Problematics of accessing tertiary education in Tanzanian prisons

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Abstract

Prisoners' education, especially tertiary education for prisoners, is largely under-researched in Africa, particularly in Tanzania. This article draws upon a qualitative research project, which focused on prison education in Tanzania to address a major research question, 'What are barriers to tertiary education in Tanzanian prisons?'

A total of 51 participants were involved in this study. They were mainly prisoners, ex-prisoners, prison staff and the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) representative. Data were collected through interviews and documentary analysis. Then data were analysed thematically.

Results from this study showed that very few prisoners accessed tertiary education; and Tanzania has no aspects considered a 'proper' policy and reliable sources of funds to finance education for prisoners. As a result, they complicated prisoners' access to tertiary education. Some prisoners were interested and qualified to undertake tertiary education, but they were prevented from access because of lack of funds. Hence, it is argued in this paper that lack of clear policies on prison education and funding have contributed to prisoners' poor access to tertiary education. As tertiary education is vitally important for prisoners' reintegration into society, findings from this research suggest the necessity for Tanzania Prisons Service (TPS) to work closely with other institutions, including Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to gain sources of funds for prisoners' tertiary education. Other learning institutions such as the Institute of Adult Education and the Open University of Tanzania should be involved in provision