixed facility (91%,  $n=34$ ), and the modern-built facility (81%,  $n=16$ ) were forced to work in other work parties, especially in farming. This issue was also reported at the pure-farming facility which did not offer education programmes. These facilities had huge lands which the authorities used as maize fields. Young offenders were used as manual labour. It was only at the city-situated facility where 92% of respondents ( $n=49$ ) reported that they were not forced to work in other work parties. This is the only facility that did not have a farm attached to it. This is why many inmates were enrolled in education as per the sample of this study (82%,  $n=60$ ), in contrast to the other three facilities, especially the modern-built facility (27%,  $n=60$ ).

Regarding the support students are supposed to receive from the environment, young offenders generally reported lacking support from prison officers who were not educators. Table 5.9 shows that more than 70% of the students ( $m=3.93$ ,  $sd=1.551$ ) at four facilities ( $n=137$ ) indicated that they were not supported by other non-education prison officers. The disaggregated results based on individual facilities also show that respondents in four facilities; the NGO-supported facility ( $m=3.79$ ,  $sd=1.492$ ), the gender-mixed facility ( $m=4.35$ ,  $sd=1.300$ ), the modern-built facility ( $m=3.13$ ,  $sd=1.746$ ) and the city-situated facility ( $m=4.00$ ,  $sd=1.620$ ) disagreed that they received support for their studies from other prison officers.

The study further explored the views of young offenders on support from their educators and fellow inmates to continue checking if the correctional environments provided an education-friendly atmosphere for the students. Regarding the educators, the results vary across the four facilities, as depicted in Table 5.11.

**Table 5.11***Descriptive statistics: Support from educators*

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower bound	Upper bound		
NGO-supported	38	2.66	1.582	.257	2.14	3.18	1	5
Gender-mixed	34	2.41	1.844	.316	1.77	3.06	1	5
Modern-built	16	2.94	1.692	.423	2.04	3.84	1	5
City-situated	49	3.37	1.822	.260	2.84	3.89	1	5
Total	137	2.88	1.774	.152	2.58	3.18	1	5

Results in Table 5.11 on support from educators ( $m=2.88$ ,  $sd=1.77$ ) show that 54% of inmate students ( $n=137$ ) agreed that they received support from their educators, showing that another significant group (46%) did not agree. Across the individual facilities, the level of agreement appeared to vary. For example, the gender-mixed facility ( $m=2.41$ ,  $sd=1.844$ ) agreed more than the remaining three facilities (67%,  $n=34$ ), with the city-situated facility appearing to least agree with the statement ( $m=3.37$ ,  $sd=1.82$ ). A one-way ANOVA comparing inmate students' perceptions at four facilities was computed to determine if the differences were significant. Table 5.12 presents the ANOVA results.

**Table 5.12***ANOVA: Support from educators*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	16.732	4	4.183	<b>2.889</b>	<b>0.025</b>
Within Groups	191.108	132	1.448		
Total	207.839	136			

The ANOVA found significant differences among the four facilities ( $F(4,132) = 2.89$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Young offenders from the three facilities differed significantly in their perceptions of educators' support towards their studies with the city-situated facility respondents. It can be deduced that most young offenders, especially in Facilities 1, 2 and 3, acknowledged the support they received from their educators for their studies.

Regarding support from their fellow non-schooling inmates, 63% of the students at four facilities (n=137) indicated that they did not receive support from their fellow non-schooling inmates (m=3.52, sd=1.703). These results were not significantly different across three facilities (Facilities 1, 2 and 3), of which more than 70% of respondents at each facility reported that they did not receive support from fellow inmates for their studies (m=3.95, sd=1.25; m=4.15, sd=1.52 and m=3.81, sd=1.47). In contrast, 59% of the city-situated facility respondents reported that they received support from fellow inmates (m=2.65, sd=1.88). The ANOVA even noted this difference in respondents' perception at four facilities, as depicted in Table 5.13.

**Table 5.13**

*ANOVA: Support from fellow inmates*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	48.473	4	12.118	<b>10.037</b>	<b>.001</b>
Within Groups	159.367	132	1.207		
Total	207.839	136			

The ANOVA found significant differences among the four facilities ( $F(4,132) = 10.04$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Young offenders from the four facilities had a significant difference in their perceptions of fellow inmates' support for their studies.

## **5.5 EFFECTS OF EDUCATION ON OFFENDERS' RE-ENTRY PROSPECTS**

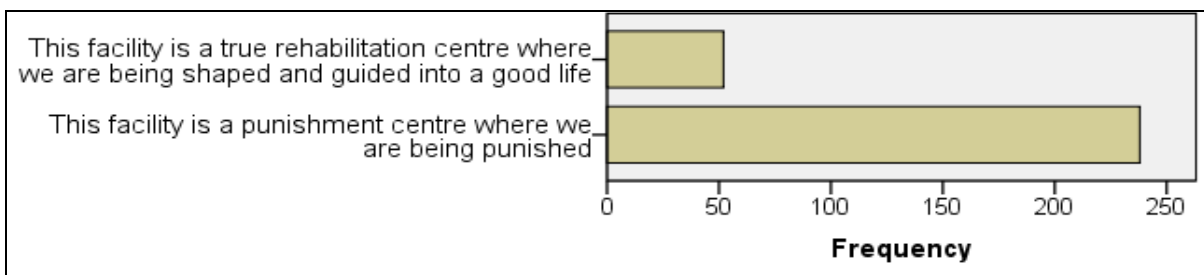
This section presents the quantitative results of the third question on the effects of education provided to young offenders on their continued pursuance of their educational or career goals after their release from prison. The findings are based on the responses of the young offenders from the study's survey questionnaire and data gathered from the researcher's observation field notes. The results assessed the general perception of offenders on their period of stay in incarceration. The perceptions of young offenders' prospects of rehabilitation and continued pursuance of their educational or other career goals after their release were also examined.

### 5.5.1 The effects of incarceration on the youth's rehabilitation prospects

The study sought to examine how young offenders find their incarceration period rehabilitative and beneficial to their future lives after release. To inquire about their perception regarding their incarceration and the related treatments while serving their sentences, 290 respondents from all five facilities were asked to choose one option that best describes their perception of the nature of imprisonment. Figure 5.7 illustrates the results.

**Figure 5.7**

*What is your perception about this facility towards your rehabilitation?*



Overall, 82% of the young offenders at five facilities (n=290) indicated that they felt that their correctional facilities were punishment centres where they experienced harsh treatment. This was in contrast to the views of the remaining 18% who reported that they felt humanely treated at the centres. A one-way ANOVA was calculated to explore whether these differences across the five correctional facilities were significant. The results were that there was no significant difference across the facilities ( $F(1,288) = 1.442, p > 0.05$ ). The five facilities' percentages of the respondents indicated that their facilities were more punitive centres than rehabilitative (the NGO-supported facility=82%, the gender-mixed facility=83%, the modern-built facility=75%, the city-situated facility=77% and the pure-farming facility=98%) attesting to the results that they were not significantly different. This means that most young offenders harboured the feeling that the activities taking place in their facilities were more punitive than rehabilitative.

Furthermore, there were variations in young offenders' responses across the five facilities to the question 'do you think what you are doing here is helping you to acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes that will help you live a good life after your release from here?'

**Table 5.14**

*Cross tabulation: Are the activities beneficial for re-entry prospects?*

Facilities		Young offenders responses		Total
		Yes	No	
NGO-supported	<i>Count</i>	31	29	60
	<i>% within the facility</i>	51.7%	48.3%	100.0%
Gender-mixed	<i>Count</i>	26	39	65
	<i>% within the facility</i>	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
Modern-built	<i>Count</i>	20	40	60
	<i>% within the facility</i>	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
City-situated	<i>Count</i>	36	24	60
	<i>% within the facility</i>	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
Pure-farming	<i>Count</i>	3	42	45
	<i>% within the facility</i>	6.7%	93.3%	100.0%
Total	<i>Count</i>	116	174	290
	<i>% of the total</i>	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%

The results in Table 5.14 show that overall, 60% of young offenders indicated 'no' as their response showing that they did not think that what they were doing in the correctional facilities was helping them to acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes that would help them live a good life after their release. However, the variations were observable when considering the views of inmates at each facility. The pure-farming facility was the highest with 93% of young offenders (n=45) followed by the modern-built facility (62%) and the gender-mixed facility (60%) indicating 'no' as their response to the question. This was in contrast to 60% of young offenders at the city-situated facility and 51.7% at the NGO-supported facility who indicated 'yes' to the question suggesting that they believed that the activities that they were involved in while in incarceration were helping them to acquire proper resources to live a good life after their release. This variation could be due to the differences in the activities and programmes provided at individual facilities.

For instance, the pure-farming facility, where 93% of inmates indicated 'no' was purely a farming prison in which farming was the only substantive activity in which young offenders were involved. Farming was not an enjoyable activity since coercion was reported to be involved for inmates to take part, as noted in Section 5.4. Moreover, respondents reported in previous sections that many young offenders, including those in the facilities where education was provided, did not enrol in education or any other rehabilitation programme. These young offenders did not see anything beneficial to report as helping them to live a good life. This finding points to the variations in the provision of education in the four facilities. It was also noted that the gender-mixed facility lacked resources in terms of infrastructure, human and material resources compared to the other facilities offering education programmes.

### **5.5.2 Examination results as outputs of the education programme**

In understanding the benefits of correctional education to the lives of young offenders, the study analysed the general trend of the national examination results at YORC schools as outputs and outcomes in terms of the systems theory. The researcher checked the public displays of each facility for the broadcasted national examination results for the past six years (2016 to 2021). Where they were not found, the researcher requested the same from the educators. The findings were that out of the four facilities providing education programmes to inmates, only three had national examination centres. The gender-mixed facility did not have a centre since the numbers of students who registered for various national examinations were below the ceiling requirement by the Malawi National Examination Board (MANEB). Instead, those willing to write examinations were sent to the NGO-supported facility for them to sit for their examinations. This study focused on the MSCE results as the national marker of basic education completion and certification. Figure 5.8 displays the aggregated six-year MSCE results (2016 to 2021) collected at the three centres.

**Figure 5.8**

*Young offenders' centres' MSCE examinations results for six years*

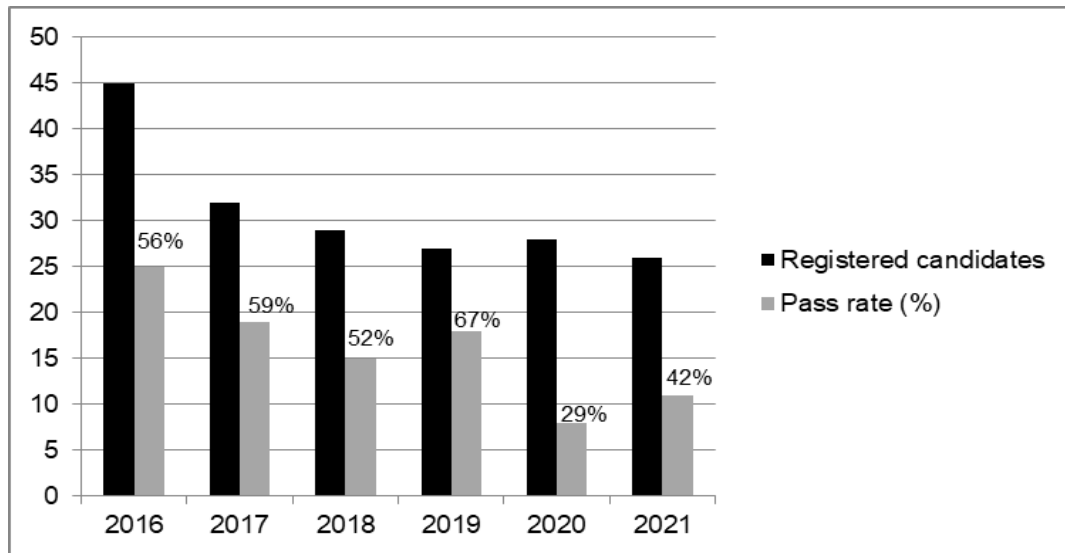


Figure 5.8 shows a significant drop in the number of students who registered for MSCE examinations from 45 in 2016 to 26 in 2021 at all three examination centres. Furthermore, the results show that the pass rate was consistent from 2016 to 2018 (m=56%), which sharply ascended to 67% in 2019. However, there was a noticeable drop in the pass rate to 29% in 2020, with a noticeable rise to 42% in 2021. The study assumed that the drop in the pass rate in 2020 was due to COVID-19 effects on education since correctional education was also disrupted in that year. These findings show that correctional education was benefiting some young offenders. Nevertheless, it could be argued that a small population of inmates in YORCs in Malawi were holistically benefiting from the correctional education since an average of 31 inmates were registering for examinations per year, with an average of 16 young offenders per year successfully passing and completing the basic education with a qualification.

### **5.5.3 The young offenders' prospects of continued education after release**

The final part of this chapter presents the perceptions of the young offenders enrolled in education programmes at the four facilities regarding their educational prospects after their release. The students were asked to state their post-release plans for education and other career goals. They were first asked to indicate their perception

on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 'absolutely yes' to 'not at all' if they thought they would continue with their education in their communities after their release. The young offenders' responses were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale as the results presented in Table 5.15 illustrate.

**Table 5.15**

*Will you continue with your education outside this facility?*

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower bound	Upper bound		
NGO-supported	38	1.82	1.087	.176	1.46	2.17	1	5
Gender-mixed	34	1.82	1.381	.237	1.34	2.31	1	5
Modern-built	16	1.75	.931	.233	1.25	2.25	1	4
City-situated	49	2.06	1.232	.176	1.71	2.42	1	5
Total	137	1.90	1.196	.102	1.70	2.10	1	5

The overall results ( $m=190$ ,  $sd=1.20$ ) show that the students generally agreed that they would continue with their education after their release from the correctional facilities. The levels of agreement varied from the NGO-supported facility ( $m=1.82$ ,  $sd=1.09$ ), which was the highest (81.6%), to the city-situated facility ( $m=2.06$ ,  $sd=1.32$ ), which was the lowest (61.2%). A one-way ANOVA was calculated to explore whether these differences across the five correctional facilities were significant. Table 5.16 presents the results.

**Table 5.16**

*ANOVA: Will you continue with your education outside this facility?*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	11.925	4	2.981	2.009	0.097
Within Groups	195.914	132	1.484		
Total	207.839	136			

The ANOVA shows that there was no significant difference across the correctional facilities in the students' perceptions ( $F(4,132) = 2.0$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

The students were also asked to indicate their confidence levels regarding whether they believe their old schools, especially public schools, would allow them to re-



register after their release from prison for their continued schooling. Figure 5.9 presents the results.

**Figure 5.9**

*Do you think your old school will allow you to re-register?*

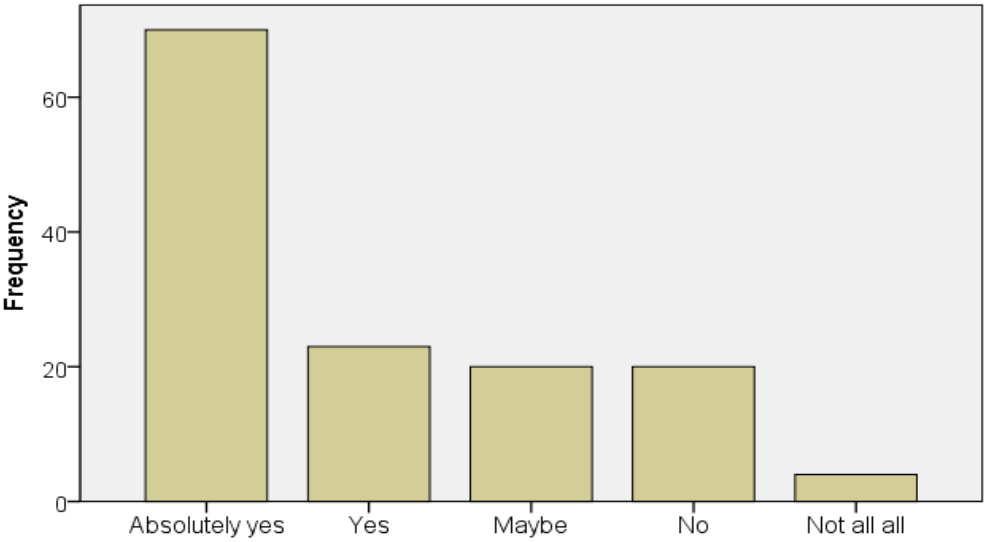


Figure 5.9 shows that the majority of the students (68%) in this study (n=137) were certain that their old schools would allow them to re-register after their release from correctional for their continued schooling. Nevertheless, 15% indicated ‘may be’ showing that they were not sure, while the remaining 18% in ‘no’ and ‘not at all’, meaning that they believed that their old schools would not re-register them due to their various reasons which are presented in Chapter 6.

One-way ANOVA was used to calculate whether there were significant differences in the views of the inmate students across the four YORCs. One-way ANOVA results in Table 5.17 shows that no significant difference was found ( $F(4,132) = 1.3, p > .05$ ). This shows that the inmate students’ perceptions of the possibility of their old schools re-enrolling them for their smooth reintegration process did not differ significantly across the four facilities providing education programmes.

**Table 5.17***ANOVA: Do you think your old school will allow you to re-register?*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.628	4	1.907	1.257	0.29
Within Groups	200.212	132	1.517		
Total	207.839	136			

It can be deduced that most young offenders enrolled in YORCs in Malawi believed that they would continue with their education after their release and that their old schools would re-register them as students.

## 5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented a quantitative analysis of findings from the descriptive survey and some parts of the observation checklist for this mixed-methods research study. The chapter was organised based on the three research questions, which were generally aimed at investigating how the incarceration of young offenders in Malawi correctional facilities impacts on their rights and access to quality education. The quantitative results presented in this chapter revealed significant challenges that incarceration presented to the availability and access to quality education for young offenders. It has been noted from the findings and their interpretation that many young offenders incarcerated in Malawi penitentiaries are mostly primary school dropouts and have unstable economic capabilities. Thus, the majority commit economic crimes, pointing to the importance of their thorough involvement in rehabilitation. Nevertheless, the study noted that there were some rehabilitation activities available at the five facilities such as education, vocational and technical skills training and religious prayers and counselling. These activities were delivered without any order or design as advocated by rehabilitation models such as GLM and RNR that advocate for systematic, organised and individualised rehabilitation programming for offenders. Even though most of the respondents picked education as their favourite programme and as an important aspect of their rehabilitation mix,

the reality as expressed by the findings shows that the majority were forced to work on prison farms, denying them a proper opportunity for education.

The chapter has also noted significant differences in the provision of education across the five facilities, with Facilities 3 and 4 (modern-built and city-situated) being more education-oriented, while Facility 5 (pure-farming facility) had no education programme in place since all inmates were forced to work on the farm at that facility. The chapter revealed the inadequacy of qualified teachers and the lack of learning materials, proper classrooms and other physical resources for quality learning in the four facilities providing education. It has also been revealed that the young offenders perceived the facility's general environment as negatively affecting their rights and access to quality education. Thus, the majority perceived the correctional environment as more punitive than rehabilitative. Nonetheless, the overall results revealed that inmate students generally wished they could continue with their education after being released from correctional facilities.

The chapter acknowledges that several aspects of the three research questions were not adequately addressed through this survey data, leading to a need for further explanation. Those aspects include why young offenders were not interested in schooling even though most regard education as essential for their rehabilitation. The study also needed to examine the issues of resources and how the penitentiary environment affected the young offenders' rights and access to quality education. The study also needed to examine further if correctional education had an effect on the lives of released young offenders, and if the young offenders continued to pursue their educational or career goals after their release. Finally, the study needed to compare the perceptions of young offenders involved in this study with those of educators and the released young offenders to triangulate the results. These aspects were taken up and formed the basis for Chapter 6 (qualitative study results) and are further discussed in Chapter 7 of this thesis.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **QUALITATIVE DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **6.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

This chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews with 77 participants, some open-ended parts of questionnaires and the researcher's observations and field notes. In this study, observations were conducted by the researcher before and after the interviews to probe for more information, as well as to validate and triangulate the respondents' views and perceptions. The first section of the chapter presents and analyses data from observations and field notes. This is followed by a section presenting the findings from the semi-structured interviews with young offenders, educators and ex-young offenders. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings from the qualitative data.

#### **6.2 DATA FROM OBSERVATIONS AND FIELD-NOTES**

This study involved all five YORCs in Malawi. For ethical reasons, the facilities involved in this study were labelled with numbers which did not follow any logical order from Facility 1 to 5 in an attempt to protect and conceal their identities. However, the researcher's given facility names describing their unique characteristics were also used for easy identification in this discussion. Moreover, the observations could have been captured with pictures. However, due to the security protocols within the prison facilities, the use of a camera was not possible. Nonetheless, the data used in this section derived from the observations made during the transect walks around the five facilities. This section begins with a summary of the basic characteristics of the facilities observed. The section then presents data from observations and field notes which focused on the availability and quality of school resources, as well as on the environment, rehabilitation policies, and school results as outputs.

## **6.2.1 Overview of the facilities' basic characteristics**

The following summaries give an overview of the basic characteristics of the five facilities where observations were conducted in this qualitative part of the study.

### *6.2.1.1 Facility 1 (NGO-Supported)*

The facility is located in an area with vast arable land suitable for agriculture. The facility has an office building, a hall, and a moderate wall surrounding the actual penitentiary facilities containing inmates' cells, school blocks, a kitchen, and a yard in the middle of all those constructions. Out of the facility's population of 159 inmates during this study, only 39 students were reported to have been actively enrolled and attending classes at primary and secondary school levels. Within the school campus, there were four school blocks, a small science laboratory, and a two-roomed office block containing one educators' office and a library. In taking the transect walk around the facility, the researcher encountered the deafening noise of non-school-going inmates that was disturbing. Apart from the educational activities conducted, the facility was also used as a farming prison. The management of the facility, thus, used the same incarcerated young offenders as the source of labour.

### *6.2.1.2 Facility 2 (Gender-mixed)*

The facility was situated on vast agricultural land. It was gathered that the facility was initially a farming prison for adult offenders before it was changed to lodge young offenders. The facility had an office block with a vast wall that enclosed it. Within the walls, there were cell blocks and a kitchen for inmates. The facility had a population of 252 inmates, of which 236 were young offenders, five were young female offenders, and the remaining 11 were adult female offenders (of the ages of  $\geq 27$ ). Out of the population, only 41 male inmates were enrolled as students since education was not provided in the female section. The school did not have proper classrooms as they used makeshift tents for classes. The classrooms were not conducive for learning due to noise pollution and were prone to scorching heat and heavy rain. There was no library or laboratories accessible to students.

#### 6.2.1.3 Facility 3 (Modern-built)

The facility had modern infrastructure as it was built and opened in 2009 as one of the modern correctional facilities in Malawi, unlike the other facilities which were built during colonial period. The facility had two sections: the male adult and young offenders' sections. This study focused only on the young offenders' section, which had a total population of 93 inmates at the time of this study. The young offenders' section had good accommodation cells with beds and mattresses for the inmates' comfort. It also had a well-built school facility as an annexe of the whole facility, which was located outside the main penitentiary area. The school had four spacious classrooms with quality furniture such as desks and chalkboards for secondary-school students. Close to this school facility were the sports grounds for football and volleyball and an auditorium used for entertainment and other purposes. The school had a library, though it stocked few books (less than 100). The library room was also used as an educators' office. There were no science and computer laboratories accessible to students. The facility looked more school-friendly compared to other facilities since it was not attached to any big farm, but just a garden (of which young offenders were mostly involved as labour). Nonetheless, schooling was the main activity, even though there were only 22 young offenders enrolled and actively involved in education out of the population of 93 inmates.

#### 6.2.1.4 Facility 4 (City-Situated)

This facility was located in the middle of one of the cities in the country. It was situated on land approximately one hectare in size with a total population of 215 young offenders. Out of this population, only 79 inmates were enrolled and actively attending classes. The facility was composed of two administration office blocks and the inner prison area with inmates' cells and a kitchen. The cells had no furniture or mattresses inside. The school premises were an annexe of the main correctional building. The school campus was outside the cells' area but within the facility's structures with only four classrooms and one office, which served as both educators' offices and a library room. The four classrooms were expected to cater for 12

classes. There were no science and computer laboratories available. Since the facility was located in a tight space in the middle of the city, there were no sports arenas for inmates' use. In the inner prison area, a TV set accessible by all inmates was installed on the wall. The facility had no farm attached, thus, the main activity was education. Apart from education, the institution did not provide any other activities.

#### *6.2.1.5 Facility 5 (Pure-farming)*

This facility was situated on substantial agricultural land (25 hectares). It was reported that the facility was opened mainly for farming purposes to help feed the growing penitentiary population of a maximum security facility close to the area. The facility, which had a population of 45 inmates, had an administrative office block, a clinic, two cell blocks, a kitchen and a hall. The hall was used for educational purposes as a classroom until 2020, the year in which the school was discontinued to focus on farming. The institution was unsuitable for the incarceration of juveniles due to the magnitude of farming work (hard labour) taking place at the facility. The work was beyond the age capacities of juveniles.

### **6.2.2 Quality of physical structures and other amenities**

The qualitative analysis of correctional schools' and the facilities' physical structures focused on the assessment of the quality, availability and accessibility of classrooms and their furniture, library services, science and computer laboratories, the educators' offices and furniture, students' accommodation and eating places as well as sports and recreation facilities (see Appendix M). A qualitative description of high, medium, low and none was attached to each aspect under examination at each facility.

Table 6.1 provides the researcher's qualitative rating from high, medium, low to none of the educational resources at five facilities based on typical community school standards in Malawi.

**Table 6.1***Qualitative rating of school's physical resources in five facilities*

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Fac 1</b>	<b>Fac 2</b>	<b>Fac 3</b>	<b>Fac 4</b>	<b>Fac 5</b>
Quality of classrooms and their furniture	high	none	high	high	none
Adequacy of classrooms and their furniture	low	none	low	low	none
Availability of library	low	low	med	low	none
Accessibility of library services of young offenders	low	low	low	none	none
Availability and quality of science laboratories	low	none	none	none	none
Availability and quality of educators' offices	med	low	med	med	none
Quality of accommodation and eating places	med	low	med	low	low
Quality of sports and recreation facilities	med	low	med	low	none
<b>Overall qualitative description</b>	<b>med</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>med</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>none</b>

*Note: Key: 'high' - comparably good quality; 'med' – acceptable and fair; 'low' – lacking in many aspects; and 'none' – non-existence.*

In Table 6.1, those physical resources that were scored 'high' at some facilities meant they were of comparably good quality. In contrast, those facilities that scored 'none' meant that the resources were neither available nor accessible. From the results in Table 6.1, classrooms were observed to be of good quality at the NGO-supported, modern-built and city-situated facilities (Facilities 1, 3 and 4) even though they were not adequate at all facilities. It was observed that there were only four classrooms at each of these three facilities for all 12 primary and secondary classes. At the NGO-supported and city-situated facilities (Facilities 1 and 4), the educators had to combine two grades for each class and share one classroom to teach two different classes simultaneously. For example, Standard 1 and 2 would be combined as Class A and Standard 3 and 4 as Class B. Class A and Class B would be taught in a single classroom; Class A facing the front of the classroom while Class B facing the rear. In this case, Class A (Standard 1 & 2) would be learning English, while Class B (Standard 3 & 4) would be learning Mathematics. At the modern-built facility, the four classrooms were only used for secondary school classes (Form 1 to 4), while the primary students were taught in corridors and visitors' rooms, which did not have desks and proper classroom furniture.

Moreover, the schools at all four facilities had no specific buildings or rooms for a library. There was just a single bookshelf in the educators' office, shelved with some reference books that were generally inaccessible to students. There were no



laboratories at the four facilities while at the NGO-supported facility, there was a small storeroom containing a few chemicals, thermometers and some minor scientific equipment. During these observation visits, it was also noted that there were inadequate educators' offices at almost all facilities, with the majority having a single room for all educators to share, including the head teachers.

With regard to accommodation and dining areas, it was observed that the NGO-supported and modern-built facilities had proper beds and blankets for the comfortable use of inmates even though both were over-congested, resulting in single beds being used by more than one inmate. However, the gender-mixed, city-situated and pure-farming facilities had no beds or mattresses. It was only at the pure-farming facility where there were enough sleeping spaces for every inmate since the facility population was below capacity during the time of this study. None of these facilities had dining areas for inmates. The facilities had kitchens operated by fellow inmates where they could get their meals and dine in their cells or in the open spaces. Finally, on the quality of sports and recreation facilities, the NGO-supported and modern-built facilities (Facilities 1 and 3) were rated 'medium' (see Table 6.1) because they had both sports grounds for volleyball and football as well as recreation halls for other entertainment and assembly purposes, which were accessible to some inmates (but not all of them based on their assessed security risks). Only the gender-mixed and city-situated facilities had entertainment areas where TV sets were accessible to all inmates in those facilities. None of these was found at the pure-farming facility.

### **6.2.3 Teaching and learning resources observations**

The qualitative analysis of correctional schools' teaching and learning resources focused on examining the availability and accessibility of prescribed texts, national school curricula and syllabuses documents, and teaching and learning equipment such as computers and projectors. The researcher generally observed the inadequacy of teaching materials at all facilities. These were usually a single textbook per class subject used by the responsible teachers and not accessible to students. Worse still, there was hardly a single book for teachers' use for some subjects in

some facilities. For instance, at the NGO-supported facility, there were not even single copies for science, English language and Mathematics for some secondary school classes. Moreover, all five facilities did not have any school curricula and syllabus documents to guide the teaching activities. Regarding teaching and learning equipment available, the schools did not have computer rooms for educators and students.

#### **6.2.4 Assessment of school environments**

There were variations in school environments at five facilities. Regarding the conduciveness of the environment for students' studies, it was observed that Facilities 3 and 4 (the modern-built and city-situated) provided a comparatively more conducive environment for schooling to the young offenders than the remaining three facilities. The schools at Facilities 3 and 4 were specifically built in separate spaces for education. The learning environments were friendly since the school areas were only accessible to students and educators and were not affected by noise and disruptions by other non-school inmates. These facilities did not have attached farms; their main activity was education. Students at these two facilities had all day for their educational activities compared to those at the remaining three.

In contrast, all young offenders, including those enrolled in education programmes at the remaining three facilities, were also used as labour for tilling, planting, weeding and harvesting in the agricultural fields. There were competitions for the use of the young offenders between the education and farming sections, which farming normally won since the station managers were usually given a maize harvest target they needed to fulfil. This situation left the students with insufficient time to attend to lessons and other study demands. Moreover, the school areas at Facilities 1 and 2 (the NGO-supported and the gender-mixed) were within the inner facility areas, adjacent to cell blocks, kitchens and general chatting yards prone to noise pollution that was disrupting classes. Worse still, the pure-farming facility was unsuitable for lodging juveniles. It made sense that the facility did not have any education programme other than farming. Clearly, the place was run as a punishment centre

where young offenders were overworked in the maize fields. Most inmates were in shabby prison uniforms, they looked very dirty as if they had never bathed or washed their clothes for weeks. It was apparent that those youths were in pain from the look on their faces.

Regarding the availability of rehabilitation paths, plans or guidelines just as advocated by GLM (Ward & Gannon, 2006), all five facilities involved in this study did not have any rehabilitation guidelines or policy documents. Moreover, all five facilities did not have counselling and guidance services to enhance a positive school ethos. It was noted that all facilities did not have other active rehabilitation programmes apart from education and farming. Facilities 1 and 2 (the NGO-supported and the gender-mixed) had two tailoring machines each aimed to train young offenders in tailoring skills. However, they were not working due to lack of maintenance and inadequacy of funds; thus, no inmates were being trained as tailors during this study. Additionally, there were few sets of equipment for the carpentry programme available at Facility 1. However, there were no materials for training. Thus, this activity was also not operational. It was noted that the city-situated facility used to have music and art programmes voluntarily provided by a certain NGO, which was later discontinued, thus contributing to the dearth of rehabilitation programmes in these facilities.

### **6.3 DATA FROM SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

The study also collected qualitative data from young offenders, educators and ex-young offenders. This section analyses and interprets the qualitative findings from the semi-structured interviews and data collected from some areas of open-ended questions of the survey questionnaire. The section uses given codes and pseudonyms in some interview quotations in direct conversations to conceal the participants' real identities. The codes are a combination of the acronyms for this study's facilities numbers, the participants' groups and the unique respondents' numbers. For example, the first (01) young offender (YO) to be included in this study, was interviewed at the NGO-supported facility (F1), so, his code was 'F1/YO/01'. In the same way, educators, officials and ex-young offenders are identified using the

acronyms 'EDU', 'PO' and 'EX-YO' respectively. The themes in this section are organised and arranged based on the study's three research questions which were aimed at investigating how the incarceration of young offenders in Malawi impacts on their rights and access to quality education.

### **6.3.1 Overview of interview data sources**

Five young male offenders at every facility (from the pool of those initially involved in the survey) and two females (27 in total) were purposively selected based on the predetermined key characteristics such as school attendance versus non-school attendance, the observed level of activeness versus passiveness amongst inmates, gender and age variations to accommodate respondents' maximum variations (Tracy, 2020; Yin, 2016). This enabled the collection of adequate in-depth data on their experiences, knowledge and views regarding the availability, accessibility and relevance of education and other rehabilitation programmes offered to inmates and how their incarceration was impacting (positively or negatively) their education, with gender sensitivity. Thus, the study involved young offenders between the ages of 17 to 25 ( $m=19.7$ ) composed of 12 school-attending, 11 non-school-attending and two respondents who were once enrolled in education but eventually dropped out before completing the basic level while in the correctional facilities.

Five educators at each of the four facilities offering education programmes in this study (20 in total) were purposively selected to investigate their perceptions and experiences and validate the findings from other sources regarding incarceration, rehabilitation and schooling of young offenders in their facilities. Since the pure-farming facility (Facility 5) did not have a school, five officials were purposively selected to share their experiences and perceptions. The study involved educators and officials between the ages of 19 and 47 ( $m=32.4$ ). The educators were composed of 15 uniformed staff members (prison officers), two civilian teachers (employed by a certain NGO) and three inmate teachers (fellow young offenders).

Additionally, five ex-young offenders from each of the five facilities (25 in total) of ages between 19 and 27 ( $m=22.5$ ) were also included in this study using quota and

snowball sampling techniques. These respondents were composed of 17 who reported having been engaged in education programmes and eight who had never enrolled in any education programme while serving their correctional sentences. In this group, 14 ex-inmates were interviewed face-to-face and 11 through telephone interviews. Table 6.2 shows the breakdown of the interview respondents.

**Table 6.2**

*The breakdown of interview respondents*

	Young offenders		Educators/ Officials		Ex-Young offenders		Totals
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
NGO-supported	5	0	4	1	5	0	15
Gender-mixed	5	2	5	0	5	0	17
Modern-built	5	0	4	1	5	0	15
City-situated	5	0	4	1	5	0	15
Facility 5	5	0	4	1	5	0	15
<b>Totals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>77</b>

Table 6.2 shows that this study involved many male respondents since only 8% of respondents (n=77) were females, composed of two young offenders and four educators/officials. All interviews for the qualitative data were conducted by the researcher. Interviews with young offenders were conducted at a provided space within the inner settings of the facilities after requesting and making prior arrangements with the facilities' management. The rooms provided enough comfort for the respondents and the researcher. The interviews with educators or officials were done in the educators' offices or specifically designated spaces at the facilities, while the face-to-face interviews with the released young offenders were done at the pre-agreed places between the researcher and the individual respondents. The researcher allowed every prospective interviewee to choose any place comfortable for them to reduce costs on their part. For telephone interviews, the researcher agreed with the respondent on the time for the interviews to be carried out. Dubey and Kothari (2022) agree that telephonic interviews are currently considered one of

the most cost-effective alternatives to face-to-face interviews when physical distances and flexibility are considered. In this study, three-quarters of the telephonic interviews were done on weekends and evenings when the respondents were free.

Before beginning each interview, the researcher informed the respondents regarding the study objectives and their voluntary participation. The researcher requested their permission to have the interview recorded using an audio recording device. The recorded information was later translated and transcribed into text. The scripts were manually analysed, which proceeded from reading and rereading through the transcripts to becoming familiar with the data. The issues shaping the discourse on young offenders' access to quality education were explored under the following main themes, structured around the three research questions guiding this study:

- a) Incarcerated youths' pre-imprisonment lives
- b) Incarceration admission issues and challenges
- c) Factors contributing to the low rates of education enrolment
- d) Perceptions of the quality of education in young offenders' facilities
- e) Effects of incarceration on young offenders' re-entry prospects

The subsequent sub-sections present the findings and discussions on these themes.

### **6.3.2 Incarcerated youths' pre-imprisonment lives**

The study inquired about the lives of young offenders before their incarceration. It inquired about their socioeconomic backgrounds and levels of their education pursuant to find out whether they had been in school before their conviction. From the interviews with young people currently incarcerated and those already released and living in their communities, it was noted that most young offenders dropped out of school before committing the crimes that landed them in correctional facilities. From their stories, it was made clear that the majority came from households' backgrounds of poverty, divorce, single-parenting families and illiteracy. These young people

indicated that they had to drop out, especially in primary school, due to lack of basic resources such as school fees and stationery.

For instance, one young man at the modern-built facility responded that he was left destitute after losing his father and had to drop out of school. Another 18-year-old young man incarcerated at the pure-farming facility said that he lost both parents and had no means for schooling. From the gender-mixed facility, another young offender said he had both parents but due to poverty, he was forced into the streets to fend for himself and his poor family. One released offender also said his child-headed family could only afford the basics such as food, but not school fees. In all four narratives of the incarcerated and released young people, the common denominator for dropping out of school was poverty, lack of resources and poor family livelihoods in various shapes and forms. These inadequacies partly contributed to the participants landing in acts of criminality as they strived to fend for their basic needs and schooling.

The only two young female offenders interviewed in this study also reported that they were already school dropouts before incarceration. One of them reported that it was due to poverty. When her father died, she did not have anyone to provide her with resources to continue with her education. Thus, she had no option but to drop out in Standard 7 and involve herself in piece work for her survival. Poverty eventually led to her getting married to an abusive man who murdered her only child, an issue that led her to attempt to commit suicide, resulting in her incarceration.

Nevertheless, not all young offenders were dropouts due to poverty since some indicated that they were in school when they committed the crimes that landed them in penitentiary facilities. Some of them indicated that their delinquent behaviours caused them to drop out of school and become involved in violence, rape, drugs (smoking and dealing with Indian hemp), and theft.

I dropped out in Standard 2 because I started smoking *Chamba* [Indian hemp] which I was initiated by my friends. I joined a certain group of youth who were a little older than me. They were living a high life; abusing drugs and alcohol and other things, and I thought that was a good life. I joined them and I participated in

their criminal activities, hence terrorising the community. That is why I dropped out of school because education was like a time waste. We were involved in theft, robbery, abusing alcohol and fighting and violence (F4/YO/17).

Some released young offenders expressed similar sentiments. Nonetheless, it was noted with concern that some young male offenders were incarcerated for defiling their under-aged girlfriends with whom they claimed to have been in a sexual relationship which the girls' parents either disapproved or ended up in pregnancy. This usually happened when the boys were in school, and the arrest and possible conviction would disrupt their education;

Yes, I was schooling; I was just starting Form 3. I was arrested for defiling my girlfriend...I had a relationship with a girl who was under 18 and who was schooling. So her parents got me arrested, and I was convicted for two years (F1/EX-YO/01)

I was in Form 4; they even arrested me while in school uniform. The offence was defilement. They claimed that I impregnated a 16-year-old girl. The truth is that I was in love with her but never slept with her. When she was found to be pregnant, she told her parents that the pregnancy was mine. Her parents had me arrested and I was convicted for defilement. Even though I tried to plead not guilty, I was sentenced to 8 years in prison (F4/YO/16).

One of the young female offenders also consented to her wrong choices and priorities in her life that forced her to drop out of school.

I passed the PSLC examinations in Standard 8. I dropped out later due to pregnancy. I was writing the national primary examinations when I was already pregnant but I did not know. So my parents negotiated with the man responsible that I give birth and then go back to school later; hence, I should continue living at my parents' home. But later the man took me and married me. When I gave birth, after some time, we agreed that I should go back to school as initially agreed. So I enrolled in Form 1 at a [low-cost] private school within the community. However, my husband was jealous. He would come to monitor me. Once he finds me with



other male schoolmates he would start fights, or we could argue. He was always suspecting me of cheating on him. I just decided to drop out (F2/F-YO/26).

Continuing with her story, it was noted that dropping out of school to save her marriage did not yield any good results because the challenges she faced in her marriage led her into prostitution and, eventually her arrest and incarceration.

However, some male offenders blamed the lack of proper parental support and guidance as the factor that led them to drop out of school and engage in criminal lives.

Nobody encouraged me to continue with school. My parents never cared for education. My mom dropped out of school in Standard 5, that's what she told me. I don't know about my father because I have never lived with him. He left my mam when I was very young. My mom took me to the village to live with my grandparents because of my delinquency behaviour (F1/YO/02).

From the interviews with young people currently incarcerated and released from correctional facilities, it was noted that many youths admitted to correctional facilities were school dropouts and had delinquent backgrounds. It has been noted that most young offenders were dropouts before their incarceration, while some were in school when they were arrested. From their narratives, the findings can be deduced to show that these young offenders need comprehensive rehabilitation programmes that include education for successful re-entry into the communities as advocated by GLM and RNR rehabilitation models (Andrews et al., 2011; Blinkhorn et al., 2020; Durrant, 2018; Farley & Pike, 2018; Forsberg & Douglas, 2022; McMahon & Jump, 2017; Ward et al., 2012b; Wilson, 2016). The rehabilitation process should start with the activities involved in their admission. The next sub-section explores activities that the YOs were involved in on their admission.

### **6.3.3 Incarceration admission issues and challenges**

The study inquired about the admission practices in the five YORCs from young offenders and educators. The focus was to find out what happens when a young

offender has been convicted by the court and taken to the correctional facility. This was to understand the incarceration admission issues and challenges particularly whether the practices were grounded on and followed the common tenets and ideal stages advocated by offenders' rehabilitation theories such as GLM and RNR as well as national policies (Durrant, 2018; Mallion & Wood, 2020; Ward & Gannon, 2006). Grounding offenders' rehabilitation programmes on particular theories or models is essential for their effectiveness (Lugo et al., 2019). The study found that the five YORCs were not using any deliberate policy or rehabilitation model as claimed by MPS (2016). On the question which required educators and officials to mention the rehabilitation model their facilities were using, all 25 educators and officials showed ignorance of such models or policies. Their responses indicated a lack of clearly articulated and deliberate rehabilitation policies or strategies used in the YORCs.

The admission process and practice at the five facilities are generally comprised of a compilation of offenders' profiles for record purposes. They also calculated the inmates' sentence with consideration of the one-third remission that every inmate is entitled to, as provided by Section 107 of the Malawi Prisons Act. It was noted that this procedure normally followed a brief induction to the facilities' rules and regulations. The following excerpts from young offenders' interviews highlight some of these admission experiences.

When I arrived here, I was taken to the reception by the gatekeepers, who welcomed me and asked if I was convicted. They informed me that instead of the five years of my sentence, I will only serve two-thirds, which is three years and four months. Then they made me sign the records. I was then given the prison uniform and they confiscated my clothes to be taken to the stores. They then oriented me on life in prison, and how I can relate to others (F2/YO/06).

On my first day here, I was asked about my properties to be recorded. I was then interviewed on my health history, and the chronic illnesses I have if I have them. I was then put in some special cells as a quarantine for COVID-19. After being released from quarantine, we were given prison uniforms and we were let to mix with other inmates (F3/YO/11).

This admission procedure was confirmed by the educators involved in this study. They also added that the admission process also involved health screening.

During admission, when a prisoner is admitted, before taking him into the premises, the officers search him and take his belongings to be kept and recorded. Thereafter, they surrender the convict to the health personnel who screen and check if he has any contagious diseases that he might transmit to others after joining them. So after that, he is now admitted in prison and allocated accommodation in cells (F1/EDU/02).

In some cases, the young offenders were further oriented by the *nyapalas*. These were inmates who were made to be in charge of other inmates by the prison authorities. The *nyapalas* would further orient them on rules and regulations.

I was welcomed by the prison authorities. They oriented me on the expected behaviour at this facility. Later when I was shown my cell, I met fellow inmates, the *nyapalas* who also oriented me on the expected conduct of inmates while serving sentences here. They told me that I must be obedient to whatever I am told to do if I don't want to have a bad time here (F2/YO/07).

The study found that the facilities did not have case management procedures that include the determination of the rehabilitation plans for individual inmates as required in the unit management model the service claimed to be using in the strategic documents (MPS, 2016), and as advocated by GLM and RNR theories (Durrant, 2018; Lugo et al., 2019; Luyt et al., 2010; Mallion & Wood, 2020; Ward & Gannon, 2006). In the unit management model, each offender is entitled to receive correctional counselling during their early days of admission organised by the case management services office (Lugo et al., 2019; Luyt et al., 2010; Ward & Gannon, 2006). This study found that after personal profiling and security briefs, the inmates were taken straight to their cells to be 'warehoused' until their sentences expired. At the NGO-supported, gender-mixed and pure-farming facilities, the educators and incarcerated and released young people involved in this study agreed and confirmed that the next activity was farming as a routine activity. Farming was reported as the main activity for every offender. They were involved in tilling the land and working in the

agricultural fields as labourers. Nevertheless, those admitted at the NGO-supported, gender-mixed, modern-built and city-situated facilities would sometimes be informed by the prison officer or fellow inmates of the availability of education programmes for them to consider enrolling in, especially when they inquired.

After my orientation, I then asked about school since I already heard that some young offenders' centres have schools; I wanted to find out if this facility also offers education. I was told that there is a school inside. I registered and was given only a few notebooks and pens, but no books (F2/YO/06).

I was welcomed and then the prison officer who received me told me that here there is a school if I was schooling outside I can decide to continue with my education here. So I decided to enrol. I enrolled in Form One. And I am still in Form One because I have come here this same year (F1/YO/05).

This was also confirmed by the educators involved in this study.

They are admitted and then allocated to specific cells. After that, they are assessed, especially those who are interested in joining education. So we allow everyone to join the school anytime they come here. We allocate them to their specific classes after assessing their capabilities in those classes... These are in a form of a small test especially for higher classes; while on others we do oral assessments and allocate them to their classes (F2/EDU/08).

The findings on incarceration admission issues and challenges indicate that all facilities involved in this study were not using any rehabilitation models, policies or guidelines for the proper handling of inmates on their admission. The study revealed that the facilities did not have case management procedures in place to properly determine individualised programming or treatment of young offenders (YOs). It could be concluded that the young offenders at all five correctional centres involved in this study were not properly admitted into the facilities even though they needed proper admission services as advocated by rehabilitation theories such as GLM and RNR models (Andrews et al., 2011; Ward et al., 2012a).

#### **6.3.4 Factors contributing to the low rates of education enrolment**

The survey results in Chapter 5 (*Section 5.3.3*) revealed that many young offenders were engaged in farming, followed by education and that most of those involved in farming did not perceive farming as helpful. This study further inquired from all respondents (young offenders, educators and ex-young offenders) about available programmes and activities in the young offenders' facilities. The interviews with educators, young offenders and their released counterparts confirmed the survey results that basic education was accessible to whosoever wished to enrol in four out of five facilities. The findings also revealed that education was perceived as the most favourite and helpful activity among a pool of activities available at YORCs in Malawi, such as farming, Prisoners' Journey, cleaning, drama and other work parties.

From the researcher's inquiry from education coordinators at the four facilities where education was accessible regarding the numbers of young offenders enrolled in correctional education, it was found that only 181 young offenders were enrolled (N=753). This represented 24% of the whole population of young offenders in YORCs in Malawi. This was comparatively close to the cross-tabulations counts of education as an activity which amounted to 32% of the 425 counts as the self-reported list of activities that the survey participants (n=290) indicated to have been involved in during their incarceration period, presented in Table 5.6 (*see 5.3.3*).

The interviewed young offenders indicated that the education programme was beneficial to them as it gave them an opportunity for free educational opportunities that were difficult to access in their communities. The released individuals interviewed in this study concurred and bore witness to the benefit of education programmes at YORCs because they enabled them to acquire knowledge and skills which would be useful in their post-release lives.

Even though I have not completed it, I now know a lot of things after my studies. I am now able to speak and write in English. I feel I benefited because there are

some inmates or others in this community who cannot write and read... Education boosted my knowledge. I also earned the trust of one of the organisations working at this facility [the NGO-supported facility] who gave me this temporary job to help me as I am continuing with my studies outside here (F1/EX-YO/01).

Even though many serving and released young offenders were positive about education as a correctional programme, the survey revealed that most young offenders were not enrolled in the education programme (see Chapter 5). To understand the reasons for the high rate of their non-school involvement, the study inquired about the factors that motivated young offenders to enrol in those education programmes. From the data analysed, six sub-themes emerged as factors contributing to the rate of inmates' school enrolment. The sub-themes were (a) prior schooling background, (b) educational interest, (c) extrinsic motivation, (d) limitations in the levels of education opportunities available, (e) involvement in other facility activities, and (f) lack of school counselling and guidance programmes.

#### *6.3.4.1 Prior schooling background*

Prior schooling background was the first factor in this study determining young offenders' correctional education enrolment. Many young offenders who had been in school when they committed their offences were also likely to enrol in education programmes after their incarceration. For example, a 22-year-old Chipi (not his real name) was in Form 2 when he was involved in a fight that resulted in the death of his colleague. He was immediately arrested for murder, remanded, and incarcerated at the modern-built facility for four years before the charges were changed to manslaughter, and he was sentenced to 14 years at the same facility. Before his conviction, he decided to continue with his education at the facility.

I came here before my conviction when I was on remand. I asked if I could enrol in school to continue with my education. But since the school complex is separate from the main prison building, I was told that they could not allow a remand inmate to attend school. But I persisted in requesting school. So the [education] coordinator took me to the officer in charge of the facility who rejected my application. I decided to start attending Standard 8 since the classes are within

the main prison compound and I was allowed. But after a year, I realised that I was not progressing. I had to resume my Form 2 studies at the secondary school facilities. I decided to press on. So I went back to the authorities to persist in requesting. After a long consultation, I was allowed to attend classes at the secondary school, and I resumed my Form 2. I am now in Form 4. I have been made inmates' in charge of education here now (F3/YO/12).

To Chipi, education was the only viable activity he wanted to join, even if it meant going back and repeating the primary grade of Standard 8. According to Chipi, education was accessible at the facility to everyone who showed interest and commitment to attend classes, even those on remand. It just needed someone to show interest. This sentiment was also echoed by many young offenders and their released counterparts interviewed in this study.

In the same way, the study found that most young offenders who were not schooling at the four facilities where education was offered were already dropouts before their incarceration. Some young offenders at the city-situated facility pointed out their non-schooling background as one of the reasons most inmates were not enrolled in the education programme.

Some inmates are not enrolled in this school usually because they were not going to school when they were outside. Some of them look at themselves as too old for school. For example, one might have been sentenced to 4 years here but has never gone to school. So to start in Standard 1 at their age might not go well with them. He might start and by the time he is released he is in Standard 3 which is of little use to the outside world. Hence, they rather just sit idle (F4/YO/19).

This was echoed by another young offender at the modern-built facility.

But still, you will find other fellow inmates who don't want to join the school because they might have dropped out of school a long time ago before they were imprisoned here, so they might have already given up on education (F3/YO/11).

A 24-year-old recidivist, who dropped out of school in Standard 7 before his first incarceration and never enrolled in correctional education, had this to say;

I did not enrol in school because I prefer to be in a work party that regularly goes out of this facility to work. I don't like to be just inside here. If I register for school, I will have to spend most of my time inside here, something I don't want. I will enrol in school at home after my release from here (F1/YO/03).

It was doubtful that he would enrol after his second release from the correctional facility because he had failed to return to school when he was released after the expiry of his first sentence. Moreover, he did not mention schooling as one of his future goals in the subsequent questions in the same interview. He indicated that he planned to start a legitimate small business for his day-to-day sustenance. Both young female offenders interviewed in this study were dropouts before incarceration. However, they were not enrolled in any education programme at their current facility. One of them called correctional education a prospective 'burden' to female inmates. This was a 25-year-old woman who dropped out of school after passing national primary school examinations due to pregnancy. She later resumed schooling after she gave birth only to drop out again due to jealousy and abuse of her husband. She had this to say.

We are not enrolled in school because we did not tell them that we need school here in the female section. We never requested for school. To me, I am remaining with 5 months so I feel I have a very short time that cannot make any difference if I join the school. My colleagues in this female section do not show any interest in education. So if I decide to request for school I would just bring a burden to them which they don't wish to have (F2/F-YO/26).

The educators also confirmed these sentiments.

The number of those not enrolled is indeed big here simply because they are not interested in school. The major reason behind this is that many of them were not schooling even when they were outside. So they are ashamed to start in junior primary or literacy classes (F3/EDU/12).

In fact, the educators reported that they targeted the young offenders who were schooling before their incarceration for enrolment in the correctional education



programmes rather than those who were already dropouts. This was because they were easier to manage in school than those who had already dropped out before incarceration.

Nonetheless, the study found that some of the young offenders who were dropouts in the communities before incarceration indicated that they decided to resume their schooling after incarceration. Some had initially dropped out due to a lack of resources and support.

When my mother died, my father left us in the hands of my grandmother who could not manage to give us all the needed school resources. I was lacking school resources such as clothes, and learning materials such as notebooks, pens and many other things. I decided to drop out of school in Standard 7. But when I entered this facility, I was told that the school was accessible freely. I realised that it was my golden opportunity to pursue my educational goals. I decided to re-enrol in Standard 7. But I have benefited a lot from this school. I have acquired two certificates while in this prison, the PSLC and the Junior Certificate. I am now in Form 4 and I am planning to write the MSCE this year (F1/YO/04).

However, stories of the previous dropouts deciding to enrol for education were not common in this study. These comments point to the fact that students who were in school when they committed the offences were likely to enrol and request to be enrolled in education programmes.

#### *6.3.4.2 Inmates' intrinsic educational interest*

The educators reported that inmates' enrolment and continued class attendance greatly depended on individuals' intrinsic interest and motivation in education.

Education is voluntary here, student's interest in education matters so much. We don't force someone to join school; we don't force someone to come to school. So if they don't show interest to join they are left to just stay. Even if they were in higher classes, we do nothing if they don't show interest. It is only those who show interest in education persist to continue attending classes (F3/EDU/11).

Many school-attending young offenders and their released counterparts indicated an intrinsic interest in schooling for various reasons.

I enrolled because I thought it was only the education activity I could do in that facility. I did not feel like it was the end of my life. I had careers in mind that I wanted to pursue. I wanted to be either an accountant or a medical doctor or to do BCOM. But eventually, I followed the accountancy path (F1/EX-YO/05).

I realised that if I just decide to stop learning, my brain capacity might be affected by what is happening in prison. At least in the class, I am using my brain and it continues to be active; hence, I might not have a problem continuing in my grade at another prison or when I am released from here (F2/YO/08).

In contrast, most inmates not enrolled in school showed a lack of interest in education regardless of its accessibility. One 18-year-old boy who dropped out of school in Standard 2 and joined a robbery gang in his community confessed that he never liked school. Before his incarceration, his parents tried to make him stay in school, but they did not succeed. He was also not schooling inside prison. Manuel was another 20-year-old young offender who reported to have dropped out of school in Standard 7 before his incarceration. He acknowledged that education was accessible to everyone who wanted to enrol at the gender-mixed facility, but he was not enrolled. Explaining the reason for his non-enrolment, this is what he had to say:

Education is indeed free and very accessible to everyone who wants it here. But I am not interested in enrolling. Firstly, I don't see any future in further pursuance of school after my release from this facility. It is only here where one can get free education. I will need to look for money to pay for my education after my release, coupled with my basic needs and satisfaction. I cannot manage. So the money I might have will need to be used productively rather than just wasting on fees. All I wanted from education was to be able to read and write, and I now can do that, hence, I don't need any more education (F2/YO/07).

The colossal unemployment rate could have contributed to Manuel's apathy towards education in Malawi. He did not see the value of education in his life.

Moreover, in my community, many young people are educated; in my family, we have seven educated boys, but only one is employed and the rest are unemployed at home, still dependent on their parents. And for this one who is employed, he had to struggle to get the job. So, I don't think I can gain a lot from education (F2/YO/07).

Therefore, these findings show that the young offenders' intrinsic motivation and interest to acquire education have a role in their decision to enrol and stay in school in correctional facilities.

#### *6.3.4.3 Lack of extrinsic motivation and encouragement*

The study also found that extrinsic motivation and other people's encouragement were influential factors contributing to the enrolment or non-enrolment of young offenders in education programmes. Many inmate students in these facilities indicated that they were motivated and encouraged to enrol and stay in correctional schools by fellow inmates, some prison officers and their parents.

After entering this facility, I had fear of the unknown; I didn't know what will happen to me. I thought my future was gone. But the prison officer who received me told me that here there is a school if I was schooling outside I can decide to continue with my education here. My fellow inmates who were also enrolled encouraged me to enrol. So I decided to enrol. I enrolled in Form One (F1/YO/05).

Nonetheless, encouragement from prison officers was not a common occurrence since it depended on the individuals. Many young offenders reported that the discouragement by their fellow inmates and some officers inhibited potential students from enrolling and staying in school. This is what one ex-inmate had to say;

I initially enrolled in Standard 7, but I dropped out later in Standard 8 because of discouragement by some officers. When they are taking us to work on the farms, they used to say that we were imprisoned for hard labour which was working on the farms, not for education. They used to say that we left school outside. So they discouraged me. In prison, it is as if you are defying the prison rules by seeking to

be educated. So I just decided to drop out and concentrate on things that will make me serve my sentence well (F2/EX-YO/06).

While confirming that students in the young offenders' facilities lacked external motivation and support for their education, the educators extended the blame onto other prison officers and non-school-going inmates. According to them, the negative comments of some non-school-going inmates and the coercive involvement of young offenders in farming discouraged school enrolment and attendance. This excerpt from an interview with an educator (inmate) at the gender-mixed facility summarises it all.

Inmates usually discourage each other. When some are preparing to go to class, some usually bully and mock them that they are just wasting their time attending school here since they failed education outside. Instead of education, they just need to focus on their imprisonment, do their time and leave the place. So the majorities fall into this trap and are discouraged (F2/EDU/07).

From this study's findings, the young offenders appeared to be a vulnerable educational group. Thus, they need a lot of encouragement and support from the duty-bearers to enrol in school and obtain an education that will help them after their release. The results of this study show that this extrinsic motivation and encouragement from some officials negatively affected the desired participation of young offenders, affecting the educational programmes at all five facilities.

#### *6.3.4.4 Limitations in the levels of education opportunities available*

This study found that YORCs in Malawi did not provide a wide range of educational levels to suit all inmates' educational needs. Some young offenders and their released counterparts reported that they were not enrolled in the education programme because their levels of education were not offered at their facilities. The study found that only primary and secondary school education levels were available at the NGO-supported, modern-built and city-situated facilities. This meant that those young offenders who needed tertiary (college or university) education could not access it in correctional facilities. Additionally, the study found no technical and vocational skills training programmes in the five YORCs. Thus, many were engaged

in other work activities, enrolled in basic education, or were just staying idle. An example was one 18-year-old young man who was a first-year student at one of the public universities in Malawi when he committed a violence-related offence that landed him at the city-situated facility. The penitentiary did not give him a chance to continue with his higher education goals.

Worse still, the gender-mixed facility (Facility 2) only offered primary school education classes as acknowledged by the educators.

We don't have a secondary school now. In the past, we used to have both primary and secondary schools here, but things changed along the way (F2/EDU/08).

From this study's survey results and the interview with some young offenders at the gender-mixed facility, some young offenders needed secondary education even though it was not being provided. According to them, they were advised to enrol in primary school or be engaged as teachers as they wait for their transfer to another young offenders' facility offering secondary school education level. A Form 2 young offender (19-year-old) who was arrested for impregnating his girlfriend (defilement) in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic when the schools were suspended reported to have been engaged as a teacher instead of continuing with his education.

Since there is no secondary school here, I was asked by the education coordinator if I can assist in teaching primary school students. I assist my fellow inmates as their teachers. I have been volunteering as a teacher for four months. But I desperately wanted to continue with my education in Form 2 as I was already disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic school suspension (F2/EDU/09).

Moreover, it was reported by many respondents (young offenders, educators and ex-offenders) that some facilities did not have junior primary classes (Standards 1 to 4). Even though they were registering learners for all classes, the actual classes started from Standard 5 and above in most of these facilities. This was reported at the NGO-supported, modern-built and city-situated facilities. Some young offenders in the study cited the unavailability of junior classes as the reason they were not attending

classes in correctional facilities. An inmate at the NGO-supported facility, who dropped out in Standard 2 before incarceration, had this to say;

When I just arrived here, I registered to start in Standard 1 to know at least how to read and write. But the class had never been called to start. They are few classes that are offered here. Standards 1 to 6 are not being taught because of shortages of teachers. There are few teachers here, plus there are few classrooms to accommodate all classes (F1/YO/02).

Educators also confirmed this status. They also cited shortages of classrooms and teachers as the main reasons contributing to the situation. This finding is an indication that young offenders' facilities did not provide enough or a wide range of educational options for the needs of all inmates.

#### *6.3.4.5 Involvement in some work activities*

This study found that young offenders who were not involved in other work activities were more likely to be enrolled in an education programme than those involved in other work activities. According to the educators interviewed in this study, it was difficult for most young offenders to work in a certain permanent work group and continue attending classes at the schools. Firstly, it was highly likely for students assigned to the most prestigious and lucrative work parties, such as work activities that enabled them to work outside the facilities regularly, to drop out of school to concentrate on the newly assigned work activity.

Sometimes they allocate the learners to some work parties, very lucrative work parties which make most of them choose to stop schooling to concentrate on the work party. It is because they receive incentives in those outside work parties such as food and soap, so being allocated into a work party here is a privilege. An inmate who was doing well in school once put in a lucrative work party will stop coming to school outright (F4/EDU/16).

This was confirmed by one released young offender who indicated that he desperately hoped to be put in those lucrative work parties. However, he was not lucky. Instead, he joined education and resumed Standard 8, which he had dropped

some years before his incarceration. In contrast, a 20-year-old young offender (a Standard 7 dropout) reported having earned the trust of the facility authorities and being promoted to the status of *nyapala*. He was made to be in charge of the facility's sanitation party, which meant he would no longer be involved in the most painful work party of farming. He had this to say when he was asked to justify his non-enrolment in education.

School is good, but I am usually busy with other things I do at this facility. I am busy in the sanitation party; I also go out to search for firewood, and I am a *nyapala*. So I just decided not to involve myself in education (F2/YO/07).

Another 18-year-old young man who had dropped out of school in Standard 2 and joined friends who initiated him into a life of crime did not bother registering for school in the correctional facility. He claimed that he also wished he could join school but did not have time due to his involvement in the lucrative sanitation party. According to the educators, it is always the wish of every young offender to be involved in the sanitation and catering work parties because there were many hidden incentives they received due to their regular work outside the penitentiary walls.

Furthermore, some young offenders reported that some of their colleagues were attracted to the work parties that enabled them to frequently go outside the facility walls at the expense of pursuing education since they provided a rare opportunity for them to access and use contraband such as drugs which they could not access and use inside the four walls.

Some of the inmates use drugs such as *Chamba* [Indian hemp]. So they usually know that if they are to enrol in school, most of the time they will be in class; hence, they won't have time to go outside to smoke their *Chamba* because it is literally impossible for an inmate to smoke inside the facility (F1/YO/04).

Conversely, it was also highly likely for young offenders and even those who were initially enrolled in the correctional schools not to enrol or drop out when they were involved in work activities that were considered painful, such as farming, due to fatigue and demoralisation. This is what one ex-inmate had to say;

When I just entered, we were told that the school is available and that everyone is allowed to enrol. But the way you are treated especially at the farm, you come back tired and already exhausted for you to do something else such as school. As you are working, you are whipped and beaten, and some are injured in the process and these things make people just decide to drop out of school so that during that time you can be resting and reflecting (F2/EX-YO/09).

This shows that the involvement of young offenders in particular work parties discouraged their enrolment in correctional education. This also shows that young people incarcerated in penitentiary facilities needed comprehensive counselling and guidance programmes to realise that they needed education in their lives and to make decisions to enrol in freely accessible schools in correctional facilities.

#### *6.3.4.6 Lack of school counselling and guidance programmes*

This study found that many young offenders admitted to young offenders' centres come with various backgrounds and issues such as delinquency, school dropout and school apathy which require focused psychosocial programmes. Moreover, the survey of this study found that many young offenders in Malawi were first offenders. Consequently, the majority indicated that they were confused and traumatised by their incarceration. They needed psychosocial counselling and guidance before being introduced to any other activity, as advocated by the GLM and RNR models of offender rehabilitation. Nevertheless, this study found that all five young offenders' facilities had no planned psychosocial programmes. This study inquired about the alternatives to the psychosocial programmes that young offenders accessed. The study found that many young offenders found counselling and guidance service alternatives from their fellow inmates, some prison officers and religious groups regularly visiting the facilities.

For instance, Mavuto (not his real name) was a Form Four 19-year-old young offender who was sentenced to eight years imprisonment for defiling and impregnating his 16-year-old girlfriend. However, Mavuto claimed that he had never slept with the girl even though they were in love. In court, he tried to plead not guilty.



He demanded for a test to be done on the girl or the baby as evidence. However, his request was not considered. He was depressed, sad and very angry about what he believed was unfair judgement. He did not accept his fate. Even though he was seriously depressed, he was not involved in therapy or counselling sessions.

I felt bad the first days of my stay here. But I was never engaged in any kind of counselling. The only advice I received was from my cell colleagues who rendered a listening ear to my story. For the first time, I felt like someone was on my side. They later told me that these things happen, I just had to move on. And some prison guards who asked me about my offence consoled me that I should not think about those things when I explained to them. I needed to just accept and move on. My friends told me that I needed to enrol in school soon so that I should not miss a year of my education. I did just that (F4/YO/16).

Mavuto wrote MSCE the same year. He passed but not to his satisfaction.

I wrote MSCE examinations here in prison and passed it. But I did not pass with good grades, so I decided to repeat. I have written the examination this year to improve my grade. My plans are that I should have a good certificate when I am released from here (F4/YO/16).

Mavuto's experience could be similar to other inmates' experiences in the YORCs in Malawi and beyond. However, not many inmates had a chance of meeting the right people at the right time to tell them something that could make them decide to follow the right path in the middle of their troubled state of mind. Deliberate psychosocial treatment programmes needed to be part and parcel of the young offenders' journeys within the criminal justice system. This shows that young offenders were not involved in any planned psychosocial programmes as required in the unit management model MPS claimed to be using in its policies. The reality was that inmates were just 'warehoused' without any consideration of their mental welfare related to the trauma or confusion that is created when they were admitted to a correctional facility (Farley & Pike, 2018; Faruqee, 2016; Price & Turner, 2021; Swanson, 2018).

However, some young offenders reported finding solace in religious activities. Their involvement in religious activities such as preaching and Bible studies was reported to have helped some young offenders in their depression and need for counselling and guidance. Religious activities were reported to help some young offenders to reflect on their life purpose and decide to change. Every facility had a chaplaincy office that coordinated religious groupings' visits.

These religious activities are so beneficial here. I am encouraged by my friends in a Christian way. We sit down and encourage each other as church members as well as choir members. When we have time, especially on Saturdays and Sundays afternoon when we are not involved in farming, we sit down and encourage ourselves that we need to hold Christ steadfastly as our Lord and Saviour so that we can be guided in the best behaviours to avoid coming back here after our release (F2/YO/08).

During my stay here, I have realised that what my parents were telling me was right. I have now received Christ as my Lord and Saviour here, and I don't want that criminal life. I want to be a good person. So when I go back, I will be just doing labour piece work other than stealing things that other people worked for, for many years to have, thereby destroying his future and future of his family. I have changed (F4/YO/17).

Nevertheless, it is doubtful that 'walking the talk' would be easy for these quoted young offenders, especially the second commenter. The first commenter (F2/YO/08) was an 18-year-old young man who was schooling (in Form 3) when he committed an offence that landed him at the gender-mixed facility. Unfortunately, the gender-mixed facility did not offer secondary school classes. So he decided to enrol in Standard 8. He repeated the same class for the two years he had been at the facility. Nonetheless, his efforts could yield something after his release. On the other hand, the second commenter (F4/YO/17) was an 18-year-old young man who dropped out of school in Standard 2 at age 13 when he left his home and joined a criminal gang. His only survival methods had been through violence, robbery and theft with his criminal colleagues. During his stay at the correctional facility, he was not involved in

any educational, technical or vocational skills training since he was in the lucrative sanitation work party. It would be challenging for him to change after his release, which was due the following year.

This shows that religious activities, especially spiritual counselling and guidance, can be effective if they are part of a comprehensive rehabilitation plan for specific individuals when many other elements in the rehabilitation mix such as education, technical skills training, psychosocial programming and post-release follow-up and support are also available.

### **6.3.5 Perceptions on education resources and environment in the YORCs**

This study inquired about the perceptions of young offenders, educators and ex-young offenders on the educational resources and the incarceration environment to ascertain the quality of education provided in young offenders' centres. The assessment of these perceptions was in response to the second research question of this study. The general perception of all interviewees in this study was that the education was of low quality. From the analysis, two sub-themes emerged as factors affecting the quality of education provided in those facilities: the inadequacy of resources and the general environment of the facilities.

#### *6.3.5.1 Inadequacy of resources*

Almost all young offenders, educators and ex-young offenders interviewed in this study cited the inadequacy or unavailability of essential teaching and learning resources such as library services, classrooms, prescribed textbooks, science laboratories, and other accessories such as books, pens, notebooks and mathematical instruments as contributing to their perceived low-quality education at the five facilities. The respondents also reported the inadequacy and, in some facilities, absence of qualified teachers as another factor contributing to the low quality of the education provided in the five facilities. This was confirmed by the released young people.

The education was very poor. The materials and resources were usually not available. It usually took the personal efforts of the particular inmate to do well in that facility by sourcing those resources from relatives and family. Another challenge is class time is very small. Since there are no classrooms but sheds, students are usually disturbed by the noise of other inmates. The school has no lab and the library is not accessible to students (F2/EX-YO/07).

The educators also perceived the education provided at young offenders' centres to be of low quality when compared to the one provided in the communities. The educators were asked to describe the characteristics of quality education in the community. After describing the ideal education quality, they were asked to compare their description with the quality of education at their respective correctional facility. The following excerpt represents their general perceptions;

No. We are far away from the quality I just described simply because the institution is not yet formalised. It does not have enough qualified teachers to claim that it is an institution that is providing quality education...It does not have the facilities I have just talked about such as updated libraries with prescribed books in them, we only have one qualified teacher here, no laboratory, and the environment is not that conducive, because you can hear noise everywhere [*inmates chats and loud music were audible in the background*]. So with that, this institution cannot qualify to offer quality education (F3/EDU/11).

On the issue of educators, young offenders indicated that teachers were the main factor contributing to their perceived low-quality education in correctional schools.

The main problem here is regarding teachers. This school needs professional teachers, not just prison officers who are just assigned the teaching role but do not have any educational qualifications. The teachers here do teach, but they don't teach the way professional teachers can teach (F4/YO/20).

Educators also confirmed the inadequacy of qualified teachers in the young offenders' schools. Some facilities were reported using other inmates as teachers regardless of whether they were qualified to teach or not. The respondents, including those involved teachers, faulted the involvement of unqualified inmates as teachers.

Involving inmates like me to teach here is not productive. I do have my own problems here regarding my life and I am not that educated to teach others, we only teach because there are no teachers...This is because trained teachers know the methodologies of teaching apart from knowing what they are teaching. But people like me only teach out of the experience and because I learned those things in my own education (F2/EDU/06).

Instead of encouraging these young offenders to help as volunteer educators, these inmates complained that they were not motivated and were still treated harshly like other regular inmates at the facility. Uniformed teachers were also reported to be using demoralising words towards the students. This is why young offenders at the city-situated facility strongly recommended recruiting and deploying civilian teachers to replace uniformed staff in the education section.

They need to be involving professional teachers, not prison officers. You know a person trained as a warder is good at what he is trained in, providing security and not teaching. So engaging that person in teaching would not bring good results because he would be focusing on making sure that they are not escaping and not having educational performance. Prison schools need qualified teachers just like community schools (F5/EX-YO/23).

However, educators acknowledged their general lack of seriousness and cited the lack of motivation by the correctional service and facility management as causing their lack of commitment to the education of this vulnerable group of society. This shows that the respondents in this study generally perceived the young offenders' schools as low-quality compared to those in the communities because of the inadequacy of resources.

#### *6.3.5.2 The general facility environment versus education*

The study found variations in the respondents' views on the effects of the general environment at young offenders' facilities on their right to education. Out of the 75 interviewees, only one young offender and one educator were of the view that the environment was just as normal as any school or study-related environment outside

the correctional facility's walls. According to one of the educators at the gender-mixed facility, their facility was clean and spacious for the students' comfort. The young offender argued that life in the correctional facility was not that different from his original home outside prison. He, therefore, praised the correctional facility for providing him with an education many people could not afford outside.

The most important thing is that we are being provided with the education that some people outside this facility cannot afford to access. Like in the villages we come from, problems and challenges exist. We lack adequate food and proper accommodation on top of looking for money to pay for school fees to go to school. Here school is free. So this environment is just similar (F1/YO/04).

Perhaps it was because this young man was a Standard 7 dropout when he committed an offence which led to his incarceration. He dropped out of school because his mother (single parent) died, and he had no one else to support him with resources. He started Standard 7 at the correctional school. He passed the PSLC examinations and proceeded to secondary school, where he passed the JCE and was in Form 4 during this interview. Perhaps he had a lot to thank for the correctional facility.

However, most of the respondents in this study reported that the general environment in most of the five facilities was not conducive to education. The young offenders complained about the food they received, disturbances within the classroom area, noise in their cells, and overcrowding.

We have classrooms, but they are disturbed by the noise from the outside. Our accommodation is not good for studying because we are not allowed to study or read our study notes during the night in our cells. Since the *nyapalas* are tasked to ensure the security of inmates in every cell, they suspect that if someone is awake while they are asleep they might escape. Hence, when the *nyapalas* are going to sleep, everyone is forced to stop whatever they were doing (F1/YO/05).

The mixing of school-going with non-school-going inmates was suspected as the cause of noise and overcrowding.

To say the truth, school and imprisonment are not related. We are overcrowded in the cells. It is difficult to study during the night because of the congestion in the cells. Imagine you are sleeping on the shamba [the middle lines of the sleeping floor], and other inmates who are not students are singing or making noise, how can you study? So the way we sleep is not good for studying (F4/YO/16).

The young offenders' sentiments on the negativity of the environment were further corroborated by many educators involved in this study. According to them, the food, noise, classrooms and inaccessible library services limited the full enjoyment of the right to education of young offenders in correctional facilities in Malawi. The living conditions were reportedly worse at the pure-farming facility, where education was not provided. This was observed by young offenders lodged at the pure-farming facility and echoed by their released counterparts.

There is nothing helpful to the young people here. We are not even provided with the basic necessities. Imagine we lack soap. We sometimes spend more than four weeks without soap to wash our clothes and even to use for bathing. You can look at our uniforms [pointing at his dirty uniform]... We go to the farm twice without taking any food at 6 am and we come back after 11 am, and we go back after lunch and come back around 4 pm. We work as slaves here (F5/YO/23).

This shows that many respondents perceived the incarceration conditions as not conducive to education since they perceived the inmates' treatment as harsh, comparable to slavery. This relates to Marxists' viewpoint that penitentiary facilities can become spaces that perpetuate social inequalities (Rusche & Kirchheimer, 2007).

### **6.3.6 Effects of incarceration on offenders' re-entry prospects and outcomes**

This sub-section presents the qualitative results of the third question of this study; what are the effects of education provided to the young offenders on their continued pursuance of their educational or career goals after their release from prisons in Malawi? The young offenders, educators and ex-young offenders were interviewed to assess their perceptions regarding the issues. During the interviews, the existence and impact of pre and post-release programmes or activities were further examined.

#### *6.3.6.1 The effects of incarceration conditions on rehabilitation prospects*

The study inquired about the young offenders' incarceration conditions and how they affect their rehabilitation prospects. Firstly, young offenders, educators and the released young offenders were asked to explain whether their facilities were rehabilitation or punishment oriented. There was a mixed reaction from the young offenders' perceptions at various facilities. Some young offenders at modern-built and city-situated facilities generally perceived their facilities as rehabilitation oriented. According to a 22-year-old Form 3 student at the modern-built facility, apart from the monotonous non-nutritious diet, the facility was rehabilitation oriented.

It is rehabilitation oriented because I don't feel like I am being punished here. I am enrolled in school and continuing with my education. Every time, if I am not busy with my studies, I go to bed and come back to collect my food. I am not being punished (F3/YO/13).

Probably this 22-year-old young man had that incarceration picture because he was not involved in farming like most young offenders in other facilities. Moreover, he already had plumbing skills which were useful to the correctional facility. Thus, he was not always confined to staying inside the four walls of the facility. Nevertheless, his perception was confirmed by another young offender and two ex-offenders who cited the acquisition of life-important skills as beneficial. Some released young people also said something good about their incarceration.

Yes. I did benefit. Even though I went through hell at that facility, my incarceration helped me and served my life. If I had not been imprisoned, I would have been dead by now. Most of my criminal friends I left when I was arrested were eventually caught by the community members who torched them alive one by one. I strongly believe I would have been burned alive by now (F5/EX-YO/25).

However, most of the young offenders interviewed in this study, especially at NGO-supported, gender-mixed and pure-farming facilities, did not share the sentiments expressed above. The majority were of the view that their correctional facilities were more punitive than rehabilitative. This was because of the harsh treatment and



conditions they were experiencing at those farming facilities. They reported overcrowding, ill-treatment, overworking and food problems as among the reasons they felt the facilities were punitive. According to them, incarceration conditions could increase cognitive distortions and criminal thinking patterns among young offenders. Instead of changing for the better, they could change for the worse.

We are ill-treated when we are working; we are beaten and whipped while working. This ill-treatment makes many young inmates become hard-core inmates. There are many inmates who are here for offences that they never intended to commit; they are here accidentally. But after here they might become ruthless beasts who are ready to commit more serious crimes when they have returned to their communities (F5/YO/25).

Many respondents also cited the lack and absence of essential rehabilitative programmes; thus, inmates were forced to only work on the farms or stay idle within the facilities. According to the incarcerated young people, these are the arenas where advanced criminal lessons are taught to less serious young offenders.

When they are tired and forced to continue working in the field, there are stories that these young people share to amuse themselves and uplift their spirits. Some of these stories are about how one is supposed to be brave and work and think like a real man. And what they will have to do after their release to compensate for the slavery they have served in prison. If one is not careful, he might take some lessons from these stories (F2/YO/06).

Educators also perceived the correctional system as more punishment oriented than rehabilitative.

On the ground, I can say we are punishment oriented, while on paper we are rehabilitation oriented. If you look at the prison of today and the prison of the past there is not much of a difference. Why am I saying this? In the past, prisons were used as farming areas. Those prisons are not closed they are still there, and inmates are the ones who are used as labour. So we cannot say that we are rehabilitative when the activities that were in the prisons before rehabilitation was introduced are being carried out without introducing new things. Moreover, if you

look at the food they were eating in previous years it is the same food they are eating today, the cells they were accommodated are the same that are used today. So there is no change to show that we are now a rehabilitation area. Maybe we have only managed to change the labels from 'prison' to 'rehabilitation centre' (F1/EDU/03).

Generally, educators faulted the coercive nature of farming on the young offenders at the so-called 'young offenders rehabilitation centres', which affected inmates' attendance and participation in the education programme.

These inmates are forced to work here. I usually know that it is about the priority of priorities of the management. Judging from the actions of the management, their priorities are on farming which is being used here as a punishment since there is that element of force on inmates who are not interested in working on the farm. If they were allowed to choose, I believe the majority would choose to enrol in school. So for those who choose farming in this case, it might be considered a rehabilitative activity because they would choose it since they want something from the activity, maybe to learn farming skills (F2/EDU/08).

We put much effort into the security of inmates. We usually experience that when security manpower is sensed to have gaps, the management finds it easy to suspend classes and redeploy the ones who were teaching to beef-up security. That does not happen in the education section. When there are no teachers, no one will take heed of that (F4/EDU/18).

This punitive theory was confirmed by a story of 19-year-old Chris (F5/YO/21), who was a re-offender at the pure-farming facility. According to him, his first incarceration happened when he was 16, schooling in Standard 5. He was convicted and incarcerated at one of the young offenders' centres for injuring a fellow student at school. Chris was fortunate to have been released on presidential pardon after serving only one year of his three-year sentence. However, Chris was rearrested and re-incarcerated for a more serious offence of burglary and theft. Perhaps, this was the reason many young offenders reported that their greatest fear in their lives was the possibility of reoffending after their release. This shows that young offenders were not

effectively and comprehensively rehabilitated and prepared for their release. Moreover, due to the absence of comprehensive rehabilitation programming, young offenders observed that even good programmes such as education would fail to rehabilitate a young person to desist from committing more crimes after their release.

I have seen many boys here passing the primary national examinations and being transferred to another young offenders' facility to proceed with their secondary school studies, and passing the national school certificate examinations there, hence, being released with MSCE certificates, but still, come back here after committing another crime out there. This is discouraging (F2/YO/07).

It was obvious that education programmes without comprehensive individualised rehabilitation programming would likely not be effective for many young offenders.

#### *6.3.6.2 Young offenders' education and other post-release outcomes*

It is common knowledge that the majority of incarcerated people would eventually rejoin the outside world. To catch a glimpse of the offenders' post-release plans and activities, this study inquired on the serving young offenders' envisioned post-release outcomes against their likely actual education and employment outcomes as experienced by those who were already released. This was to compare the young offenders' envisioned future and the reality of life after release.

##### a) Young offenders' post-release plans and prospects

The young offenders in this study were requested to explain their envisioned post-release plans and prospects. The majority mentioned continuing with their education, starting small businesses, farming or getting employed to live a pro-social life and avoid reoffending. However, many young offenders reported that they did not have any plans. A 19-year-old young man who was due for release within two months was also worried about where to stay after his release.

My plans and my prayer are that I should get out of here alive. But unfortunately, I don't have anywhere to stay after my release here since both of my parents are dead. This might create a point of weakness for me to commit a crime again after

my release. So I just wish I could be assisted to have somewhere to stay after my release so that I can make something out of my life (F5/YO/23).

Another 20-year-old young offender feared a lack of support after his release because his illiterate family did not care about education. He doubted the possibility of their support for him after his release.

Nobody encouraged me. My parents never cared for education. I then moved to stay with my grandparents. My parents took me to the village to live with my grandparents because of my delinquency. But the old lady did not encourage me to go to school (F1/YO/02).

This shows that young offenders needed deliberate pre-release programmes apart from schooling to help them prepare for community re-entry.

b) Experiences of released young offenders on pre-release programmes

The released young offenders in this study generally indicated that they experienced a lack of pre-release programmes and support during their stay in the facilities, which resulted in them facing many challenges in their reintegration processes. Education or/and farming were the programmes which were indicated by the majority of the released young offenders to have been involved in while serving their incarceration sentences in the YORCs. Apart from these two, some also mentioned technical work skills, sanitation and religious gatherings as activities they were involved in. However, most of these released inmates indicated that they were never involved in deliberate programmes aimed at preparing them for community re-entry when they were about to be released. According to the officials (educators), the practice was that inmates were told in advance the day they would be due for release. They were also warned a few days before the release day. In this study, the young offenders acknowledged being reminded a week before their release.

I was only warned a week before that I was about to be released and [they] gave me the date. That was all. I was never prepared for release (F3/EX-YO/12).

Nonetheless, these released young people generally reported that after their admission, there were no deliberate programmes to mentally prepare them for release, apart from some of them being enrolled in education programmes. An offender who was allocated to a work party would be working in that party until the day of their release. It was during the last week of release that the individual would be called for verification purposes only.

Moreover, this release process was haphazardly dramatic when the release was due to the presidential pardon order. The State President is given powers to pardon offenders at any time he or she deems fit. Therefore, most often, inmates, including those in the young offenders' centres, are released on a presidential pardon, which becomes even harder for someone to prepare for their release:

I was not prepared in any way for release. With me, what happened was that it was a presidential pardon. So it was on a day that I was not expected to be released. One day we were all made to assemble and we were told that the president has pardoned some offenders in the country, and they started reading the list of names, and I made it on the list. So the police officer came to make us fill out some forms and took our fingerprints. That was all (F1/EX-YO/01).

These released young people reported that they were only given transport money to take them to their homes. However, some of them complained that the money was not even enough to make them reach home. They had to walk on foot or ask for assistance to reach home safely. Worse still, some young offenders reported that they were not even given transport money. For this group, it was another hurdle or strife to reach home.

I was not prepared for release. Imagine, I was not even given transport money to take me back home. The facility and home are more than 200 kilometres apart. I had to ask some well-wishers to give me that money (F3/EX-YO/13).

I was not given transport to home. The government is supposed to give us transport money but never gave me. I had to contact my relatives to send me some money for transport (F4/EX-YO/16).

Nevertheless, the two released young offenders from the pure-farming facility mentioned an offender pre-release support project called 'Chance for Change'. This was a skills project carried out by a certain NGO targeting offenders about to be released from various correctional facilities. The following is an excerpt from the story of a 20-year-old previous inmate.

Chance for Change is a project by an NGO that had an agreement with the prison authorities to prepare inmates for release through the provision of some technical skills training and some guidance on how one can live a crime-free life. So, during the bigger part of my sentence, I was just working on the farm; this was painful work. But when I was remaining with four months to be released, I was so lucky to be among the three young offenders to be included in this project from our facility. But after four months of the expiry of my sentence, I was taken back home. This was before I completed the training programme...We were told that our term was completed, but they later invited another intake. But I have heard that the project was discontinued (F5/EX-YO/21).

According to this Standard 7 dropout, he was sent back home before completing the basics of motor vehicle mechanics. He was not given any mechanic toolbox as a starter pack. When the researcher asked him if he was using the skills learned in this pre-release support project in his day-to-day life as it was intended, this was his reply;

No. I cannot manage to repair a motorbike. We never covered enough content to make you able to start applying the skills... I wished I could complete the MVM course at another college, but I don't have money for fees. My parents cannot afford to enrol me for training at a local garage (F5/EX-YO/21).

Therefore, despite being involved in this programme, this young man who was previously convicted of theft was staying idle at home. He did not re-enrol in school nor complete his MVM training programme. He complained of lacking the necessities of life, which could be a loophole for him to return to crime for survival. This just shows that pre-release support activities such as Chance for Change needed to be part and parcel of the rehabilitation plans of individual young offenders to help them reintegrate, even though this programme had some problems. However, as reported,

few (three) young offenders were involved in this programme (from the modern-built facility) and the project was reported to have been discontinued due to a lack of funds after the main donor of the local NGO running the project pulled out. This could be the reason the current young offenders never reported about this project or any pre-release support programme.

Therefore, the lack of proper pre-release support and support on the actual release day was one of the perceived contributing factors to the recidivism of some young offenders since it became difficult for them to survive the reintegration process. Apart from that, some released young offenders observed that the lack of psychosocial preparation of inmates who are due for release was the other cause of recidivism.

When we were about to be released, many of us were not sure of how we will survive outside prison. There were some people, because of overthinking, anxiety and stress, who ended up having mental problems. When we were finally released, some colleagues did not last a week outside because of a lack of perseverance; hence, they re-offended, thereby ending up going back to prison. So the facility does not prepare inmates very well. It is up to an individual to decide the path they want to follow after their release (F4/EX-YO/20).

This just shows that all groups of respondents agree that young offenders were not prepared well for their release from correctional facilities for their successful reintegration processes.

c) Released young offenders' post-release outcomes

Regarding offenders' post-release outcomes, this study found that many released young offenders face difficulties in reintegrating into society after their release. In this study, out of 25 young people released from five facilities, 17 were reported to have been involved in education in correctional facilities. However, out of the 17, only six reported continuing to pursue their education goals at both secondary and tertiary levels immediately after their release. Nevertheless, two reported dropping out of school along the way generally due to a lack of support.

Just after my release, I continued with school in Form 2. I dropped out in the same class because the person who started paying tuition fees, unfortunately, passed on. I had no source of money to pay for my education. I had to drop out. So I just do some gardening where I grow some vegetables which I sell to fend for my basic needs. I started this to avoid stealing, hence reoffending (F1/EX-YO/04).

Out of the four who were still in school during the time of the study, one was a second-year student at one of the private universities in Malawi, another was a Standard 7 primary school student, while the remaining two were secondary school students who were released from the correctional facility in the same year when they were already registered for MSCE examinations. They were, therefore, studying outside before going back to their previous facilities to write their registered examinations. Apart from the four young people who reported continuing with their education, another seven young men reported being involved in temporary piece work jobs such as drivers of *kabanza* (commercial motorbikes), small shops' workers and call boys in the cities' taxi depots.

Nonetheless, six ex-inmates were honest and sincere enough to report that they were just staying idle at their homes with nothing to do. Most released young offenders were just staying idle or involved in temporary piece work jobs because it was difficult for an ex-offender to get a job. Malawi's largest employer is government. According to them, even if the released young offender had acquired a good certificate, his conviction status restricted many government employment opportunities. One released young man testified based on his experience.

But the most demotivating thing with correctional education is that it is difficult to get a job outside here even if you got a good qualifications while in prison. There is a stigma out here. You cannot easily get employed if they know that you were once in prison. In government, there are many opportunities people with criminal records are not allowed to apply for, such as all security posts in police, prison and army. So we tend to wonder about the logic behind attaining education



qualifications in prison, it looks like a useless endeavour to do education in prison because it is almost impossible to get a good job out here (F1/EX-YO/01).

This young man was motivated to continue with his education in the correctional facility to be employed in one of the public security organisations. However, he had realised that his conviction history blocked his chances indefinitely.

These findings show that the released young offenders' post-release outcomes were generally their continued education pursuance, temporary piece works, small businesses, or subsistence farming. However, the finding that some released young offenders were not involved in any activity and the revelation that many correctional ex-students were not continuing with their education after their release was a good indicator that the reintegration process was challenging to many of them.

d) Released young offenders' official post-release support

Regarding post-release support, out of the 25 ex-young offenders interviewed in this study, 23 reported having never been involved in any post-release programmes after their release. It was only two young men who reported having received some post-release support from a certain NGO. The majority reported that ex-inmates were never followed up by the correctional service or government-employed social workers to find out how they had settled as required. It generally seemed like the correctional services' processes ended on release. Every young person who had been released was no longer the correctional service's responsibility.

Nevertheless, those two released young offenders who were affirmative of receiving post-release support were from the NGO-supported facility. They reported that the post-release support was from an NGO owned by a Catholic nun. One of these two ex-young offenders was temporarily employed at the NGO's community milling shop while continuing his education. Upon being asked if he had ever been provided with post-release support, this is what he had to say;

Uhhmm! Maybe only by the NGO... that I am working, for now, supports me after my release. They are also assisting in my studies to prepare for national

examinations. I enrolled in Form 3 at the correctional facility, and I was released when I was just entering Form 4, which is why I will have to go back and write my examinations there. But no support from the prison service or social welfare offices. They have never visited me, even phoning me (F1/EX-YO/01).

The other ex-inmate, who was also enrolled in correctional education, was released when he was in Form 2. However, he had nowhere to go since both of his parents were not there. The same NGO owned by the Catholic nun helped him.

I was released when I was in Form 2, but I had nowhere to go. During this time, my mother was already dead, and my father had migrated to South Africa to never come back. But the organisation that I had connected with while in prison followed me and continued supporting me after my release. They made arrangements with a certain family to take me in for me to attend the education which they were paying. In 2019, I wrote MSCE and passed with 22 points. When I presented the results to the nun, she decided to continue paying for my university education. She is still supporting me now. I am in my second year at a private university (F1/EX-YO/05).

This young man strongly believed that his incarceration was a blessing in disguise because it enabled him to meet and connect with the Catholic nun's organisation supporting his education goals.

I can say with pride that I was positively impacted by my imprisonment. It is where this educational opportunity came from. Without going to prison, I don't want to imagine what I would have been doing now. The NGO started this from Form 2, and I got my MSCE certificate, and now they are paying for my university degree. They pay for the tuition, accommodation and all living expenses for me. Without them, I don't think I would have applied for tertiary. Before my incarceration, I was already a dropout of Form 1; with tuition fees problems (F1/EX-YO/05).

Unfortunately, these kinds of positive stories are scarce and not common because most released young offenders are not privileged for any support from the government or NGOs. Moreover, this Catholic nun was reported to have curtailed her charity work in Malawi in 2022, which meant the end of these fruitful efforts.

e) Community and family offenders' post-release support

There were mixed reactions from the 25 released young offenders regarding the support they received from their families and communities. Some young offenders indicated that they were warmly welcomed by both their families and communities. Still, some reported being warmly welcomed by their families, not the community members. These released ex-inmates sensed stigma and discrimination in some community members towards them.

My parents were very happy. But the rest of my relatives look at me negatively. They think I have learned so many bad things from other criminals in prison. Many people don't believe that people can change; they believe that once someone has spent some time in prison, he is even worse than the way they were before going to prison. So there is usually less support from people like these. But some give you chance that maybe after experiencing the harsh conditions of the prison, maybe you have changed. But three-quarters of people look at you with a negative eye (F3/EX-YO/13).

This stigma was capable of provoking and irritating the victimised ex-inmates to commit aggression offences in retaliation which could result in recidivism.

Some people in our neighbourhood welcomed me. But some still refer to me as a *kaidi* [jailbird]; I am always angry when someone refers me to by that prisoner label, especially my fellow young people. So I beat them. I cannot tolerate that. So that has lessened that stigma now (F4/EX-YO/17).

Nonetheless, this study found that many released young offenders lacked moral, emotional and financial support. Some of them reported that they were never welcomed nor supported by their families and communities, making their reintegration challenging. Chris, the young man who re-offended after being released from his first conviction, had a story that provided testimony to the lack of after-release support. Chris's lack of post-release support had an effect on his continued pursuance of education which resulted in his reoffending. In his first incarceration, Chris continued his education at the correctional school. He was schooling until he was released on

presidential pardon the other year. However, like many other released young people, he was never involved in pre-release programmes. He also reported that he was not involved in any post-release programmes during the 18 months he was outside. Worse still, his parents never received him.

My parents never welcomed me. They told me that they will no longer support me because I shamed them by going to prison. They told me I should be living my life; they are done with me. So I decided to just leave the home (F5/YO/21).

Chris had nowhere to go. Even if he had plans to continue his education after his release, the plans were automatically shattered. He had to survive.

With what my parents did to me, I was confused and I later became friends with a certain colleague whom I met in Nkhotakota. I, later on, learnt that he was also an ex-convict. He initiated me in robbery and theft as a career. We had a series of successful robberies with him. But the last time we tried to break into a house to steal; we were caught and got arrested and landed here (F5/YO/21).

From Chris's story, it is clear that the lack of pre-release and post-release support and programmes challenged the successful re-entry processes of some released young offenders. Unfortunately, Chris was re-incarcerated at the pure-farming facility, where there was no education programme since all young offenders were forced to work on the farm. He was due for release within the same week of this study's interview. Just as in his first release, he was not involved in any pre-release programmes. The vicious circle of imprisonment was likely to repeat on Chris if his parents were not to receive him again.

This sub-section has generally found that the incarceration of young offenders had an effect on their educational and career pursuance after their release from the correctional facilities in Malawi. The study found that young offenders usually harboured positive plans for their post-release prospects and activities such as continuing their education, getting employed or venturing into entrepreneurship. However, from the interviews with the already-released young people, the reintegration process was difficult generally because of the lack of proper pre-release

programmes when they were in the correctional facility, which is made worse by the lack of post-release support. This results in many young offenders dropping out of school, just staying idle or engaging in unstable and unsustainable economic activities that could land them back in correctional facilities.

#### **6.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter presented findings on the incarceration of young offenders in correctional facilities and their access to quality education as an element of the rehabilitation process. The findings reveal some key issues and gaps in young offenders' education and the general correctional environment. It has been noted that most young offenders came from family poverty, divorces, and illiteracy which sometimes caused their delinquency and school dropouts, necessitating comprehensive rehabilitation programming. However, the findings in this chapter revealed a lack of organised or absence of comprehensive offender rehabilitation programming in the five facilities. The facilities mainly engaged young offenders in education and farming; thus, they did not have a wide range of rehabilitation activities. Education was considered the only meaningful programme in many respondents' perceptions since farming was negatively perceived as a punitive tool due to its associated coercive nature and ill-treatment. However, education was also viewed as of low quality. This was because the resources were generally inadequate, and the general conditions of incarceration were harsh on young offenders at most facilities, which are thus largely not conducive to education. The facilities were perceived as more punishment centres than rehabilitative environments.

Though the findings revealed some positive deterrence effects of punitive incarceration, the findings generally suggest that lack of proper rehabilitation programmes that include education has a negative effect on the released young offenders in terms of their post-release outcomes such as education continuity and self-reliance in the community. The next chapter presents an integrated interpretation of the findings and a discussion of the results based on data presented in chapters five and six.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

#### **7.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

This chapter presents an integrated discussion of this study's quantitative and qualitative results presented in chapters five and six. Overall, the study was aimed at investigating how the incarceration of young offenders in Malawi correctional facilities impacts on their rights and access to quality education. The study used convergent design within the mixed-methods research approach with greater emphasis on the qualitative strand in addressing the research problem [QUAL + quan]. The quantitative and qualitative data were generated using three research approaches; descriptive survey, semi-structured interviews and researcher's observations. The survey captured the young offenders' perceptions regarding their access to and quality of education and other rehabilitation activities offered. The semi-structured interviews with young offenders, educators and ex-young offenders sought to understand the core issues shaping the conversation on the impact of incarceration on young offenders' rights and access to quality education. The researcher's observations primarily checked, validated, and triangulated the respondents' views and perceptions regarding the incarceration environment, services and the quality of educational resources accessible in the young offenders' facilities.

The subsequent sections of this chapter discuss the study's findings based on the three research questions related to the literature on young offenders' incarceration, rehabilitation and access to education and their effects on post-release outcomes. The chapter compares, integrates, and aggregates the quantitative and qualitative findings in this study to generate a comprehensive picture of the impact of incarceration on young offenders' access to quality education in Malawi. Specifically, the chapter begins with a discussion on young offenders' activities while incarcerated in correctional facilities to ascertain if they were engaged in meaningful rehabilitative

activities, including education. Secondly, the chapter discusses the effects of the correctional system's environment and resources on young offenders' rights and access to quality education. Thirdly, the chapter discusses the effects of the education provided in correctional facilities on the lives of young offenders in prison and their continued pursuance of their educational or career goals after their release. Finally, the chapter summarises the key points of the discussion.

## **7.2 YOUNG OFFENDERS' REHABILITATION ACTIVITIES AND EDUCATION**

Although punishment is one of the aims of incarceration, in many jurisdictions, the emphasis has evolved toward rehabilitation (Blinkhorn et al., 2020; Durrant, 2018; Forsberg & Douglas, 2022). The Malawi correctional policies indicate the MPS's priority toward rehabilitating and educating incarcerated young people. The offender's rehabilitation journey, therefore, ought to start immediately after their admission into the correctional facility.

### **7.2.1 The admission process versus rehabilitation values and standards**

This study's integrated results revealed that 56% of young offenders incarcerated in Malawi penitentiaries (n=290) are uneducated, primary school dropouts and have unstable economic capabilities, thereby the majority commit economic crimes. It, therefore, denotes that most incarcerated young people are socially disadvantaged. Studies around the world concur with these findings that many incarcerated young offenders are incarcerated while they have experienced multiple social disadvantages due to their personal and households backgrounds of poverty, divorces, mental problems, substance abuse, and lack of education and vocational skills (Byrd & McCloud, 2021; Johnson, 2022a; Hunt & Nichol, 2021; Nkoana et al., 2020). Furthermore, in this study, it was revealed that the remaining 44% of young offenders were incarcerated for violence and sex-related offences; rape, defilement, murder and physical injuries due to peer pressure, drug abuse and poor decision-making.

These findings signal the need for comprehensive rehabilitation programming to target at identifying and addressing the offenders' underlying psychosocial needs as

advocated by modern rehabilitation theories such as the GLM and RNR anchoring this study (Andrews et al., 2011; Blinkhorn et al., 2020; Durrant, 2018; Farley & Pike, 2018; Forsberg & Douglas, 2022; McMahon & Jump, 2017; Ward et al., 2012b; Wilson, 2016). From the Marxists' viewpoint, correctional facilities can become spaces that perpetuate social inequalities that protect the interests of the privileged over those of the poor if inmates are not provided with rehabilitative interventions (Nkosi, 2021; Rusche & Kirchheimer, 2007).

However, the study found that there were limited activities involving young offenders, including sex offenders, aimed at evaluating their individual criminogenic needs to help them in isolating the primary goods that the offender previously strived to fulfil that made them commit offences to develop individual rehabilitation plans as advocated by the GLM. The study found that, despite the availability of the legal framework and policies, the five YORCs in this study did not use deliberate policies or rehabilitation models as stated in the MPS strategic plan (MPS, 2016). The management of incarcerated young people was not grounded on any rehabilitation theory or model and did not follow the general tenets and principles advocated by modern offenders' rehabilitation approaches, such as GLM and RNR models (Durrant, 2018; Mallion & Wood, 2020; Ward & Gannon, 2006). Lugo et al. (2019) argue that grounding offenders' rehabilitation programme on a particular correctional theory is essential for their effectiveness.

Furthermore, the survey results and interviews of young offenders, educators and released young people corroborated the finding that young offenders were haphazardly and mostly forced to be involved in various activities, mainly farming. All five facilities had no case management services, as expected in the unit management model the MPS was claiming to use in her strategies (MPS, 2016). The researcher's observation visits to the facilities verified that neither a single psychologist nor social worker was available. These professionals are expected to interact with young offenders through diagnostic therapy, counselling and guidance sessions, especially those with serious offences, to identify their rehabilitation needs and develop their individualised rehabilitation plans (Durrant, 2018; Mallion & Wood, 2020; McMahon &



Jump, 2017). Overall, the integrated findings suggest that Malawi's young offenders were generally not involved in initial preparatory rehabilitation activities as advocated by many rehabilitation theories, including GLM and RNR model.

These results concur with studies conducted in some African countries, such as Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Zambia, which report scarcities of comprehensive rehabilitation programming in many facilities, including those incarcerating young people (Ajah & Ugwuoke, 2018; Kusada, 2014; Ngozwana, 2017; Samanyanga, 2016). Samanyanga (2016) showed scepticism on the effectiveness of the purported rehabilitation activities in Zimbabwean penitentiaries in addressing the needs of the offenders since the offenders were haphazardly handpicked and allocated to the conveniently available rehabilitation programmes irrespective of their suitability and personal preference. Like in Malawi, most offenders in Zimbabwe were forced to work on farms, an activity perceived by the majority as hard labour (Kusada, 2014; Samanyanga, 2016). Ngozwana (2017) also observed the lack of proper rehabilitation planning of individual offenders in Lesotho since many offenders considered many skills programmes, such as farming as punitive due to their coercive nature and absence of educational components.

### **7.2.2 Programmes and activities in young offenders centres**

The integrated results of this study show that education, farming, technical work and skills training, religious activities, sports, and cleaning were the activities available at the five YORCs for the inmates. From their self-reporting in the survey, most young offenders indicated to have been involved in farming compared to education and other activities. Several studies in Africa report similar activities such as basic education, technical and vocational skills training and farming as rehabilitation programmes offered to inmates (Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017; Ajah & Ugwuoke, 2018; Fambasayi & Moyo, 2020; Jules-Macquet, 2014; Makuwerere, 2020; Msoroka, 2019; Msoroka et al., 2018; Quan-Baffour et al., 2022). However, studies in some countries show that some young offenders have access to many more rehabilitation programmes or activities such as university education and psychosocial interventions

(Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017; Johnson, 2015; Jules-Macquet, 2014; Msoroka, 2019; Samanyanga, 2016). Studies indicate that college education is accessible to some inmates at some correctional facilities in Uganda (Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017), in South Africa (Johnson, 2015; Jules-Macquet, 2014), and in Tanzania (Msoroka, 2019). Moreover, psychosocial interventions are accessible to young offenders at a few facilities in African countries such as South Africa and Zimbabwe (Johnson, 2015; Jules-Macquet, 2014; Samanyanga, 2016), even though Samanyanga (2016) shows scepticism about their effectiveness in Zimbabwean penitentiaries due to lack of clear criteria and standards, and that they are accessible to few inmates.

Nonetheless, most studies in Africa report the absence of rehabilitative activities such as education in some young offenders' centres within the same countries where they were reported in some facilities (Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017; Ajah and Ugwuoke, 2018; CHRAGG, 2011; Msoroka, 2019; Ngozwana, 2017; Samanyanga, 2016). This trend is similar to this study's findings that show that education, which was available at four facilities, was only not accessible at the pure-farming facility. Instead, just like in many African prisons (e.g. Msoroka, 2019; Ngozwana, 2017; Samanyanga, 2016), all young offenders incarcerated at the pure-farming facility in this study were coercively involved in farming which was perceived as punitive by the inmates. From the Marxist viewpoint, the coercive involvement of school-aged young people in farming instead of allowing them to fully pursue their educational goals is tantamount to exploitation and oppression (Marx & Engels, 2018). Marxists advocate for the abolition of any forms of exploitation of children, such as child labour, that would disadvantage them from acquiring similar education as accessed by other children (Heslin, 2016; Marx & Engels, 2018). This trend needs to change in Africa.

Ngozwana (2017) also adds that religious activities, which were freely accessible to inmates in Malawi, as reported in this study, were also considered rehabilitation activities in Lesotho even though they were not perceived as rehabilitative by the majority of inmates in either country. Nonetheless, the findings in the present study showed that the majority of young offenders indicated education programmes as

helpful and essential for their rehabilitation. Many young offenders still considered education as an essential endeavour in their lives.

### **7.2.3 Accessibility of education to the incarcerated young offenders**

Education access is considered mandatory and obligatory by law for school-aged incarcerated young people (Hawley et al., 2013; Jäggi & Kliewer, 2020). This study revealed that certain levels of education (primary and secondary education) were accessible to young offenders at four YORCs in Malawi to whosoever wanted to enrol. These findings are consistent with studies in many African countries which report that many young offenders' centres provide educational opportunities to incarcerated young people (Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017; Ajah & Ugwuoke, 2018; Fambasayi & Moyo, 2020; Johnson, 2015; Makuwerere, 2020; Msoroka et al., 2018). It is reported that young prisoners are admitted at borstal training centres in Ghana and Kenya, where they access education services (Aheisibwe & Rukundo 2017; Fambasayi & Moyo, 2020). In Lesotho, education is mandatory for juveniles incarcerated in juvenile facilities (Johnson, 2022a). In South Africa, education is seen as both a constitutional right and a "foundation stone for rehabilitation"; thus, it is provided to all prisoners, including those who are young (Quan-Baffour & Zawada, 2012, p. 73). Johnson (2015) indicates that South Africa has youth correctional centres known as 'centres of excellence' where young people are provided with quality education.

Nevertheless, the interviews with various participants in this study showed that most young offenders were not enrolled in school despite the education programmes introduced in the MPS. From their self-reporting in the survey, the majority of young offenders indicated to have been involved in farming (42%) as compared to education (32%), technical work and skills training (7%) and other activities, mainly religious ones (12%) at a certain time during their incarceration. Nonetheless, 7% indicated that they were staying idle since they had never been involved in any activity since their incarceration. The facility records gathered in the researcher's field notes were consulted to verify and triangulate the education attendance findings. The facility

records indicated that only 24% of the young offenders' population at the five YORCs (N=753) were currently schooling. The interviews with educators explained the differences in the number of young people involved in education. The reality was that a good number of young people drop out of the education programme a few days after their enrolment. Thus, some of them, including those who already dropped out, could have indicated that they registered for schooling at a certain point in their incarceration lives. These findings imply that most young offenders (76%) were not engaged in any educational activity while serving their conviction sentences.

These findings concur with what was found in a previous study conducted in 2020, which reported that more than 80% of prisoners in all correctional facilities in Malawi were not schooling, even though more than 90% were school dropouts (Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022). Using the Marxist lens, this is unacceptable since all school-aged young people need education (Marx & Engels, 2018). The low enrolment rates in the correctional facilities' schools reflected different results gathered from surveys and interviews that education was accessible to whosoever wanted to enrol. Nevertheless, from the interviews and the researcher's observations, it was noted that several factors contributed to the low enrolments.

Firstly, education was provided at only four facilities, leaving out one facility (the pure-farming facility) with no educational activities accessible to young offenders. The complete non-availability of education at the pure-farming facility contributed to the YORCs' national low educational enrolment rate. Moreover, education was not accessible to young female offenders as there was no school in the female section of the gender-mixed facility, the only facility that incarcerated young female offenders among the five facilities. These findings denote a notable inequality in the provision of education in Malawi since the majority of young offenders (76%) were not in school in a population with a mean age of 19.8 years and mode age of 18 years (range= 16-26) that needed education for their future (Jäggi & Kliwer, 2020). The findings also confirmed the disparity in educational opportunities between incarcerated male and female offenders reported in the literature (Achakzai et al., 2015; Agboola, 2016; Allen & Overy, 2019; Huber, 2015; Korzh, 2021; Ryder, 2020; Simpkins, 2015).

Literature shows that a significant population of women offenders is denied access to education programmes in many correctional facilities worldwide. Huber (2015) narrates that correctional authorities seldom take care of female offenders' academic and gender-specific needs. This is because, compared to those opportunities accessible to men, few academic and vocational skills training opportunities are accessible to women. Moreover, when education programmes are accessible to female inmates, they are often poorly resourced than those offered to male offenders (Achakzai et al., 2015; Allen & Overy, 2019; Huber, 2015; Johnson, 2015; Korzh, 2021; Ryder, 2020; Simpkins, 2015). As a result, many girls are warehoused or "...stored until released back into society" without any rehabilitation programme, including education (Simpkins, 2015, p. 26). These findings further confirm some studies' conclusions that "prison facilities were not built with a woman in mind" (de Araújo et al., 2020; Gadama et al., 2020, p. 8).

Secondly, the findings revealed that a lack of proper case management activities disadvantaged young offenders from considering enrolling in correctional facilities' schools even though education was available and accessible. Just making education available at young offenders' centres was not enough. Blomberg et al. (2011) argue that programmes such as formal education that do not provide special education services usually essential to youths with significant learning and psychological problems in penitentiary facilities are usually not effective. The education programmes must be augmented with other programmes that target mindset change (Durrant, 2018; Hollin & Palmer, 2006). The incarcerated school-aged young people need deliberate programmes to motivate them to realise the importance of education for their pro-social lives, social autonomy and reintegration. Case management activities that start with identifying the rehabilitation needs of each young person, thereby engaging them in psychosocial therapy and counselling or cognitive behavioural treatment programmes to address them, are pivotal (Durrant, 2018; Hollin & Palmer, 2006; Wilson, 2016). These deliberate activities can rejuvenate the incarcerated young offenders' life priorities, beliefs, values and norms, leading to the decision to pursue their educational goals in penitentiaries and after their release

(Durrant, 2018; Horney et al., 2012; James et al., 2016). Therefore, the lack of case management services contributed to low enrolment rates at the YORCs' schools.

Thirdly, the interviews with educators, young offenders and their released counterparts indicated that the low enrolment rates were partly attributed to the incarcerated young people's lack of interest in education. This education apathy was due to their earlier school dropout, lack of intrinsic motivation, and sacrificing their educational chances to pursue immediate gratification when they were allocated to lucrative prison work parties, which enabled them to access contraband easily.

Regarding the school dropouts' background factor, this study revealed that the offenders' pre-incarceration education background determined the individual's enrolment in correctional education or not. The study found that most young offenders who had been in school when they committed their offences were also likely to enrol in education programmes after incarceration. Conversely, those who were already dropouts before committing their offences were likely not to show interest in correctional education. This finding also points to the importance of comprehensive rehabilitation programmes that include counselling and guidance activities for young offenders to make them realise that they need education in their lives, and decide to enrol in correctional education (Davis & Tolbert, 2019; Kusada, 2014; McGrath et al., 2020).

Fourthly, the findings revealed that access to education was also discouraged by a lack of external motivation mechanisms for young offenders to enrol and benefit from such educational opportunities. Instead, incarcerated young people were exposed to verbal discouragement, physical ill-treatment and forced labour like slavery, making their school apathy worse. Studies reveal that young people are often psychosocially immature (Lambie & Randell, 2013). They generally come into the correctional facilities with histories of troubled pasts, illiteracy, school dropout, suspensions and expulsion, and family problems (Cole & Chipaca, 2014; Leone, 2015; Ou & Reynolds, 2010; Quan-Baffour & Zawada, 2012). These are likely to make them easily give up on their educational goals, resulting in apathy against education and schooling. That

could be the reason most of the young offenders were reported to be attracted to lucrative work parties that would provide instant gratification instead of pursuing their educational goals for their futures in this study.

Lastly, the study revealed that the involvement of the incarcerated young people in coercive farming activities also contributed to the low school enrolment rates in the young offenders' centres. This study's findings revealed that farming was a common activity in many young offenders' centres. Both survey and interview findings in this study confirmed that farming was compulsory for all young offenders incarcerated in those facilities. The study revealed that farming affected students' school attendance because they were forced to work on the farms during class hours, especially during farming seasons. It was revealed that most young offenders would not have volunteered to be engaged in farming if they were not forced. Literature indicates that these harsh treatments "brutalise prisoners, humiliate them, and educate them in the ways of crime" and cause perpetual recidivism rather than rehabilitate them (Cullen & Gilbert, 2013, p. 71). These are the conditions that Marxists observed to disadvantage the already unprivileged youth from acquiring similar education accessed by others. The harsh treatment could demoralise and dehumanise young offenders, making them not see the value of education. Moreover, this is a blatant abuse of the constitutional rights of children and young people. Section 23 of the Constitution of Malawi states that all children and young people are entitled to protection from any punishment, treatment, or work hazardous to their health and likely to disrupt their education (GoM, 2018a).

Overall, these findings highlight the importance of comprehensive rehabilitation programming for young offenders. Education ought to be an integral element in every rehabilitation programme targeting school-aged, incarcerated youths. Studies all over the world single out educational activities as the pillar of effective rehabilitation for their successful post-release outcomes (Coates, 2016; Durrant, 2018; Gehring, 2017; Finlay & Bates, 2018; Johnson, 2022a; Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022; McMahon & Jump, 2017; Tshephe & Mbanjwa, 2022; Wilson, 2016). Gehring (2017) called correctional education the "hidden heritage" of prison reform (p. 1), because education, even

though it is usually overlooked, has always been crucial in the rehabilitation function of modern penitentiary systems (Finlay & Bates, 2018). This study further revealed that many young offenders, including those who were not enrolled, considered education as their favourite and most helpful activity.

### **7.3 EFFECTS OF RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT ON EDUCATION**

The systems theory postulates that resources and the environment directly affect the quality of the education provided at an institution (Garira, 2020; Lai & Lin, 2017). Thus, correctional facilities' schools are responsible for securing inputs (resources) from government and prison authorities and processing them to produce quality education that benefits the incarcerated young people (Garira, 2015; Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022; Lai & Lin, 2017). From a Marxist viewpoint, school-aged youths in correctional facilities also deserve to have access to quality education (Marx & Engels, 2018). They “must receive schooling meeting the minimal standards of mandatory public education” (Jäggi & Kliewer, 2020, p. 2). The emphasis is on quality to avoid exacerbating inequality, as expounded in Marxist theory (Bowles & Gintis, 2002; Heslin, 2016; Marx & Engels, 2018). Therefore, resources and the environment are the key issues in quality education.

#### **7.3.1 Effects of resources on the quality of education in YORCs**

This study revealed that YORCs were not providing adequate resources in terms of teachers and materials for quality education outcomes. Thus, even though there were variations among facilities, the education was generally perceived as of low quality. Findings from the survey and interviews revealed the inadequacy of resources in the facilities as affecting the education quality as an output. The participants cited the inadequacy and unavailability of essential teaching and learning resources such as library services, classrooms, prescribed textbooks, science laboratories and other accessories such as books, pens, notebooks and mathematical instruments, let alone digital technological resources, as contributing to their perceived low-quality education in the YORCs.



The study further revealed the inadequacy and, in some facilities, absence of qualified teachers in the YORCs' schools. Studies indicate that quality education is highly dependent on the schools having well-qualified teaching staff that contribute to students' academic success (Kyriacou, 2009; Redlo, 2021; Reed & Kochan, 2006; Stauffer, 2020). However, this study revealed that the facilities were yet to recruit qualified secondary school teachers since primary teachers were also teaching secondary classes. The untrained educators complemented the few qualified primary teachers. Some of these untrained teachers were inmates who were volunteering. The study revealed that the involvement of unqualified inmates as teachers was counterproductive since they were teaching out of the experience. Training is essential for someone to work effectively as a teacher (Kyriacou, 2009; Reed & Kochan, 2006). Moreover, this study found that most inmates involved as teachers were themselves secondary school dropouts in these young offenders' centres.

Furthermore, the use of uniformed prison officers as educators is a common phenomenon in many countries' correctional facilities in Africa (Ajah & Ugwuoke, 2018; Bella et al., 2010; Ismaila, 2020; Johnson, 2015; Rupande & Ndolo, 2014). However, this study found that the young offenders, as clients of these services, did not perceive uniformed prison officers as the right people to work as educators in their educational space. It was revealed that many uniformed teachers were often absent from their teaching duties due to other prison work commitments. The lack of educators' seriousness was further confirmed by the educators who participated in this study. The educators justified the malpractice as due to the fact that the MPS did not have teaching posts in its official establishment. Thus, those officers working as educators had other official responsibilities, mainly as security officers in the safe custody division. Therefore, when their official guard duties were demanded, they had no choice but to miss their teaching schedules. Additionally, the study found that some uniformed correctional officials physically and emotionally abused and ill-treated the students. Therefore, most young offenders preferred being taught by qualified civilian teachers and their fellow inmates than uniformed correctional staff, in contrast to previous studies in which inmates commended uniformed teachers (Kajawo, 2019; Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022).

The lack of human and physical resources also made prison education unattractive, often resulting in many incarcerated school-aged young people not registering and dropping out of school. This poor quality of education is similar to the one the Marxists labelled as the proletariat's education provided by the *bourgeoisie* as an oppression tool of the marginalised groups in society (Levitas, 2012). Previous studies also concur with this study's findings regarding the inadequacy of resources in African correctional education programmes (Ajah & Ugwuoke, 2018; Bella et al., 2010; Ismaila, 2020; Rupande & Ndolo, 2014). In Nigeria, Bella et al. (2010) reveal that Nigeria's juvenile justice system was performing poorly because the education offered in many juvenile facilities was marred with many problems, including the inadequacy of school infrastructure, teachers, funds and lack of proper policies. Similar challenges were reported in Uganda, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Zambia in young prisoners' centres (Ajah & Ugwuoke, 2018; Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017; Mwenya & Chibomba, 2019; Samanyanga, 2016). These findings show that prisoners' education programmes operate with limited budgets in many jurisdictions.

### **7.3.2 Effects of incarceration environment on quality of education in YORCs**

This study found that the correctional environment was an essential variable in effective correctional education. The environment in which an education facility is located plays a critical role in the quality of education provided. For learning to occur, correctional facilities need to provide a safe and peaceful atmosphere, not oppressive, and a climate of high expectations, trust and care (Ornstein & Levine, 2008; Warr, 2016). This study revealed disparities as regards correctional environments among the five young offenders' centres in Malawi. The survey and interview results and the researcher's observations confirmed that the modern-built and city-situated facilities provided at least a better learning environment for the incarcerated young people for their educational goals than the other three (NGO-supported, gender-mixed and pure-farming facilities). These two centres had well-built classroom blocks with desks, though they were inadequate. The two facilities also had a good number of qualified teachers (uniformed officers) compared to the others, even though they were inadequate. Above all, the facilities' main activity for

inmates was education. They did not have farms attached to them; thus, students had all time to attend classes and study.

In contrast, the study revealed that the environment at the remaining three facilities (NGO-supported, gender-mixed and pure-farming facilities) was generally not conducive to education. Students complained of noise and disturbances within the classroom areas and cells, as well as poor diet and overcrowding. The study also revealed that it was difficult for examination candidates to study at night due to the cell by-laws that prohibit cell members from being awake for security purposes. The mixing of school-going with non-school-going prisoners in overcrowded cells made it worse since it was challenging to manage the non-school inmates who usually made noises that disrupted those examination candidates' studying. Previous studies in African countries have also reported these environmental challenges. The challenges include scarcity of quiet places for students to study or read, congestion and numerous disruptions to schooling caused by the archaic prison laws and limited class periods (e.g. Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017; Gona et al., 2014; Hopkins & Farley, 2015; Mwenya & Chibomba, 2019). Prisons are naturally noisy, congested, disorienting, depressing and hostile environments which are unlikely to be a suitable learning environment for students if left without serious checking (Gona et al., 2014; Hopkins & Farley, 2015).

Furthermore, the prison environment was also perceived as not conducive in this study due to the physical abuse and ill-treatment that the incarcerated young people reported having been experiencing. Literature indicates that rehabilitation centres ought not to be arenas of harsh and inhumane treatment of offenders but for their rehabilitation (Cullen & Gilbert, 2013; Durrant, 2018; Duwe, 2017). This study's findings at the modern-built and city-situated facilities and the female section at the gender-mixed facility did not show any physical abuse or ill-treatment. The survey and interview results indicated that male inmates at these two facilities and female inmates incarcerated in prisons were treated well, even though the majority were just staying idle within the four walls.

However, the lived experiences of young offenders at the remaining three male facilities revealed that inhumane treatment prevailed at some YORCs in Malawi. Both current inmates and their released counterparts at NGO-supported, gender-mixed and pure-farming facilities complained of the harsh treatment they experienced perpetrated by some prison officers and prisoners' leaders (the *nyapalas*), especially when working in the maize fields. This inhumane treatment also contributed to their lack of interest in enrolling in school. Participants used terms like 'butchery', 'slavery', '*ntchito yakalavula gaga*' (hard labour) and 'bullying' to describe their lived experiences. They explained that they were whipped and forced to work beyond their capacity. It was revealed that the NGO-supported facility had a place called the 'butchery' for corporal discipline and punishment by the *nyapalas*. Unfortunately, these harsh treatments were more likely to be inflicted on inmates who were seen as committed to education since some prison officers and the *nyapalas* considered inmates as not deserving educational opportunities while serving their sentences. An offender committed to academic studies was often considered as just avoiding work.

Literature indicates that the harsh treatments in prisons "brutalise prisoners, humiliate them, and educate them in the ways of crime" rather than rehabilitating them (Cullen & Gilbert, 2013, p. 71). These are the conditions that Marxists observed to disadvantage the already unprivileged youth from acquiring similar education accessed by others. The harsh treatments could demoralise and dehumanise young offenders, making them not see the value of education. As already suggested, this is a blatant abuse of children's constitutional rights. This implies that the general environment in YORCs in Malawi did not provide the UNESCO-recommended educational space that could "engage, enable and empower" the incarcerated young people to enrich their lives (UNESCO, 2021, p. 97).

#### **7.4 INCARCERATION AND EDUCATION VERSUS RE-ENTRY PROSPECTS**

More than 95% of incarcerated people will one day be released and reintegrated back into society (Davis, 2019; James, 2015; Li, 2018). Once released, studies agree that ex-incarcerated young people often face numerous barriers to successful

reintegration into society when they are not adequately prepared (Blomberg et al., 2011; Clark et al., 2011; Hancock et al., 2018; Jäggi & Kliewer, 2020; Lambie & Randell, 2013; Unruh et al., 2009). The integrated results of this study revealed that, despite the incarcerated young people's high likelihood of facing post-release challenges, education was still perceived as the most useful of all the activities young offenders were involved in during their stay in the YORCs in Malawi.

#### **7.4.1 The usefulness of education as a pre-release incarceration activity**

The study found that correctional education was perceived as beneficial to incarcerated young people for their post-release outcomes. Moreover, the school-attending young offenders indicated that the education programme was beneficial to them. The results in the national examinations of more than a 50% pass rate provided tangible evidence that a certain population of inmates in young offenders facilities in Malawi were benefiting from correctional education. As a result, some young offenders, especially at the modern-built and city-situated facilities, generally perceived their facilities as rehabilitation-oriented since they provided them with educational opportunities they had not had in their communities. It was revealed that access to education improved the involved incarcerated young offenders' knowledge, social skills and attitudes toward life, thereby enhancing their rehabilitation chances. This finding concurs with what was found in many studies elsewhere that education enhances the rehabilitation of an individual through the benefits accruing from obtaining formal certificates as well as knowledge, skills and new attitudes, which also improves their decision-making (Blomberg et al., 2011; Lambie & Randell, 2013). This finding was also consistent with the Marxists' idea of education in *The Communist Manifesto*, which states that free education ought to be accessible to all young souls (Marx & Engels, 2018).

The study also revealed that it was highly likely for a released person who is provided with post-release support to continue their education outside prisons. In this study, most school-attending incarcerated young people indicated continuing with their education both at secondary school and tertiary education levels after release if they

were supported. Others envisioned their post-release outcomes as getting employment using the qualifications they obtained from prisons. The study triangulated these plans with the already released youths' lived experiences. This study confirmed that out of the 17 released young people who were involved in education in correctional facilities; six reported that they continued pursuing their education goals at both secondary and tertiary levels immediately after their release. However, out of the six, only four were still in school during this study. These four young people reported having received tremendous support from a certain NGO or their families. The released young people who failed to continue their education after their release reported a lack of post-release support as the main contributing factor. This result shows that young people needed post-release support to continue their education after their release.

Several studies agree that education as a rehabilitation tool is more effective when post-release support is provided as part of the transition process (Coker, 2020; Gary, 2014; Hartwell et al., 2010; Shoham et al., 2017). Post-release support improves ex-offenders' educational outcomes in community schools upon their re-entry, which has the prospect of reducing crime and recidivism (Coker, 2020). Some scholars argue that post-release outcomes are likely to be affected by the family support received by the juvenile before and after their release (Graffam et al., 2004; Hourani et al., 2019). Graffam et al. (2004) argue that released offenders with great family support do better in their communities than those with less or no support. The successful reintegration of school-going released young people requires a deliberate offender transition programme to assist them to re-enter and stay in community schools (Kubek et al., 2020; Lea & Abrams, 2017; Robison et al., 2017; Tan et al., 2019). From this debate, one point that stands out is the importance of post-release support to the school-going youth, thus, pointing to the need for collaborative efforts amongst all stakeholders such as the correctional services, communities and families (Garfinkel, 2010; Martinez & Abrams, 2013).

## **7.4.2 Incarcerated youths' post-release challenges**

The study revealed several post-release challenges that the youths incarcerated in YORCs were likely to face based on the expressed post-release fears of the incarcerated young people and the lived experiences of those already released. These challenges included (a) inadequacy of the correctional system to prepare young people for release due to lack of correctional pre-release support activities; (b) lack of proper correctional-community transition support during release; (c) lack of post-release support to continue with their education; (d) lack of post-release family support; and (e) reduction of opportunities due to their criminal record.

### *7.4.2.1 Inadequacy of correctional system to prepare young people for release*

The modern rehabilitation theories (e.g. RNR and GLM) emphasise that offender management ought to be guided by a comprehensive rehabilitation plan (Andrews et al., 2011; Ward et al., 2012b). This individualised plan ought to consider the offender's criminogenic risk factors and incorporate the offender's strengths and relevant environmental factors to provide the right competencies and resources necessary to help individuals realise their pro-social goals, thus equipping them with enough resources for success after their release (Durrant, 2018; Mallion & Wood, 2020; Ward & Brown, 2004). The young offender needs to be assisted to achieve a new meaningful lifestyle by identifying their areas of competence that need improvement for the successful fulfilment of their Good Life Plans, such as re-education, re-socialisation and the reinstatement of full citizenship after their release (McNeill, 2012; Ward & Gannon, 2006). Therefore, a typical Good Life Plan for a juvenile offender of school age ought to integrate education with other activities in response to his or her criminogenic needs.

However, this study revealed that many young offenders (both male and female) were 'warehoused' in YORCs without being involved in meaningful rehabilitation activities, apart from a few who reported education, religious activities and other technical work programmes. Thus, YORCs were generally viewed as more punitive than rehabilitation-oriented in the NGO-supported, gender-mixed and pure-farming

facilities. Jäggi and Kliewer (2020) argue that young offenders' involvement in correctional education enhances their chances of anticipated increased productive activity (in the form of continuing with schooling or working) and reduced criminal behaviour after their release. Blomberg et al. (2011) also report that the incarcerated young offenders who were successful in their educational programmes within the correctional facility were more likely to resume schooling and successfully transition from criminal behaviour after their release. Conversely, the young offenders' risk of reoffending in the community is increased when they are released from penitentiary facilities without the necessary education and other soft skills (Lambie & Randell, 2013). This study confirmed these findings from the literature because the released young people who were not involved in correctional education reported struggling to reintegrate into their communities in contrast to their school-attending colleagues, regardless of whether they acquired a certificate in the facility.

This study's survey and interview findings further corroborated that inmates at YORCs experienced a lack of pre-release activities and support during their stay in the facilities. The facilities did not have deliberate programmes to prepare individuals for community re-entry when they were about to be released, apart from small projects by a few NGOs that targeted a few inmates. This gap resulted in released young people facing many challenges in their reintegration processes. GLM, as a modern rehabilitation theory, advocates for the offenders' involvement in pre-release programmes and support. In the GLM's personalised, detailed guidelines for offenders' intervention by Ward and Gannon (2006), the fourth phase involves evaluating the offender's environment (Ward & Gannon, 2006). In this stage, the offender's release location and accommodation arrangements ought to be evaluated and considered to be included in the individual's Good Life Plan for their successful reintegration process. These include schooling or employment options, leisure events, community aspects and available support. This phase helps in planning for the proper transitioning of the offender into the community (George, 2016; Ward & Gannon, 2006; Willis & Ward, 2013).



Studies have confirmed that proper transitioning of the released young offenders to community schools or other productive activities can significantly reduce reoffending (Clark et al., 2011; Hancock et al., 2018; Unruh et al., 2009). According to Hancock et al. (2018), proper offender transitioning not only requires the completion of the pre-release programmes, such as involvement in schooling and work skills training but also ensuring that the offender secures a place to stay before release and is followed up, particularly for those with no family structures. However, in this study, the prison service did not have pre-release services for young offenders. The majority of offenders worked on the farms as a routine until the day of their release due to a lack of correctional pre-release support activities.

Instead of rehabilitation programming significantly impacting young people's desistance from crime after their release, this study's findings revealed some positive deterrence effects of punitive incarceration. The survey and interview results revealed that most young people (currently incarcerated and their released counterparts) decided to strive to desist from recommitting other crimes to avoid experiencing the same hurdles and harsh treatment in prisons they experienced. This unexpected and unplanned incarceration outcome could be called 'accidental reformation' since it could happen accidentally as a result of personal change due to pains felt in prisons (Bradley, 2003; Burton et al., 2005; Durrant, 2018). However, Durrant (2018) doubts the accidental reformation since punitive regimes are often ineffective in reducing recidivism and completely deterring crime because the punitive strength of criminal sanctions is simply insufficient to deter offenders. These results show that efforts need to be put into offenders' rehabilitation.

#### *7.4.2.2 Lack of proper correctional-community transition support during the release*

Apart from comprehensive pre-release interventions, offenders need to be provided with enough resources to reach their registered release locations (Denney et al., 2014; Luther et al., 2011; Vigne et al., 2008). Vigne et al. (2008) argue that clothing, food and transportation are the essential immediate needs of a person leaving the correctional facility. They need to have a means of reaching their homes in good

civilian clothes with some food to sustain them on the journey. Section 114 of the Malawi Prisons Act states that the prison authorities need to provide for the travelling expenses of every person being released from their facilities (GoM, 2018). The Prisons Regulation 141 further directs the prison authorities to provide the released persons with sufficient food or subsistence allowance to assist them in reaching their registered destinations.

However, this study revealed inconsistencies in the handling of released young people. The study found that most released young people faced many challenges during their release because they were not provided with adequate transport, clothing and food for their effective re-entry into their communities. Even though some released ex-inmates reported to have been given transport money, the majority reported that they were not provided with any means of travelling. Thus, some had to travel by foot, covering hundreds of kilometres without food and wearing their old, ragged clothes. Those young people who reported having been given transport money also complained that the money was always not enough to help them reach their destinations. These challenges resulted in some individuals not reaching their registered release locations, thus being forced to join the same antisocial peer groups for survival assistance (e.g. studies by Hartwell et al., 2010; Martinez & Abrams, 2013). If the MPS failed to provide the released young people with transport to safely reach their homes as the first step for their community re-entry, correctional post-release support requiring a lot of resources was not to be guaranteed.

This study concurs with previous studies that released individuals have high levels of vulnerability. When their basic needs are not met, the released individuals are more likely to re-engage in risk or antisocial behaviours such as committing economic crimes for survival such as shoplifting and engaging in drugs and substance abuse, amongst others (Denney et al., 2014; Luther et al., 2011; Vigne et al., 2008). Women might also engage in prostitution or sex work for immediate survival (Dastile & Agozino, 2019; Luther et al., 2011). This study found that ex-schooling young offenders' struggles during their release and re-entry were the beginning of their post-release educational challenges. Therefore, this study did not concur with Denney et

al.'s (2014) findings in their USA study that immediate basic needs such as transport and accommodation are not the major barriers to offenders' community re-entry since various non-profit organisations often provide them. In Malawi, these immediate needs were considered major barriers to the released offenders' community re-entry since they were hardly any non-profit organisations taking care of them. As a result, inmates were released without any plan or support systems to enable them to reach their homes. If the released young people cannot be satisfied with their immediate needs of transport, food and clothing, educational needs would be considered unattainable luxuries.

#### *7.4.2.3 Lack of post-release support to continue with their education*

This study revealed that most school-going individuals usually have ambitions of continuing with their education to complete either secondary school or university levels. However, there were no post-release support programmes provided by the correctional service at all five facilities. The correctional service's responsibility often ended immediately after the person was released. The correctional service did not try to follow up with the released persons to check how they were adapting to their communities. As a result, most released school-going individuals who failed to get support from their families or NGOs for tuition and other academic expenses did not resume schooling in their communities or dropped out afterwards. The facilities' failure to provide post-release support is contrary to the international minimum standards on the management of correctional facilities (UN, 1990; 2015b).

The minimum standards emphasise the need for post-release services for former offenders. The Nelson Mandela Rule 90 stipulates that "the duty of society does not end with a prisoner's release..." since the government and civil society have an extended duty of providing post-release and aftercare services to the released ex-offender (UN, 2015b, p. 27). Studies also concur that education programmes for young offenders are more effective when post-release services are included as part of the transition process in a rehabilitation programme (Coker, 2020; Gary, 2014; Hartwell et al., 2010; Shoham et al., 2017). Post-release services can improve young

people's educational outcomes in community schools upon their re-entry, which have the prospects of reducing crime and recidivism (Coker, 2020; Tan et al., 2019). This study shows that released young offenders generally face difficulties in reintegrating into society after their release. The findings point to the need for the introduction of post-release services to the released young people so that they are encouraged to continue with their education after their release.

#### *7.4.2.4 Lack of post-release family support*

Most Africans hold the philosophy that family is an integral part of the indigenous life of society since it is where forgiveness and love ought to be derived to support the offenders (Johnson & Quan-Baffour, 2016). The integrated results of this study showed that post-release outcomes such as continued schooling of the once-incarcerated released young people were impacted by the kind of support they received from their families before and after their release. Family support for the individuals' continued pursuance of educational goals is essential in light of the previous findings that the MPS did not provide any post-release support programmes to the released individuals. Graffam et al. (2004) argue that released youths with excellent family support do better in their communities than those with little or no support. The lack of a family support system, coupled with the non-existence of proper educational programming and community support, is likely to lead to recidivism (Hourani et al., 2019). This study also observed that many young offenders relied on their families for their schooling expenses. However, the study found that in many families, even though they were willing to support these released individuals, poverty made them fail to assist. This result is conceivable in Malawi, a country where more than 70% of the people live below the international poverty line of USD1.90 per day (The World Bank, 2020).

Consequently, many young offenders dropped out of school to stay idle at home or engage in piece work or street vending to support their families economically. Moreover, some released individuals resumed their breadwinners' roles as soon as they were released, having no time to pursue their education goals. For most of them,

these activities were in the same criminogenic environments as their previous offences, which could easily make them fall into the previous criminal traps again. These results show that lack of a family support system coupled with lack of proper educational programming and community support likely lead released individuals to recidivism (Hourani et al., 2019).

#### *7.4.2.5 Reduction of opportunities due to the criminal record*

In this study, many incarcerated young offenders expressed fear of having limited economic opportunities due to the criminal record they were to acquire after their release. Survey and interview results showed that some young offenders were not motivated to pursue their education in prison because they heard that the certificates acquired in correctional facilities would not get them any jobs outside. Moreover, the country's high unemployment rates haunted them as they thought it would be difficult for them to get employment with their criminal records. These perceptions partly contributed to the low rates of inmates' enrolment in YORCs' schools, even in the modern-built and city-situated facilities, where the learning environment was reported to be generally positive. These findings were supported by the findings from the released young people's lived experiences. It was found that the majority were just idle or involved in temporary piece work because it was difficult for an ex-offender to get a job. Malawi's current largest employer is the government. However, even if the released young offenders had acquired good certificates, their conviction record restricted them from applying for most government employment opportunities. This status had a way of discouraging incarcerated young people from enrolling in school, as well as promoting recidivism.

It is for these reasons that rehabilitation theories such as GLM and RNR have been criticised for lacking explicit explanations on other factors beyond the individual that can cause recidivism. It is argued that even in jurisdictions that are religiously using these models, there are considerable barriers to access to social amenities and resources placed before those released offenders who are expected to live meaningful and fulfilling lives (George, 2016). The majority of released convicted

persons are denied the resources guaranteed to ordinary citizens. They are denied access to the same resources that would enable them to conform easily to the expected societal norms and morals (Manza & Uggen, 2006; Segall, 2011). This situation is one of the barriers to successful post-release lives of previously incarcerated young people. However, studies reveal that securing employment after the ex-schooling offender's release assists them in successful re-entry into society, thereby reducing potential recidivism (Hassan & Rosly, 2021; Newton et al., 2018). The released young persons need post-release support.

## **7.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter has presented an integrated discussion of this mixed methods study's quantitative and qualitative findings. The chapter was organised based on the three research questions, which were generally aimed at investigating how the incarceration of young offenders in Malawi correctional facilities impacts on their rights and access to quality education. The findings reveal a significant corroboration between the study's quantitative and qualitative results. The qualitative results have further explained, triangulated and raised other issues beyond the quantitative results as reflected in the previous Chapters 5 and 6. While there are notable practices in Malawi's YORCs, the results demonstrate significant challenges in the accessibility and availability of education and how incarceration impacted the young offenders' supposed enjoyment of the right to quality education.

The quantitative results showed that most young offenders incarcerated in Malawi penitentiaries are uneducated and unstable economically, they, therefore, need comprehensive rehabilitation programming that includes education. However, the five YORCs did not provide any planned rehabilitation programmes. A few activities such as education, vocational and technical skills training and religious activities were haphazardly delivered without any order or design as advocated by modern rehabilitation approaches such as GLM and RNR as well as the systems and Marxist theories. Even though many young offenders preferred education, the reality was that the majority were forced to work on prison farms, denying them a proper opportunity

for education. These findings were consistent with the qualitative findings from interviews and researchers' observations. Nonetheless, both quantitative and qualitative results of this study confirmed that farming as an activity was not necessarily bad, although the punitive and coercive aspects used were counterproductive due to the lack of planned rehabilitation programming. It was observed that farming could benefit young offenders if used as one of the interventions that address their particular needs aimed at food security and productivity in individualised rehabilitation programming.

Even though education was the only perceived meaningful programme on offer in many YORCs in Malawi, it was also viewed as of low quality. This was because the resources were generally inadequate, and the general conditions of incarceration were harsh on young offenders at most facilities, thus largely not conducive to education. The facilities were generally perceived more as punishment centres than rehabilitative ones. Though the findings revealed some positive deterrence effects of punitive incarceration, the findings generally suggest that a lack of proper rehabilitation programming that includes education has a negative effect on the released young offenders in terms of their post-release outcomes, such as education continuity and self-reliance in the community. The next chapter presents a summary and conclusions of the study.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **8.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

This chapter presents the summary, key findings and conclusions, as well as recommendations made from this study. The chapter begins by summarising the research questions investigated in this study that aimed at analysing the impact of incarceration on young people's access to quality education in Malawi's correctional facilities. It then highlights the key findings of the study and their conclusions. The chapter is followed by a section on the study's implications and recommendations on theory and practice in correctional education. It then presents the limitations and strengths of the study. The chapter concludes by suggesting the areas requiring further research based on the findings.

#### **8.2 SUMMARIES OF RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND KEY FINDINGS**

This section presents summaries of the study's background, research objectives and questions, and methodologies. The section then presents the key findings.

##### **8.2.1 Summary of the research background and study questions**

Several studies attest to the fact that correctional education is beneficial to offenders. Nonetheless, studies on the impact of incarceration on young offenders' education access and rights particularly in Africa and other developing countries were found to be limited. This study contributes to the knowledge gap in that regard. This thesis aimed at investigating how the incarceration of young offenders in Malawi penitentiary facilities impacts on their rights and access to quality education. It explored the activities that young offenders were involved in while incarcerated in penitentiary facilities in Malawi to ascertain if they were engaged in meaningful rehabilitative activities, including education. It also analysed the effects of the penitentiary system's environment and resources on the young offenders' right and access to quality



education and how incarceration and education impact on the young offenders' continued pursuance of their educational or career goals after their release in Malawi. The main research question was: What is the impact of incarceration on young offenders' rights and access to quality education in Malawi's correctional facilities? In responding to this research question, the study tackled the following sub-questions:

- To what extent are young offenders engaged in meaningful rehabilitative activities, including education, during their incarceration in the correctional facilities in Malawi?
- How do the availability of resources and the environment in the correctional systems affect the young offenders' rights and access to quality education?
- What are the effects of education provided to the young offenders on their continued pursuance of their educational or career goals after their release from prisons in Malawi?

Through these questions, the study argues for the need to re-imagine and re-configure the role of education accessible in correctional facilities in the rehabilitation and reintegration of young offenders. The MPS opened YORCs across the country where young people are lodged. These centres are supposed to aim at enabling these young persons to return to society as fully functioning individuals. Therefore, the study was motivated by the growing concerns about the incarceration of school-going young people and the curiosity to find out if these young offenders' stay in prison impacted their rights and access to quality education. To respond to the research questions, four theories; Marxist, systems and modern rehabilitation theories (GLM and RNR), provided the theoretical framework for investigating how the incarceration of young offenders impacts juveniles' rights and access to quality education. They interchangeably guided the researcher in responding to the three research questions, with GLM anchoring the discussions as the lead theory.

The study used the pragmatic research paradigm, thus adopting a mixed-methods research approach. Within this approach, it used the convergent design with greater

emphasis on the qualitative strand in addressing the research problem [QUAL + quan]. This research design was chosen since this study aimed at analysing the impact of incarceration and correctional programmes on young offenders' access and the right to quality education. The gathering of detailed information on these issues required the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study involved 340 participants from a population of 753 young offenders incarcerated at five YORCs in Malawi for both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The study also involved educators and previously incarcerated young people released from the five YORCs.

### **8.2.2 Summary of the main research findings**

The key research findings are summarised below based on the three research questions guiding this study.

- a) The study findings suggested that correctional education was beneficial to those incarcerated young people involved. The study found that education was available at some YORCs in Malawi. The findings revealed that education was accessible to whosoever showed interest to enrol (when it was available) even though institutional challenges limited enrolment. It was also noted that many school-going young offenders considered education as beneficial to their rehabilitation and reintegration needs. This was evidenced by the passing of the national examinations and the continued pursuance of educational goals by some incarcerated young people after their release. These findings suggest that prisons, instead of being seen as places of doom, could be spaces where dark clouds might have a silver lining for those young people engaged and benefiting from the education programmes.
- b) However, this study's integrated findings suggested that young offenders were not significantly engaged in meaningful rehabilitative activities, including education in the correctional facilities in Malawi. Despite the revelation that most young offenders were incarcerated for economic, violence and sex-related offences due to lack of education, poverty, dysfunctional family backgrounds, peer pressure and

childhood abuse which point to psychosocial problems, the study found no evidence of meaningful efforts in the YORCs of addressing these *criminogenic* needs. There was no evidence of case management and deliberate individualised comprehensive rehabilitation programming that is expected to target the identification of the offenders' underlying socio-psychological needs as advocated by modern rehabilitation approaches such as GLM and RNR. As a result, the existing education, farming and technical skills programmes were haphazardly attended by young offenders, with farming forced on all inmates at three facilities.

Even though education was the only perceived meaningful programme on offer, this study revealed a huge inequality in the provision of education at YORCs in Malawi. Most young offenders (76%) were not schooling in a population with a mean age of 19.8 years and mode age of 18 years (range= 16-26) that needed education for their future. The inequality was in terms of (1) levels of education, (2) geographical locations, and (3) gender. In terms of levels of education available, the findings revealed that the education provided was limited to basic education, leaving out tertiary education despite some inmates needing it. Geographically, the study revealed that education was not completely accessible at one facility (the pure-farming facility) since all inmates were forced to work on the farm without educational opportunities. Regarding gender, the study revealed a huge disparity in educational opportunities between male and female offenders since education was not accessible at all in the young female offenders' section.

The study revealed that the low enrolment rate in education among incarcerated young people was also due to the lack of proper counselling, guidance and motivation to arouse educational interest in young offenders with school dropout and illiteracy backgrounds. The findings of this study suggested that prior schooling background determined the probability of an individual enrolling in correctional education. The findings also revealed that the involvement of the inmates in coercive farming activities also contributed to the low school enrolment rates in the young offenders' centres.

- c) Although the laws and correctional policies in Malawi stipulate the significance of quality correctional education, especially for school-aged young offenders, this study revealed that YORCs did not have adequate resources and a conducive environment for quality education. The findings revealed some disparities and inadequacy of essential teaching and learning resources such as library services, classrooms, prescribed textbooks, science laboratories, and other accessories such as books, pens, notebooks and mathematical instruments as the hindering provision of quality education. The study further revealed the inadequacy and absence of qualified teachers in the YORCs' schools since the service did not have posts for teachers. This finding meant that education was operated as a temporary initiative, showing a lack of authorities' commitment to YORCs' education. As a result, the students were taught by unqualified uniformed staff and fellow inmates as volunteers. Regarding the quality of educators, this study found that students at YORCs' schools did not perceive uniformed prison officers as the right people to work as educators in their educational space due to their general non-commitment to their teaching assignments and cruelty to the students. The study's findings further suggested that the educationally positive correctional environment was an essential variable in effective correctional education. The facilities which did not have farms were perceived as providing a more conducive learning environment than those with farms. This perception was generally noted because their main activity was entirely education. However, students complained of physical abuse and ill-treatment, disturbances within the classroom areas, cell noise, poor diet, and overcrowding affecting their education quality.
- d) The integrated results revealed that, despite the incarcerated young people's high likelihood of facing post-release challenges, education was perceived as helpful incarceration activity essential for their post-release outcomes. The findings suggested that it was highly likely for a released person who is provided with post-release support to continue their education outside prisons. Even though many school-attending inmates embraced plans to continue their education after their release, the reality was that the majority experienced challenges in their re-entry and reintegration processes. The challenges were due to the absence of post-

release support which disadvantaged them from continuing their education, getting a job or embarking on entrepreneurship. As a result, few released young people who received support from NGOs or their families were able to continue with their education after their release.

In light of the challenges, this study proposed a seven-phased rehabilitation framework (see 8.4.10) applicable in developing countries like Malawi to guide the incarceration and rehabilitation of young offenders from their admission to their release, and beyond through individualised rehabilitation programming.

### **8.3 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study analysed how the incarceration of young offenders in Malawi correctional facilities impacts on their rights and access to quality education. The study addressed the following main research question: What is the impact of incarceration on young offenders' rights and access to quality education in Malawi's correctional facilities? Based on data generated from the young offenders' survey, the researcher's observations and interviews, the study explored the meaningfulness of the rehabilitative activities in which the young offenders are involved, eventually zeroing into education to analyse how its access, quality and further pursuance are impacted by incarceration and its environment. Based on the study's results and key findings, the following conclusions are made to respond to the study's research questions.

Overall, the study found that the incarceration of school-aged young offenders had a relatively negative effect on their rights and access to quality education in five YORCs in Malawi. Comparatively, some young offenders' centres strived to provide educational opportunities to their incarcerated young people resulting in benefits accruing through the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes as well as national examinations certificates which were essential for their post-release outcomes. However, due to a lack of comprehensive offender rehabilitation programming, 76% of incarcerated school-aged young people were not enrolled in any education programme at the five YORCs. The study further found a huge inequality in education provision at YORCs in Malawi due to non-conducive environments, and limited

access to educational programmes since inmates at one male facility and all female inmates were denied any access to education chiefly due to inadequacy of resources, thereby partly contributing to low enrolment rates. Due to a lack of rehabilitation activities, most young people were not motivated to further their education. Instead, they were forced to work in prison farms.

Furthermore, the study found that incarcerated young people were highly likely to face post-release challenges when they did not access pre and post-release support. Likewise, it was highly likely for a released person who is provided with post-release support to continue their education outside prisons. However, the study found that many school-attending ex-inmates experienced challenges in their re-entry and reintegration processes mainly due to the absence of comprehensive offender rehabilitation, thus disadvantaging them from continuing with their education, getting a job or embarking on entrepreneurship.

In view of the challenges posed by the incarceration of young offenders to their access to quality education during and after their incarceration, this thesis has found significant evidence to suggest that incarceration in YORCs in Malawi, together with its environment, lack of meaningful rehabilitation programming, and inadequacy of resources had a significant negative impact on the majority of young offenders' rights and access to quality education. However, the study is optimistic that education is the most useful incarceration tool in the rehabilitation mix for young offenders' successful post-release outcomes.

#### **8.4 THE STUDY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings of this study question the meaningfulness of the rehabilitation function of the correctional service, particularly among school-aged young people in the YORCs. It questions the ability of the YORCs to provide education to the incarcerated youth, similar in quality to that enjoyed by their colleagues outside penitentiaries for their successful post-release outcomes, such as continued schooling, employment opportunities, entrepreneurship skills and sustainable livelihoods. The findings identify significant challenges in the whole incarceration process contributing to low

enrolment rates of school-aged young offenders in education programmes. Durrant (2018) argues that correctional facilities should not be punishment centres but arenas for rehabilitation and education. These findings, therefore, raise significant issues that need urgent attention and further debate in ensuring that the opportunities to positively impact on the lives of incarcerated young people through education and other activities are harnessed and utilised. The following sections include the study's implications and recommendations for policy and practice.

#### **8.4.1 The need for rehabilitation and education frameworks and policies**

This study found that the MPS did not have specific rehabilitation and education policies guiding offenders' rehabilitation and education activities in the service, except for the strategic plan that expired in 2020. The MPS still face challenges and struggles to realise the rehabilitation goal of the offenders. This implies that the constitutionally mandated rehabilitation function of the MPS had limited implementation guidelines, resulting in various facilities involving haphazard activities such as punitive farming and manual work, religious and chaplaincy, and inferior education which had little impact on the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. The findings of this study, therefore, suggest that offender rehabilitation ought to be a planned, individualised programme from admission to release and beyond. This should include a collection of psychosocial, physical and material support, including education, skills training and work programmes addressing various needs related to the incarcerated people's offending behaviour to help them lead productive and satisfying or pro-social lives (Blinkhorn et al., 2020; Durrant, 2018; Forsberg & Douglas, 2022; Wilson, 2016).

The provision of a single unorganised activity, even if it is an education programme, without complementing it with other activities that address other needs of the individuals, such as their psychosocial needs, is usually not effective in reducing reoffending (Blomberg et al., 2011; Durrant, 2018; Hollin & Palmer, 2006; Wilson, 2016). This implies that the MPS needs to develop deliberate and specific policies to guide the implementation of their constitutional mandate of rehabilitation to enhance

the offenders' post-release success. These policies must be based on modern rehabilitation research and theories, customised in the local contexts to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness. Most of all, the government needs to accelerate and endorse the review and revision of the prison legislation introduced in 2014 and not yet finalised (Kajawo, 2021). The current Prisons Act was enacted in the colonial period in 1956 (GoM, 2018; Kajawo, 2021). There have been many developments in the correctional management field lately emphasising the need for comprehensive rehabilitation and education of offenders which renders the 1956 legislation out of date. The act of parliament must be urgently reviewed to meet contemporary demands. Even though prison reforms have not been the priorities of many policymakers, the development of rehabilitation policies should go together with the review of the legislation to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of the particular policies (Kajawo, 2021).

#### **8.4.2 Education must be accessible to all young offenders**

This study found that 76% of all inmates at the five facilities were not enrolled in education programmes because, among other factors, education was still not provided at some facilities. Instead, some school-aged inmates were engaged in farming at the expense of pursuing their educational goals. This study also found inequality in the education provision based on gender since no education programmes were offered in the female section of the only facility that had female inmates. Female inmates were generally idle and not engaged in any meaningful activity until the day of their release. The gender disparity in education provision was unacceptable in the twenty-first century. It is unacceptably shocking that the country still had a YORC that denied young people access to education in the twenty-first century. School-aged young people were being 'warehoused' without an opportunity for education access, even though some inmates were desperate for it. Listening to the voices of the school-aged youth who were working as enslaved people on prison farms while being denied access to education was a reminder of African colonial history. Studies all over the world single out educational activities as the pillar of effective young offenders' rehabilitation and reintegration (Coates, 2016; Durrant,



2018; Gehring, 2017; Finlay & Bates, 2018; Johnson, 2022a; McMahon & Jump, 2017). Both male and female young people incarcerated at YORCs deserve access to quality education (Hawley et al., 2013; Jäggi & Kliewer, 2020). Thus, equality and equity need to be exercised in the provision of education opportunities in penitentiaries. Where resources are scarce, at least similar educational resources accessed by male offenders should be equally and equitably made accessible to female offenders by correctional regimes. The efforts should be towards making education the primary rehabilitation activity at every YORC for both genders.

#### **8.4.3 Expand the choices of education or schooling available**

This study found that education provided at YORCs was limited to basic education (primary and secondary schools), thus leaving out tertiary education, which some inmates still needed. The implication is that this group of potential students were left out without any rehabilitation activity. Studies show that offenders involved in post-secondary education had higher rates of post-release success than those involved in only basic education (Bozick et al., 2018; Davis et al., 2014; Davis, 2019). This is because, despite the fact that ex-offenders are highly likely to have challenges getting employed due to their applications being rejected, the evidence shows that a college qualification can enhance their prospects of better employment and good pay after their release (Duwe & Clark 2017; Farley & Pike, 2018). The incarcerated young people can benefit from tertiary education.

Malawi can introduce tertiary education, learning from South Africa and Uganda, where, apart from basic education, tertiary and vocational education programmes are provided to inmates, including those at YORCs (Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017; Johnson, 2015; Jules-Macquet, 2014; Teane, 2022). In South Africa, Johnson (2015) argues that offenders obtain university certificates, diplomas and degrees in correctional facilities mostly through open and distance learning offered by various universities, including UNISA. The university provides these higher educational services using correctional services hubs established in various correctional facilities in South Africa which are equipped with computers and the internet (Johnson, 2017;

Teane, 2022; Tshephe & Mbanjwa, 2022). Aheisibwe and Rukundo (2017) also report that diploma and degree study programmes are accessible by inmates in correctional facilities in Uganda in collaboration with universities such as Makerere University. Malawi could also sign agreements with universities that offer open and distance learning to provide tertiary education to inmates who need it.

#### **8.4.4 Stop forcing school-aged young offenders to work on prison farms**

This study found that young offenders involved in farming activities expressed dissatisfaction with how the activities were handled. The farming activities consumed most of their time which could have been devoted to schooling activities for the school-aged young people. For instance, their classes were often cancelled to concentrate on farming in critical agricultural periods. Moreover, young people complained that they were often too tired after harsh and painful work on the farms to proceed with their academic work. Thus, the majority just preferred to drop out or not enrol at school at all. While farming has its positive attributes in enhancing food security, seemingly farming was used as a punishment tool since inmates were ill-treated. This largely defeats the purpose of rehabilitation (Kusada, 2014; Ngozwana, 2017; Samanyanga, 2016). Incarcerated young people need to be lodged in a family-like environment with basic amenities suitable for their ages with proper quality education (Nowak, 2019).

Nonetheless, this study found that the idea of engaging incarcerated young people in farming activities was not bad if farming was used as a rehabilitation activity after understanding the particular needs of individual offenders for their pro-social and fulfilling lives after their sentences (Andrews et al., 2011; Durrant, 2018; Ward et al., 2012b). Proper rehabilitation programming with farming as an activity needs to be a voluntary non-formal educational activity involving an individual who has either completed secondary education as a post-secondary activity or is assessed to only need farming skills for their rehabilitation needs. However, the findings revealed by this study show that farming was a punishment activity. It was clear that the authorities just changed the names of the farming facilities from 'prison stations' to

'YORCs' but not the activities so that the country could be seen as to be on the right track within the global prison reforms' agenda. In reality, the YORCs were punishment centres; the "custodial warehouses misnamed penitentiaries and correctional facilities" (Cullen & Gilbert, 2013, p. 65; Maguire, 2021).

Therefore, this study recommends transferring of all school-aged young offenders from prison farms to other YORCs offering education programmes in Malawi. Rather, prison farms should lodge only adult offenders who are not interested in education, who are numbered in their thousands at the maximum security prisons and stay idle at the government's expense (MPS, 2021). School-aged young people need to be allowed to enjoy their education rights in a comparably better environment such as those provided by two facilities (the modern-built and city-situated) in this study.

#### **8.4.5 Provision of resources for young offenders' education**

This study revealed that education as an activity was not provided with adequate resources regarding qualified teachers, infrastructures and teaching and learning materials. Non-resourcing of the education function by the government translated into the provision of the proletariats' inferior and low-quality education as observed by the Marxists (Levitas, 2012). From the systems theory perspective, the primary indicator of education quality of an educational institution as a social system is the inputs (resources) provided by the environment (Garira, 2020; Garira et al., 2019; Lai & Lin, 2017). The quality of inputs usually determines the quality of the outputs and outcomes (Benowitz, 2001; Garira, 2020). Therefore, the MPS needs to allocate sufficient resources in its annual budget for the education of young people incarcerated at all YORCs. Notwithstanding the limited government budgets across African countries, this study recommends that schools at correctional facilities should be resourced and sustained with equipment, school blocks, and teaching and learning resources for effective and quality teaching and learning. For the students' academic success, the schools also need qualified and dedicated educators to teach effectively thereby enhancing young offenders' rehabilitation.

#### **8.4.6 The Ministry of Education's involvement in correctional schools**

This study found that YORCs' schools lacked resources, including materials and qualified teachers, partly because the MPS was not collaborating with the Ministry of Education in supporting the correctional schools in the education provision mandate. Even though the responsibility for providing education to incarcerated individuals was allocated to the correctional facilities (UN, 2015b), the facilities in developing countries are usually provided with meagre resources that are not enough for the basic educational necessities (Ajah & Ugwuoke, 2018; Ismaila, 2020; Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022; Rupande & Ndolo, 2014). Thus, allocating adequate funds to education is usually a challenge. However, incarcerated people do not stop being citizens of the country by virtue of their prison status. They are statistically included in the Ministry of Education budgets as school-aged young people who need free public education which is provided to citizens in the communities (UN, 2015c). Young offenders need an education that can "be integrated with the country's educational system so that after their release, they may continue their education without difficulty" (UN, 2015b, Rule 104). Non-provision of resources and support to incarcerated school-aged young people legitimises education inequality in the Marxists' view. Since the Ministry of Education has the ultimate responsibility for citizenry education, it needs to take the leading role in managing schools in prisons by providing resources and deploying qualified teachers to work as educators just like they do for community schools.

#### **8.4.7 The need for post-release educational support for released individuals**

There is a need for collaboration among the key stakeholders, including correctional service, community schools and social workers, to provide deliberate post-release support programmes, especially for the released school-going young people. Several international instruments such as the Nelson Mandela Rules (UN, 2015b), Tokyo Rules (UN, 1990), and the African Union's Ouagadougou Conference on Penal and Prison Reform in Africa declarations (2002) emphasise the need for post-release services for former offenders. The Nelson Mandela Rule 90 stipulates that "the duty

of society does not end with a prisoner's release..." since the government and civil society have an extended duty of providing post-release and aftercare services to the released ex-offender (UN, 2015b, p. 27). In this study, many ex-students of correctional schools did not continue their education because they faced multiple challenges with a lack of financial support for school costs such as tuition fees and other basic needs. However, the few released youths who received support from their families or NGOs were able to continue pursuing their educational goals.

Studies concur that education programmes for young offenders are more effective when post-release services are included as part of the transition process in a rehabilitation programme (Coker, 2020; Gary, 2014; Hartwell et al., 2010; Shoham et al., 2017). Therefore, to avoid losing gains made in the rehabilitation efforts in correctional facilities (Wolfer, 2018); there is a need to have proper re-entry strategies, interventions or support systems for the released youths. In developing countries such as Malawi, correctional services might not have the resources to carry out these post-release support services effectively. Consequently, studies have emphasised the significance of the correctional facilities' collaboration with the stakeholders at home, school and community in enhancing the young offenders' education quality and their successful post-release outcomes (Garfinkel, 2010; Haines et al., 2015; Hourani et al., 2019; Johnson, 2022a). These collaborations in post-release support can be helpful in the successful reintegration and school transitioning of the released young people from penitentiaries to their communities. In the spirit of *Ubuntu* "it takes the village to raise a child", correctional facilities in developing countries can collaborate with other community-based stakeholders in marshalling support and resources for the offenders' post-release support services.

#### **8.4.8 The need for non-custodial sentences for some school-going offenders**

Criminal justice systems need to begin considering reducing their focus on incarceration as the major correctional measure for dealing with juvenile delinquency and young people's criminality. This study found that many school-going young offenders were educationally disturbed by their incarceration for the offences they

perceived were not worth their conviction. For instance, 27% of young offenders involved in this study (n=290) were incarcerated for rape and defilement offences. The majority were arrested after impregnating their girlfriends because their parents had lodged a criminal case against them. However, some young people had to be incarcerated after their girlfriends' parents discovered their relationship and reported them to the police. Often, these incidences happened when the young men were in secondary school leading to a disruption in their academic progress, especially when incarcerated at a facility where education was not provided.

These cases could be the reasons some scholars firmly harbour the belief that correctional facilities are not good places for young souls, even if they are seriously delinquent (Lambie & Randell, 2013; Price & Turner, 2021; Swanson, 2018). Incarceration affects young offenders' mental well-being (Forrest et al., 2000). They also tear young people away from their normal schools, families and employment opportunities capable of providing support systems for their success (Faruqee, 2016; Nowak, 2019; Schaefer, 2010). Nowak (2019) observes that ages between birth and 18 years of age are crucial childhood periods in which an individual is expected to "develop their personality, their emotional relationships with others, their social and educational skills and their talents" (p. 4). These are best attained in a family setting. Nowak (2019), therefore, strongly stresses that children need to be raised in a family environment to receive love and protection since "depriving children of liberty is depriving them of their childhood" (p. 4). Farley and Pike (2018) and Faruqee (2016) therefore condemn juveniles' incarceration as an outdated approach to rehabilitation since imprisonment does more harm than good to young people.

Instead of sending each delinquent or offending young person to prison, the courts need to consider other non-custodial options suitable for individual cases. It would be rewarding for African societies to consider returning to the indigenous approaches to crime and delinquency enshrined in Ubuntu philosophy (Dastile & Agozino, 2019). In Dastile and Agozino (2019) words, youth incarceration ought to "be replaced with the Ubuntu praxis of forgiveness, truth, reconciliation and restorative justice" (p. 31). In Malawi, the *Umunthu* ideals (similar to the Ubuntu concept) put the responsibility on

community elders for the behaviour of all children and youths within the community (Kayange, 2018; McCracken, 2012). This is a pre-colonial concept before prisons were introduced in Malawi when various non-custodial measures focusing on restitution and restorative justice principles were used when dealing with delinquencies and social disorders (McCracken, 2012; MPS, 2021). The contemporary criminal justice system needs to adopt the *Umunthu* non-custodial ways of dealing with crime and delinquency to reform them instead of worsening them with an incarceration sentence.

#### **8.4.9 The use of technological equipment in the criminal justice system**

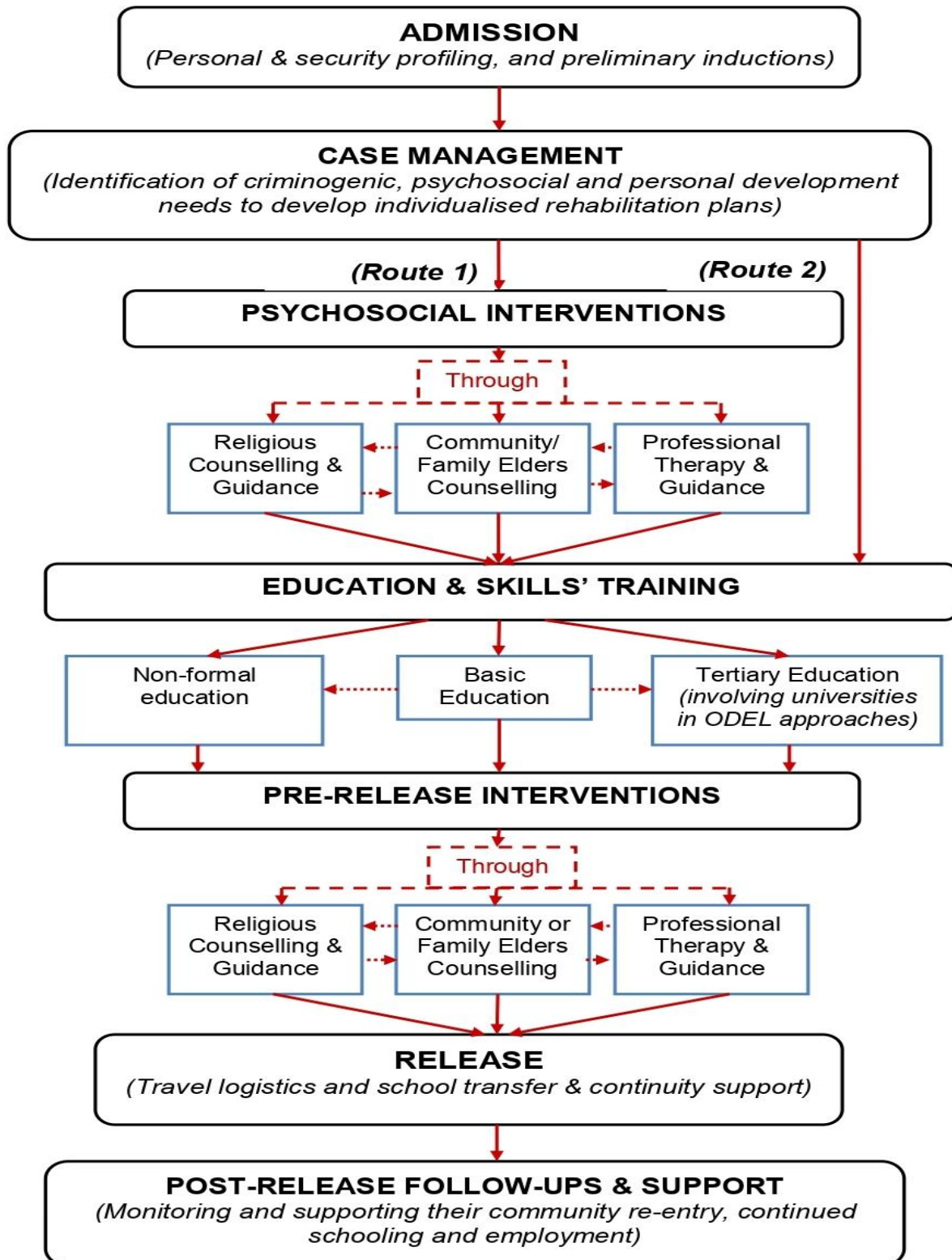
The criminal justice system needs to start using technological devices for evidence collection to ascertain the validity of witnesses' claims. Many young offenders in this study complained of unfair conviction based on witness accounts in situations where they could have been exonerated if forensic examinations had been conducted. Decisions to incarcerate a juvenile or a school-aged young person need a serious and thorough understanding of the implications of such decisions on their entire lives (Lambie & Randell, 2013; Nowak, 2019). Thus, due diligence in determining and investigating their involvement in their alleged crimes should be observed. Exercising due diligence through the use of modern technological equipment such as DNA machines will avoid sending innocent young souls to prisons.

#### **8.4.10 Proposed rehabilitation framework for African jurisdictions**

In light of the absence of a comprehensive rehabilitation framework in YORCs in Malawi as revealed in this research, the study proposes a rehabilitation framework applicable in developing countries (see Figure 8.1). The framework is aimed at guiding the rehabilitation of young offenders from the day they are incarcerated to the day they are released and beyond through individualised rehabilitation programming. The proposed framework is modelled on GLM and RNR strength-based principles combined with the African indigenous restorative (Ubuntu) ways (Andrews & Bonta, 2017; Durrant, 2018; Harkins et al., 2012; Mallion & Wood, 2020; Sefotho, 2022; Ward & Gannon, 2006).

**Figure 8.1**

*Proposed rehabilitation framework for YORCs in Malawi*





The basic assumption of this framework is that correctional facilities fail to provide comprehensive rehabilitation programming due, apart from resources, to the scarcity of professional psychosocial personnel who are essential in the whole rehabilitation process (Ajah & Ugwuoke, 2018; Johnson, 2022a; Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022; Ngozwana, 2017; Quan-Baffour et al., 2022; Samanyanga, 2016). Psychologists are rarely found in prisons in many developing countries, including Malawi, as revealed in this study, causing psychosocial counselling and guidance to usually be disregarded in the incarceration cycle of offenders. These professionals were supposed to assist offenders in addressing the underlying psychological causes of offending to enhance the acceptability and effectiveness of educational programmes (McMahon & Jump, 2017; Nagin et al., 1995; Wilson et al., 2016).

This study found that the facilities' chaplaincy offices were already coordinating visits by religious groups, especially Christians and Muslims, to deliver sermons and conduct worship services, which also include aspects of religious guidance and counselling. Studies show that religious guidance and counselling can be used as rehabilitation tools (Johnson, 2022a; Robinson-Edwards & Kewley, 2018). Robinson-Edwards & Kewley (2018) observe that religious and faith-based programmes within the correctional setting provide numerous benefits to the offenders, their families and their relationship with the correctional staff.

Similarly, incarcerated young people come from families and communities that are not always completely dysfunctional. The use of family or community elders for young persons' counselling and guidance is a common indigenous African practice which has proven to be effective in changing the behaviour of delinquent or troubled youths in indigenous communities including in Malawi (Kayange, 2018; McCracken, 2012). For instance, the family and community elders' support and encouragement to a school-aged young person not interested in pursuing their educational goals can help in opening their eyes to the importance of utilising the educational opportunities during their stay at the YORCs. Moreover, Sefotho (2022) questions the effectiveness of correctional facilities' use of solely euro-western incarceration models which are alien to and not part of the fabric of indigenous ways of correction and rehabilitation,

thus, in the process, completely disregarding the indigenous methods. Sefotho (2022) therefore suggests that contemporary rehabilitation systems can learn from indigenous knowledge systems that espouse the African values of compassion, love and forgiveness. This practice is inscribed in the principles of Ubuntu (or *Umunthu* in Malawi) in which all community elders are considered to have the responsibility for all children within the community. Though it is impossible to go back to pre-colonial life, it is possible to introspectively choose from the African unique indigenous values and merge them with modern practices and theories (Quan-Baffour, 2022).

Therefore, the framework suggests that religious and communities' indigenous skills in counselling and guidance can be used to bridge the specialists' gaps in rehabilitating incarcerated young offenders. The growing numbers of incarcerated young people in Africa in contemporary times could be because the majority are disconnected from their African roots and values, resulting in absents of moral codes to guide their behaviour, thereby leading to their criminality (Quan-Baffour, 2022). Apart from western education, they need humanity (Ubuntu) education. The inclusion of religious and indigenous methods becomes relevant because cultural and spiritual values are all important in humanity (Quan-Baffour, 2022; Sefotho, 2022). Apart from fostering oneness and social interdependence of humanity as inscribed in culture, Ubuntu also embraces a set of spiritual values which pursue respect and dignity for all humanity (Sefotho, 2022).

The framework, therefore, suggests seven phases of the incarceration cycle which are named in line with the key activity at the particular time, from (1) admission, (2) case management, (3) psychosocial interventions, (4) education and skills training, (5) pre-release interventions, (6) release, to (6) post-release follow-ups and support; as illustrated in Figure 8.1. In the application of the framework, when a young person is admitted to the YORC, before being mingled with others after personal and security profiling, they would need to be allocated a case management officer who would identify their rehabilitation needs through in-depth interviews. The individual offenders are expected to be fully involved in the whole process of developing their individualised rehabilitation plan.

After the case management, the young person would have two alternative routes to follow depending on their individuals' identified needs (see Figure 8.1). In Route 1, the young person needs to be involved in psychosocial interventions. The decision to choose one or more of the three provided alternatives (religious, family and community, or professional therapy) would depend on the need and the availability of the intervention(s) at the facility. As stated already, most facilities in Africa do not have professional therapy services because there are hardly qualified psychologists or social workers to carry them out. That is why this framework is unique. It presents the alternatives that can be combined or used separately, depending on the need and availability of the intervention. Route 2 is to be taken by an individual who has been diagnosed as not in need of psychosocial intervention and would, thus, go straight to the next phase.

In the next phase, depending on the results of the diagnosis of the rehabilitation needs of a particular offender, the individual can be involved in either non-formal education, basic education or tertiary education. These activities are based on the understanding that young people would need one or more of these based on their rehabilitation needs, as revealed by this study. The non-formal education would be activities such as farming, carpentry, welding and other technical training, which should be approached in an educative way, not as painful work parties as revealed in this study and many other studies in Africa reported in the literature (Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022; Ngozwana, 2017; Samanyanga, 2016). The horizontal arrows mean that a young person with a long sentence might complete the basic education (primary and secondary education) and either move to non-formal or tertiary education based on their performance and individual needs.

As the young person is moving towards release, the next phase; the pre-release interventions ought to automatically follow. This phase is where religious, family and community or/and psychosocial support would also be provided to help the person prepare for release. Just like in the preliminary psychosocial interventions, indigenous or religious methods might be chosen if needed or when professional therapists are not in the incarceration space.

During the actual release, the person would need to receive all logistical support to enable them to reach their homes or release locations safely and problem-free. This phase would reduce the re-entry problems that the released youths faced just after their release, which also hindered their schooling plans. If they were schooling, school transfers need to be processed for the released individual to transition from correctional to a community school easily.

Finally, the proposed framework suggests that the correctional services need to collaborate with other organisations to support young persons to successfully reintegrate through continuing with education, entrepreneurship or securing a job. Their strife and challenges should be noted and provided with reasonable support for their successful reintegration. Currently, MPS in collaboration with Prison Fellowship Malawi (a religious organisation) run a halfway house where offenders who are about to be released are sent to acquire both soft and technical skills for their successful reintegration. Johnson (2015) also mentioned the use of a halfway house in South African correctional facilities as a successful endeavour towards offenders' rehabilitation and reintegration. However, in Malawi, very few offenders (less than 1%) mostly from maximum or adult prisons are sent to halfway houses due to a lack of resources. Thus, young offenders seldom benefit from such services. This framework advocates for the enhancement of these kinds of reintegration initiatives.

In summary, this framework proposes the use of a combination of indigenous and religious services and resources that already exist or are available in correctional facilities but have not yet been used to support young offenders' education towards their effective rehabilitation. The framework infuses the indigenous and religious aspects with the euro-western (GLM and RNR) models to provide the missing link in comprehensive rehabilitation that includes young offenders' pursuance of their education and post-educational goals during and after their incarceration. The framework provides three alternatives (religious, indigenous, and formal therapy) as psychosocial interventions after their admission and before their release as pre-release interventions.

## 8.5 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study claims a number of strengths. Firstly, the use of a mixed-methods research design allowed for quantitative data from descriptive statistical findings regarding the rates of young offenders' access to education and other rehabilitation activities as well as the quality of education offered in correctional facilities to be validated and triangulated with data from various qualitative data sources. Results from this study's quantitative and qualitative components were integrated to expose areas of convergence and discrepancy. While it might be argued that the study did not use advanced statistical tools and applications, simple descriptive statistics that were used adequately achieved the study's objectives.

Secondly, the study included 38.5% of the young offenders' population (N=753) at the five YORCs, which can be considered an adequate subset of the targeted population for the internal generalisability of the findings (Cohen et al., 2018; Dubey & Kothari, 2022; Maxwell, 2012; Verma & Verma, 2020). This sample provided better inferences about the whole population regarding the perceptions and the rates at which young offenders are involved in schooling at a national level from the data collected. Nevertheless, the findings cannot be generalised to all prison facilities in Malawi and other countries, especially those incarcerating adult inmates, because the management and the level of activities in adult prisons are usually different from the young offenders' centres (Kajawo, 2019; MPS, 2021). Though not representing all prison facilities, the results serve as an essential indicator of potential issues and challenges related to the education of people incarcerated and released from correctional facilities in Malawi and other developing countries.

Thirdly, the inclusion of released young offenders in this study contributed considerably to answering the three research questions. The in-depth lived experiences of these young people who were once incarcerated at the targeted YORCs verified and triangulated the results from current inmates' data. It also helped to compare the current trends to the previous ones as these released individuals had lived them. However, the involvement of some of the released young offenders was

different from the plan. It was planned that the researcher would carry out face-to-face interviews with all 25 ex-offenders. However, due to the distances and remoteness of the residential addresses of some potential targeted participants, the researcher used telephone interviews to engage the participants whom it was difficult to meet face-to-face. Thus, out of the 25 participants, 14 were face-to-face and 11 were telephonic. Nonetheless, the telephone interviews still contributed to the rich data collection in this study. Dubey and Kothari (2022) agree that telephonic interviews are one of the best alternatives to face-to-face interviews when physical distances and time flexibility are considered.

Lastly, the study involved only nine female participants; five young female offenders out of 290 and four female educators/officials out of the 25 involved. This trend was because there was generally low or no participation of women in YORCs' incarceration and education. Out of the five facilities, it was only one facility that incarcerated five young female offenders. This implies that few incarcerated women were in the centres, which determined their subsequent participation in this study. Regarding educators/officials, only seven women were working as educators at five facilities, of which three were purposively selected for this study, while one female official at the pure-farming facility, where education was not provided, was also included in this study. Therefore, looking at the demographic data, it could be said that the study involved a few women. However, it was due to the low numbers of women in the general prison setting.

## **8.6 AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH**

This mixed-methods study focused on investigating the impact of incarceration on young offenders' rights and access to quality education in Malawi, targeting only young offenders' facilities. From the literature, analysis and findings of this study, further studies could be conducted in the following areas:

- This study revealed a dearth of empirical studies regarding juveniles or young offenders' rehabilitation and education in many African countries, making it difficult for researchers to compare trends in incarceration and their education. Many

studies on young offenders had been conducted in western countries. However, western studies' findings might not be generalised to African contexts especially because of the differences in the penitentiaries' social contexts (Boakye, 2010; Cole & Chipaca, 2014). While they operate within similar international laws and standards, their operational approaches and requirements are likely to differ. In this respect, a comparative study of young offenders' incarceration and its effect on their education in selected countries, such as in the SADC region is suggested. This could provide an opportunity for policymakers, implementers, and the academic community to compare and understand the milestones and challenges individual countries face.

- This study revealed that many young offenders preferred the services of qualified civilian individuals as their educators compared to the uniformed prison officers and volunteer inmate educators. A study focusing on exploring the effectiveness of uniformed educators in correctional facilities to evaluate their roles and performances is recommended. This study could include an exploration of how serving inmates can be best used and incentivised within their roles as volunteer educators during their incarceration and post-release periods.
- This study produced an unexpected finding that suggested that the pains of imprisonment had a positive deterrent effect on the offenders. Many young offenders and their released colleagues indicated that the main factor likely to make them desist from committing more crimes after their release was the fear of re-incarceration and experiencing the same pains of imprisonment. The pains included poor and inadequate diet, living in overcrowded cells, and physical and mental abuse perpetrated by prison officers and *nyapalas* (in-charge prisoners). A qualitative in-depth investigation is needed to understand and further unpack these perceptions of punishment that are considered archaic and their effects on modern incarceration theories and practice.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: UNISA ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



#### UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2021/07/07

Ref: **2021/07/07/13450549/05/AM**

Name: Mr SCR Kajawo

Student No.: 13450549

Dear Mr SCR Kajawo

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2021/07/07 to 2026/07/07

**Researcher(s):** Name: Mr SCR Kajawo  
E-mail address: 13450549@mylife.unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: +265881962228

**Supervisor(s):** Name: Prof L R Johnson  
E-mail address: johnslr@unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: +27124812740

**Title of research:**

**The Impact of Incarceration on Young Offenders' Access to Quality Education in Malawi's Penitentiary Facilities**

**Qualification:** PhD Adult Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2021/07/07 to 2026/07/07.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2021/07/07 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)



3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2026/07/07**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

*The reference number **2021/07/07/13450549/05/AM** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



**Prof AT Motlhabane**  
**CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC**  
motlhat@unisa.ac.za



**Prof PM Sebate**  
**EXECUTIVE DEAN**  
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za

## APPENDIX B: MALAWI PRISONS SERVICE AUTHORITY'S APPROVAL

Ref. No **ADMIN/2091/74**  
Telegrams: PRISCHIEF  
Telephone: 01525 711, 01524 435  
Fax: 01525123  
E-mail: prisons@sdpn.org.mw



THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF PRISONS  
NATIONAL PRISON HEADQUARTERS  
P.O. BOX 28  
ZOMBA  
MALAWI

**4<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2021**

SamsonKajawo  
University of South Africa  
P. O. Box 392  
UNISA 0003, South Africa

**CC:** The Regional Commanding Officers, Southern, Eastern, Central and Northern regions

**CC:** Officers-In-charge, Bvumbwe, Mikuyu II, Kachere, Byanzi and Mzimba Prisons

Dear Mr. Samson Kajawo

**RE: A REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY AT YOUNG OFFENDERS' FACILITY IN MALAWI ON "THE IMPACT OF INCARCERATION ON YOUNG OFFENDERS' ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION IN MALAWI'S PENITENTIARY FACILITIES"**

It is with pleasure to inform you that your request to conduct research in the Department of Prisons on the above topic specifically at Bvumbwe, Mikuyu II, Kachere, Byanzi and Mzimba Prisons has been approved.

Your attention is drawn to the following:

- This ethics approval is valid from **10<sup>th</sup> August 2021 to 10<sup>th</sup> August 2022.**
- The relevant Regional Commanding Officers and Officers In-charge of the facilities at which the study is intended to be conducted will be informed of your proposed research project.

- Your internal guide will be Assistant Commissioner of Prisons Mr. Ian Chadza, **Head of Research, Planning and Policy Development Unit for Malawi Prisons Service.**
- You are requested to contact him at telephone number (265) 881 769 694 before the commencement of your research.
- It is your responsibility to make arrangements for your interviewing times.
- Your identity document and this approval letter should be in your possession when visiting.
- You are not allowed to use photographic or video equipment during your visits, however, the audio recorder is allowed.
- Should you have any enquiries regarding this process, please contact Head of Research and Planning Section for Malawi Prisons Service on (265) 881 769 694.

Thank you for your application and interest to conduct research in the Department of Prisons.

*Ian P.B. Chadza*

Ian P.B. Chadza (Assistant Commissioner of Prisons)  
Head of Research, Planning and Policy Development Unit

**For: CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF PRISONS**



## **APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

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

**Title: The impact of incarceration on young offenders' access to quality education in Malawi's penitentiary facilities**

### **DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT**

My name is Samson Kajawo, and I am doing research under the supervision of Prof Lineo R. Johnson, an Associate Professor in the Department of Adult Education and Youth Development, towards a PhD in Education at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled "*The impact of incarceration on young offenders' access to quality education in Malawi's penitentiary facilities*".

### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

This study is expected to collect important information that could help in investigating how the incarceration of young offenders in Malawi penitentiary facilities impacts on their right and access to quality education. The study will help in identifying and understanding critical issues and concerns regarding the rehabilitation of young offenders, including education and how they are being implemented in Malawi, thereby influencing policy change or new policy formulation.

### **WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?**

You are invited because you are an educator or an inmate at one of the young offenders' rehabilitation centres, or because you were once an inmate but was released within the past three years from one of the young offenders' rehabilitation centres in Malawi, hence I selected you for this study. I obtained your contact details from the office of the officer-in-charge in charge at one of the young offenders' facilities in the country. This study is planning to involve approximately 375 participants (300 inmates, 25 educators and 25 ex-inmates), and you will be within this pool of participants.

### **WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?**

The study will involve two parts. The first part will require the involvement of 300 inmates who will be requested to complete the semi-structured questionnaire. My colleagues and I will provide a copy of the questionnaire for each inmate to complete. If you choose not to fill the questionnaire alone, one of my colleagues will provide support. In the second part, semi-structured interviews will be conducted on 25 inmates from the pool of those already involved in the initial survey and 25 educators and 25 ex-inmates. In those interviews, I will be asking you questions and writing

down your responses, as well as audio-recording them. The questionnaires will need approximately 30 minutes, while the interviews will need approximately one hour to complete. I will also engage research assistants in data collection and transcribing, who shall sign the Confidentiality Agreement to ensure confidentiality.

### **CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?**

Participating in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent for participation. If you decide to participate, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent (adult)/ assent (participant younger than 18 years old) form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason, only if you do so before your interview script has been completed and already mixed with others. This is because there will be no participants' names on the interview scripts hence rendering it difficult to trace your submission with accuracy.

### **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

All participants will not have a direct benefit in this study. However, since the study is intended to investigate how incarceration impacts on juveniles' access to quality education in Malawi penitentiary facilities, it will help in identifying and understanding critical issues and concerns regarding rehabilitation, including education and how they are being implemented in Malawi, thereby informing and influencing policy change or new policy formulation, for the improvement of those services.

### **ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?**

The study anticipates some risks since it will also involve young offenders and ex-inmates, whom some of whom might be under the age of 18, hence classified as vulnerable groups, as well as possible issues of exposing the views of the participants if confidentiality and privacy issues are not properly observed. In mitigating these issues, the researcher will embrace confidentiality and anonymity in data collection, analysis, and reporting. Moreover, written consent will be sort from parents or guardians for all participants under 18. All participants will not be given any money or any reward for participating in this study. However, during data collection, as a way of observing COVID-19 protocols and reducing contact, every participant will be provided with a pen that will not be repossessed to avoid multiple handling. In the case of those who will not have masks or shields, the researcher will provide them with masks to use during the study to ensure the safety of both the research team and respondents.



## **WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

Your name will not be recorded anywhere, and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym, and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including transcribers and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee, in which case a confidentiality agreement will be signed. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study unless you give permission for other people to see the records. However, data in its anonymity form may be used for other purposes, such as research reporting, journal articles, and conference proceedings. Privacy will be protected in any publication of the information, and individual participants will not be identifiable in such reports.

## **HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?**

All data gathered in this study will be protected; hard copies will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked safe which is located at his house in his private room, while soft copies will be encrypted and stored on a password-protected computer to limit access to the researcher only. Any future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval. After five years of storage, hard copies will be burned in a furnace, while electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

## **WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

No participant will be given any money or any reward for participating in this study.

## **HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL**

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. A copy of the approval letter may be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

## **HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Samson Kajawo on cellphone number +265881962228 or email at: [samsonkajawo@gmail.com](mailto:samsonkajawo@gmail.com). The findings are accessible for five years. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of

the study, please use the same contacts indicated above. Should you have concerns about how the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof Lineo R. Johnson on +27124812740 or email at: [johnslr@unisa.ac.za](mailto:johnslr@unisa.ac.za).

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you

**Samson Chaima Robin Kajawo, PhD Student**  
**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY** (English Return slip)

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or the nature of study has been explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature

Date

**CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip – Chichewa)**

**CHILOLEZO CHOVOMEREZA KUTENGA NAWO GAWO MUKAFUKUFUKU**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (dzina lanu), ndikuvomereza kuti abambo awa, amene akupempha chilolezo changa kuti nditenge nawo gawo mu kafukufuku wawo, andilongosolera momveka bwino zinthu zambiri zokhuza kafukufukuyu.

Ine ndawerenga (kapena andilongosolera) ndipo ndamvetsetsa mokwanira pa zambiri za kafukufukuyu.

Ndinali ndi nthawi yokwanira yofunsa mafunso ndipo pano ndili okonzeka kutenga nawo gawo mu kafukufukuyu.

Ndikuziwa kuti kutenganawo gawo ndikosakakamiza ndiponso kuti nditha kusiya nthawi ili yonse yomwe ndingafune opanda kuimbidwa mulandu.

Ndikuziwanso kuti zimene atapeze mukafukufuku uyu azazilemba mu mabuku komanso zizakambidwa mumikumano yosiyanasiyana, koma dzina langa silizapezeka muzonsezo, pokhapokha pali chilinganizo china.

Ndikuvomereza kuti atha kutepa zokambirana zimenezi.

Nane ndilandira pepala losaina bwino lokhuzana chigwirizanochi.

Dzina wotenga nawo gawo \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Siginecha ya otenga nawo gawo

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tsiku

Dzina la wakafukufuku \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Siginecha ya wakafukufuku

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tsiku



## **APPENDIX D: LETTER REQUESTING PARENTAL CONSENT FOR MINORS**

**Dear Parent or Guardian,**

Your child/ward, who is currently in the custody of Malawi Prisons Service, is invited to participate in a study entitled "*The impact of incarceration on young offenders' access to quality education in Malawi's penitentiary facilities*".

I am undertaking this study as part of my doctoral research at the University of South Africa. The purpose of the study is to investigate how the incarceration of young offenders in Malawi penitentiary facilities impacts on their right and access to quality education. The possible benefits of the study are the improvement of education as a rehabilitation activity in the young offenders' rehabilitation centres for their successful re-entry or reintegration into their communities. I am asking permission to include your child in this study because he or she is admitted at one of the targeted facilities for this study and have been selected to participate together with other 299 young inmates.

If you allow your child to participate, I shall request him/her to:

- Take part in a survey at the facility during the data collection period in which he or she will be requested to complete a questionnaire that will take not more than 30 minutes.
- Might also be selected to be among the 25 young inmates to take part in an interview from a pool of inmates initially involved in a survey in which audio recorders will be used for data collection.

Any information obtained in connection with this study and can be identified with your child will remain confidential and anonymous. His/her responses will not be linked to his/her name or your name in any written or verbal report based on this study. Such a report will be used for research purposes only. The research assistants who will be engaged for data collection and transcribing will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement to ensure their confidentiality.

There are no foreseeable risks to your child by participating in the study. Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study; however, the possible benefits to education are that the study will help identify critical issues and concerns regarding rehabilitation, including education and its quality in young offenders' centres, thereby influencing policy change or new policy formulation. Neither your child nor you will receive any type of payment for participating in this study.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not affect him/her in any way. Similarly, you can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty.

The study will take place during regular classroom activities with the prior approval of the facility authorities.

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study, and you and your child will also be asked to sign the assent form which accompanies this letter. If your child does not wish to participate in the study, he or she will not be included, and there will be no penalty. The information gathered from the study and your child's participation in the study will be stored securely on a password-locked computer in my locked private room for five years after the study. After that, records will be erased.

If you have questions about this study, please ask me or my study supervisor, Prof Lineo R. Johnson, Department of Adult Education and Youth Development, College of Education, University of South Africa. My contact number is +265881962228, and my email is [samsonkajawo@gmail.com](mailto:samsonkajawo@gmail.com). The email of my supervisor is [johnslr@unisa.ac.za](mailto:johnslr@unisa.ac.za). Permission for the study has already been given by the Chief Commissioner of Malawi Prisons Service and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA.

You are making a decision about allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow him or her to participate in the study. You may keep a copy of this letter.

Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely

_____	_____	_____
Parent/guardian's name	Parent/guardian's signature:	Date:

_____	_____	_____
Researcher's name	Researcher's signature	Date

## APPENDIX E: A LETTER REQUESTING ASSENT FROM MINORS (YOs)

TITLE: ***“The impact of incarceration on young offenders’ access to quality education in Malawi’s penitentiary facilities”.***

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I am doing a study on the quality of education in young offenders' centres as part of my studies at the University of South Africa. Your officer-in-charge in charge has given me permission to do this study at this facility. I would like to invite you to be a very special part of my study. I am doing this study to investigate the effects of young offenders' imprisonment on their rights and access to quality education. This may help the young offenders' correctional facilities' education to be improved for the benefit of many young offenders.

This letter is to explain to you what I would like you to do. There may be some words you do not know in this letter. You may ask me or any other adult to explain any of these words that you do not know or understand.

You will be requested to complete a questionnaire, and you might also be selected to take part in an interview in which I will ask you some questions. Completing the questionnaire will take no longer than 30 minutes, while the interview will take less than one hour. If you feel like you cannot or do not want to write on your own, my research team will help you read the questions and write on your behalf.

I will write a report on the study, but I will not use your name in the report or say anything that will let other people know who you are. Participation is voluntary, and you do not have to be part of this study if you do not want to participate. If you choose to be in the study, you may stop taking part at any time without penalty. You may tell my assistants or me if you do not wish to answer any of my questions. No one will blame or criticise you. When I am finished with my study, I shall return to this institution to give a short talk about some of the helpful and interesting things I found out in my study. I shall invite you to come and listen to my talk.

All participants will not have a direct benefit in this study, and there are no potential risks resulting from participating in this study. You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the research. However, the services of professional counsellors will be ready if you will need them.

If you decide to be part of my study, you will be asked to sign the form on the next page. If you have any other questions about this study, you can talk to me. Do not

sign the form until you have all your questions answered and understand what I would like you to do.

Researcher: Samson Kajawo Phone number: +265881962228

**WRITTEN ASSENT**

I have read this letter which asks me to be part of a study at this institution. I have understood the information about my study, and I know what I will be asked to do. Therefore, I am willing to be in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Young inmate's name      Young inmate's signature:      Date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness's name (print)      Witness' signature      Date:

*(The witness, who is an official at the centre, is over 18 years old and present when signed.)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's name (print)      Researcher's signature:      Date:

**APPENDIX F: A REQUEST FOR ASSENT FROM MINORS (YOs) TO OBTAIN  
PARENT OR GUARDIAN CONTACT DETAILS FROM THE FACILITY**

**TITLE:            *“The impact of incarceration on young offenders’ access to quality education in Malawi’s penitentiary facilities”.***

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I am doing a study on the quality of education in young offenders' centres as part of my studies at the University of South Africa. Your officer-in-charge in charge has given me permission to do this study at this facility. I am doing this study to investigate the effects of young offenders' imprisonment on their rights and access to quality education. This may help you and many other young offenders in different correctional facilities.

You have been selected amongst 300 young people to be a very special part of my study. But before I involve you in this study, I am required first to seek the approval of one of your parents or guardians. In order to contact them, I need their contact details in the form of the phone number, which I can get from your admission records that are kept here at this facility. Hence, I need your permission to obtain the said contact details.

I would like to assure you that these contact details will be used solely for this study, will remain confidential. Your responses in the study will not be linked to your name or your parent or guardian's name in any written or verbal report based on this study. The research assistants will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement to ensure their compliance with the confidentiality agreement on their part as well.

Your participation in this study, including the provision of this permission, is voluntary. Likewise, your parent or guardian has the right to give consent for you to participate in this study or not. You and your parent or guardian may decline to provide permission through assent and consent, respectively, without any penalty. If you grant this permission, the researcher will obtain the phone number from the admission office. The parents or guardians will be phoned to inquire if they are willing to let you participate in the study. If they agree, consent forms will be sent to them for signing. If they do not agree, you will not be included in the study without any penalties. In addition to your parent or guardian's permission, you will also be requested again to agree to participate in the study by signing another assent form.

The contact details of your parent or guardian obtained for this study will be stored securely on a password-locked computer and will only be used by this researcher for

this study's purpose. They will be destroyed as soon as their signatures on consent forms have been obtained to ensure maximum confidentiality.

If you decide to provide this permission, you will be requested to sign this form in the spaces provided. If you have any other questions about this study, you can talk to me or ask the Officer In-charge of this facility. Do not sign the written assent form if you have any questions. Ask your questions first and ensure that someone answers those questions.

Researcher: Samson Kajawo Phone number: +265881962228

**WRITTEN ASSENT**

I have read this letter which asks me to provide permission for the researcher to obtain contact details from my parent or guardian. I have understood the information about the study. Therefore, I am hereby providing my permission to the researcher to obtain the said contact details of my parent or guardian to use only for the purposes of his study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Young inmate's name (print):      Young inmate's signature:      Date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness's name (print)      Witness' signature      Date:

*(The witness is over 18 years old and present when signed)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's name (print)      Researcher's signature:      Date:

## APPENDIX G: A COVER LETTER FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

### Title of questionnaire: Young Offenders Survey Questionnaire

Dear respondent

This questionnaire forms part of my doctoral research entitled: "*The impact of incarceration on young offenders' access to quality education in Malawi's penitentiary facilities*" for the degree of PhD in Education at the University of South Africa. You have been selected using a simple random sampling technique from the population of young offenders at this institution. Hence, I invite you to take part in this survey.

The aim of this study is to investigate how the incarceration of young offenders in Malawi penitentiary facilities impacts on their right and access to quality education. The findings of the study may benefit the young offenders in improving their quality of education whilst in correctional facilities.

You are kindly requested to complete this survey questionnaire, comprising four sections as honestly and frankly as possible and according to your personal views and experience. No foreseeable risks are associated with the completion of the questionnaire, which is for research purposes only. The questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

You are not required to indicate your name or the name of this facility, and your anonymity will be ensured. However, the indication of your age, gender, occupation, or prison status will contribute to a more comprehensive analysis. All information obtained from this questionnaire will be used for research purposes only and will remain confidential. Your participation in this survey is voluntary, and you have the right to omit any question if so desired or to withdraw from answering this survey without penalty at any stage. After the completion of the study, a presentation of the summary of these research findings will be made at this institution, where you will be invited to attend.

Permission to undertake this survey has been granted by the Chief Commissioner of Malawi Prisons Service and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. If you have any research-related enquiries, they can be addressed directly to me or my supervisor. My contact number is +265881962228, and my email is [13450549@mylife.unisa.ac.za](mailto:13450549@mylife.unisa.ac.za) or [samsonkajawo@gmail.com](mailto:samsonkajawo@gmail.com). My supervisor can be reached at +27124812740 and email: [johnslr@unisa.ac.za](mailto:johnslr@unisa.ac.za), Department of Adult Education and Youth Development, College of Education, University of South Africa.

By completing the questionnaire, you imply that you have agreed to participate in this research.

Yours Faithfully,

**Samson Kajawo (PhD Student)**  
**University of South Africa**

## APPENDIX H: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

You have been engaged by the researcher of this study, Samson Kajawo, to assist in data transcribing or collection on the research project entitled: *"The impact of incarceration on young offenders' access to quality education in Malawi's penitentiary facilities"*.

You are, therefore, required by this study's ethical guidelines to read and sign this form, demonstrating that you are willing to enter into a confidentiality agreement with respect to the data collected in this study.

The data instruments, including audio recordings you will handle, might contain identifying markers of the participants as well as names of other third parties. In order to protect their confidentiality, you are required to remove all identifiers of third parties and participants. Materials must never be left unattended and must always be secured. By signing below, you agree not to reveal any information about what is contained in all data instruments, including audio recordings or written transcripts. Furthermore, you agree not to discuss anything regarding the participants or the data collected in this study with anyone other than the principal researcher.

By signing below, you are indicating that you have read and understood the above agreement and that you will follow all the specified conditions.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date:



## APPENDIX I: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS

RESEARCH TITLE: **The Impact of Incarceration on Young Offenders' Access to Quality Education in Malawi's Penitentiary Facilities.**

### **Semi-structured survey questionnaire for young offenders**

I am Samson Kajawo, a PhD student at UNISA under the supervision of Prof L.R. Johnson. We are here to administer this questionnaire that is aimed at collecting information to assist in investigating how the incarceration of young offenders in Malawi penitentiary facilities impacts on their right and access to quality education. You have been given this questionnaire with the understanding that you are currently one of the young offenders lodged at one of the young offenders' rehabilitation centres in Malawi. Understand that your participation is purely voluntary. You can withdraw from participation at any time you feels so. You will also have to read and sign the separate consent form accompanying this questionnaire. Thank you for your time and voluntary participation.

#### **Instructions:**

- *Do not write your name on this questionnaire.*
- *Any information you may provide on this questionnaire will be treated with maximum confidentiality and anonymity.*
- *Please read the following questions carefully and respond to the question by ticking the appropriate response option provided and writing additional information in the spaces provided.*

---

#### **Section A: Demographic Data**

1. Gender  Male  Female

2. Age \_\_\_\_\_

3. Your prison status  First offender  Re-offender

4. Mention the crime/ offence which you were convicted for \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What is your current highest academic qualification?

- None
- Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLC)
- Junior Certificate of Education (JCE)
- Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE)
- College Certificate
- College Diploma
- University Degree

6. In which level of education and class were you before you were sent to this facility?

- Never attended school
- Primary: Standard 1-4
- Primary: Standard 5-8
- Secondary: Form 1-2
- Secondary: Form 3-4
- Tertiary
- Dropped-out

7. If you ticked **dropped-out** in item 6 (above),

7.1. Which level and class of education did you drop-out in?

- Primary: Standard 1-4
- Primary: Standard 5-8
- Secondary: Form 1-2
- Secondary: Form 3-4
- Tertiary

7.2. Why did you drop-out of school?

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7.3. If you dropped out or never attended school, what were you doing before your admission to this facility?

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**Section B: The activities that young offenders are involved in whilst incarcerated**

8. What was the first programme or activity you were engaged in when you were admitted into the correctional facility?

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9. Were you involved in the following procedure(s) before being assigned any rehabilitation or work programme at this institution? In the statements below, choose one option from **“Strongly agree”** to **“Strongly disagree”** that best describe your perceptions as to whether you were involved or not in what is stated:

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) On admission, I was welcomed and got my personal information entered for records	1	2	3	4	5
b) I was engaged in an induction process that introduced me to the facility's regulations and services.	1	2	3	4	5
c) I had sessions with a psychologist or any social worker regarding my offence and/or how I related with my community, family, friends and teachers at school	1	2	3	4	5
d) I was involved in therapy or counselling and guidance sessions for my future.	1	2	3	4	5
e) I have a correctional rehabilitation or intervention plan, which I was involved in	1	2	3	4	5

designing together with a counsellor or any other officer					
f) All activities and programmes I have been involved in are within my correctional rehabilitation or intervention plan	1	2	3	4	5

10. Mention all rehabilitation programmes, even work activities you have been involved in during your stay in the correctional system? Mention them in chronological order from your first day in the system to the current one. If none, just indicate NONE.

- i. \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_
- iv. \_\_\_\_\_
- v. \_\_\_\_\_
- vi. \_\_\_\_\_
- vii. \_\_\_\_\_

11. Are these programmes helpful to you in your rehabilitation or future goals?

- YES                       NO                       N/A

11.1. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11.2. Which one of them would you pick as the most favourite and helpful to you whilst in the facility and even outside the facility? Why?

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12. Does every inmate who wants to enrol for schooling or education allowed to do so at this institution?

- NO, only those who were schooling before their admission here are allowed
- NO, enrollment is controlled by the authorities
- YES, but only those who are not engaged in other work-gangs
- YES, everyone is allowed
- OTHER, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

---

13. Amongst the rehabilitation programmes you mentioned to have been engaged in whilst in this facility, do they include formal education?  YES  NO

**Section C: Young offenders' education in correctional facilities** (This section is only for young inmates who are schooling or were engaged in formal education at a certain point in the correctional system)

14. If you answered **YES** in (13) above, please respond to the following questions. If you stated **NO**, please **skip this section** and go straight to **Section D**.

14.1. Which education level and class did you first enrol into at this facility?

- Primary: Standard 1-4
- Primary: Standard 5-8
- Secondary: Form 1-2
- Secondary: Form 3-4
- Tertiary

14.2. Which education level and class are you currently in?

- a)  Primary: Standard 1-4
- b)  Primary: Standard 5-8
- c)  Secondary: Form 1-2
- d)  Secondary: Form 3-4
- e)  Tertiary
- f)  Completed
- g)  Dropped-out

14.3. If you chose (f) or (g) in 14.2 above, please mention the level you completed or class you dropped out and why.

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14.4. The following are the statements regarding education provided to young offenders in correctional facilities. Choose one option in a range of “**strongly agree**” to “**strongly disagree**”, which you feel best represents your perceptions.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) This institution has adequate teachers	1	2	3	4	5
b) Teachers teach very well just like those in schools in the community	1	2	3	4	5
c) Teachers are well motivated	1	2	3	4	5
d) We usually have enough lesson or class time to cover the school and examination syllabuses	1	2	3	4	5
e) There is no noise from outside classrooms	1	2	3	4	5
f) We learn in proper classrooms with good desks and chairs	1	2	3	4	5

g) We have a library at this facility	1	2	3	4	5
h) I have full access to the library	1	2	3	4	5
i) The library has enough relevant books for my studies	1	2	3	4	5
j) I have all relevant prescribed texts (books) for my studies	1	2	3	4	5
k) We usually have enough learning materials such as pens, notebooks and mathematical instruments.	1	2	3	4	5
l) The institution has enough technological equipment such as projectors and computers which are accessible to students	1	2	3	4	5
m) The institution has school counsellors who provide counselling and guidance services to students for their educational goals' attainment	1	2	3	4	5
n) We are given well balanced diet (at least three meals per day)	1	2	3	4	5
o) We sleep in good hostels with proper beds and blankets	1	2	3	4	5
p) The hostel has proper lights, ventilation and space for studies	1	2	3	4	5
q) We are supported in our studied by all educators	1	2	3	4	5
r) We are supported in our studies by our fellow inmates	1	2	3	4	5
s) We are supported in our studies by the prison officers	1	2	3	4	5

who are not educators					
t) We are not forced to work in other working-gangs while studying	1	2	3	4	5
u) We are given enough time for group discussions and study even during day time.	1	2	3	4	5

14.5. Do you think this facility's general environment negatively affects your rights and access to quality education?  YES  NO

14.6. Explain your response in (14.5) above.

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14.7. Compare the quality of education provided to inmates at this correctional facility with the one provided in the communities, and tick one statement that best describe it. Education at this facility...

- is of poor quality
  - is of the same quality as the one provided in the community
  - is of good quality, even better than the one provided in the community.
  - OTHER, Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- 

14.8. If you will still be in school by the time you will be released from this facility, do you think you will continue with your education outside this facility?

- Absolutely yes
- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Not at all

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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14.9. Do you think your old school will allow you to re-register?

- Absolutely yes
- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Not at all

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Section D: The effects of incarceration**

15. What do you feel about this facility? *Select one best option describing your perception.*

- This facility is a punishment centre where we are being punished
- This facility is a true rehabilitation centre where we are being shaped and guided into a good life.

16. Do you think what you are doing here is helping you to acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes that will help you live a good life after your release from here?

- YES**
- NO**

17. Excluding education or schooling, do you think you will continue with what you have been doing at this facility when you are released?

- Absolutely yes
- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Not at all

THE END

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND VOLUNTARY  
PARTICIPATION

## **APPENDIX J: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS**

**RESEARCH TITLE: The Impact of Incarceration on Young Offenders' Access to Quality Education in Malawi's Penitentiary Facilities.**

### **Semi-structured interview questions for young offenders**

I am Samson Kajawo, a PhD student at UNISA under the supervision of Prof L.R. Johnson. I am here to interview you with an aim of collecting information to assist in investigating how the incarceration of young offenders in Malawi penitentiary facilities impacts on their right and access to quality education. I will be taking notes and audio- recording the interview. As it was mentioned in the consent form, data collected in this interview will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity. Thank you for your time and voluntary participation.

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1. Note their gender, age, and whether he or she is the first offender or re-offender.
2. Inquire about their academic qualifications and their previous level of education and class in the community before their conviction. If they dropped out, inquire why they did that. Inquire regarding their personal circumstances that led to drop-out.
3. Encourage him/her to tell their story from their first day in the correctional system. For example, how they were received, the admission procedures they went through if they were involved in any therapy sessions before being assigned in any programme, the activities they were involved in. What was the first programme or activity they were engaged in in the correctional facility?
4. Inquire on the effectiveness of those activities and programmes on their well-being in the correctional system and their lives after their release?
5. Ask about how education is administered at their facility. E.g. Enrolment, the levels or classes offered, is it compulsory or not? Is it accessible to everyone?
6. Ask if he or she has ever been involved in education whilst in the correctional system? E.g. If they are not enrolled, ask why. Check their level of education, and inquire why they are not enrolled in free education offered in prison when they apparently need it. Dig for more information.
7. If they are or were engaged in formal education, inquire on their motivation in participating in the correctional facility's education. Also, inquire about the quality

of education offered. E.g. issues such as its accessibility to inmates, the correctional system environment and its effect on their education. Also, inquire on the availability, accessibility and quality of the classrooms, libraries, laboratories, teachers, hostels and food.

8. Inquire on the favourableness of penitentiary environment to young offender's pursuance of their educational goals. E.g. is the facility punishment or rehabilitation oriented?
9. Inquire on their views if the education or other programmes' skills, knowledge, and attitudes acquired whilst in a correctional facility will help them live a good life after their release.
10. Inquire on their hopes or future plans or goals, as well as their fears for their future (whilst in the correctional facility and after their release).
11. Inquire on what they think needs to be improved for the provision of quality education at the Young Offenders Rehabilitation Centre.

THE END

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND VOLUNTARY  
PARTICIPATION

## APPENDIX K: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS

RESEARCH TITLE: **The Impact of Incarceration on Young Offenders' Access to Quality Education in Malawi's Penitentiary Facilities.**

### **Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Educators**

I am Samson Kajawo, a PhD student at UNISA under the supervision of Prof L.R. Johnson. I am here to interview you with an aim of collecting information to investigate on how the incarceration of young offenders in Malawi penitentiary facilities impacts on their right and access to quality education. I will be taking notes and audio-recording the interview. As it was mentioned in the consent form, data collected in this interview will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity.

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#### *Demographic Data*

1. Would you please tell me more about yourself? E.g. your age, gender, educational background, and then, tell me how it came to be for you to be employed or be involved as an educator in a correctional facility? Any teaching qualification? For how long have you been working as an educator in the facility? Did you work as a teacher elsewhere before?
2. What is your specific role as an educator here at this institution?
3. Do you think you are happy working in a penitentiary facility as an educator? E.g. are you motivated by the authorities? Are you provided with the basics for you to teach effectively?

#### *General activities which all that young offenders are involved in*

4. Would you please explain the normal incarceration circle of a young offender at this facility? E.g. starting from their admission, the programmes and activities they are involved in whilst in prisons, including education, to their release from this facility.
5. Which rehabilitation model is being used in these facilities? E.g. do you have well-planned programmes that guide the offender on exploring socially responsible life options or purposes before engaging them in skills and educational training? Inquire on the availability of therapists/professional counsellors?

*Young offenders' education in correctional facilities*

6. In your perception, do you think it is worth wasting government resources on young offenders' education in penitentiary facilities? Elaborate.
7. Regarding education, how do you enrol students into various classes at this facility? E.g. is it voluntary, coercive, random, planned, etc. Is it accessible to whosoever wants it?
8. If there are some young offenders not enrolled in schools, why aren't they enrolled? If some drop-out, why? What are the strategies put on the ground to encourage school enrollment amongst young offenders?
9. Would you please describe how education that is said to be of quality ought to look like in a correctional facility?
10. How do you compare the quality of education at this correctional facility to the one you just described? E.g. inputs - teaching and learning resources, classrooms, libraries, laboratories, equipment, management, and outputs & outcomes.
11. What is your perception and experience on the relationship that the education section has with the security and management of this facility? Do the facility authorities provide adequate moral, financial and other resources' support?

*The effects of incarceration on pursuance of educational and other goals*

12. Would you comment on this correctional facility's environment and its effect on the education of these young people? The sleeping space, hygiene and sanitation, food, studying opportunities and officials motivation towards inmate students.
13. In your perception, what do you think about this institution? Is the facility punishment or rehabilitation oriented? Do you think education and other activities prepare these young people for their re-entry or release into their communities well?

*General issues*

14. What do you think are challenges faced by educators at this institution? What about general challenges the education section and inmates face pertaining to their rehabilitation and education at this institution?
15. What do you think needs to be improved so that quality education can be provided at this Young Offenders Rehabilitation Centre?

Thank you for the valuable time and voluntary participation

## **APPENDIX L: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EX-YOUNG OFFENDERS**

**RESEARCH TITLE: The Impact of Incarceration on Young Offenders' Access to Quality Education in Malawi's Penitentiary Facilities.**

### **Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Ex-Young Offenders**

I am Samson Kajawo, a PhD student at UNISA under the supervision of Prof L.R. Johnson. I am here to interview you with the aim of collecting information to investigate how the incarceration of young offenders in Malawi penitentiary facilities impacts on their right and access to quality education. I will be taking notes and audio-recording the interview. As it was mentioned in the consent form, data collected in this interview will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity. Thank you for your time and voluntary participation.

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1. What is your gender, age and current occupation?
2. Mention rehabilitation programmes you were involved in when you were at the Young Offenders' Rehabilitation Facility? Mention them in chronological order from your first day in prisons to the day you were released.
3. Were these programmes helpful to you? Did you choose those programmes? E.g. were you just coerced into joining and engaging in them? Did they meet your goals? Which one of them would you pick as the most favourite and helpful to you whilst in the facility and even outside the facility? Why?
4. Have you ever been to school before going to the rehabilitation facility? If you dropped out, which class or level of education did you drop out of school?
5. What level of education or schooling were you when you were sentenced to imprisonment? Did you join school whilst in the rehabilitation facility?

#### **For those who NEVER enrolled for formal education whilst incarcerated**

6. Did the facility you were admitted at provide formal education opportunities? If YES, then why didn't you enrol for schooling?
7. If you were engaged in other beneficial things for your rehabilitation needs, mention them? Do you think they indeed helped in your rehabilitation process?

#### **For those who enrolled for formal education whilst incarcerated**

8. Why did you join schooling whilst serving your sentence?

9. Which level did you join? After how long were you allowed to enrol for schooling in the facility from the day you were admitted? Which level of education were you when you were released from the correctional facility?
10. Talk about the quality of school facilities and teaching and learning resources in correctional school.
11. Talk about the accessibility of library, laboratory and other educational services in correctional schools.
12. How do you compare education provided to inmates at your correctional facility with the one provided in the communities? Do you think it is of the same quality? Compare resources and facilities such as laboratories and libraries.
13. Do you think you benefited from your education in a correctional facility? E.g. did you obtain any certificates? Did you get employed because of the correctional education outcomes? Explain.
14. What were the challenges you faced in your education at the correctional facility?

**For all (whether did enrol or did not enrol for schooling in the facility)**

15. Currently, what are you doing after getting released? Schooling or business or employment, or farming etc.

**If still schooling**, which level of education are you in now?

**If it is in primary or secondary school**, are you at public or private school? Did you face any challenges in your transition from correction school to your community school?

**If you are in tertiary**, which programme of study or professional course are you engaged in? What is the qualification you are expecting to obtain?

**If employed, in business or farming etc.**, specifically what are you doing in business, employment or farming?

16. Do you think you are happy with what you are doing after your release? Please explain.
17. Did your stay in a correctional facility impact on your life goals in any way, positive or negative? E.g. academic and employment, business and other goals.
18. How was your support system in the correctional service? Do you think programmes in correctional facilities provide you with enough support system for your rehabilitations? Did you have deliberate counselling guidance services? Did they prepare you for release when you were about to be released? How?

19. How are you supported in the community after release? How did the community, families and friends receive you? What was each group's reaction? Who is providing after release support and guidance to you? Do correctional or social welfare officials visit you after your release? If YES, how often?
20. What are your hopes or future plans or goals for your future?
21. Do you still think there are still other hindrances that can make you commit a crime and end up going back to prison? If YES, mention them and explain, and how you are dealing with them?
22. Do you think activities that the authorities engaged you in at the correctional facility prepared you enough to desist from re-offending? Please explain your answer.
23. Suggest things that you think need to be improved at the young offenders' rehabilitation centres to improve the quality of inmates' education?

#### Debriefing and post interview discussion

This is the end of this interview. Thank you for participating.



## APPENDIX M: FACILITIES' OBSERVATION CHECKLIST OR PROTOCOLS

Characteristics to look for at each facility:

### *Physical structures or facilities*

- Quality of classrooms and their furniture
- Availability of library
- Availability and quality of science laboratories
- Availability and quality of educators' offices and furniture
- Quality of accommodation and eating places
- Quality of sports and recreation facilities

### *School environment or ethos*

- Availability of rehabilitation path, plans or guidelines
- Availability and quality of counselling and guidance services
- Conduciveness of the environment for study –
  - learner friendliness
  - noise levels
  - learning climate
- Other rehabilitation programmes available for school attending inmates

### *School teaching and learning resources*

- Availability, quality and accessibility of books in the library
- Availability of prescribed texts accessible to both educators and learners
- Teaching and learning equipment available
- School curricular availability and accessibility

### *Outputs and outcomes*

- Check at the public displays the broadcasted national examination results for the past five years of each facility

END OF THE LIST

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#### THE IMPACT OF INCARCERATION ON YOUNG OFFENDERS' ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION IN MALAWI'S PENITENTIARY FACILITIES

By

**SAMSON CHAIMA ROBIN KAJAWO**

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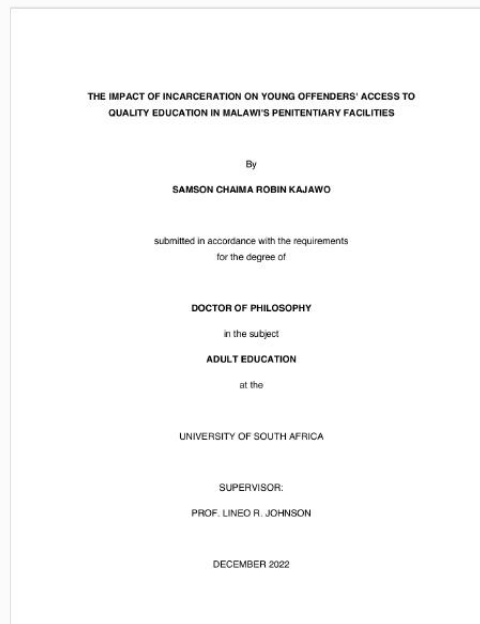


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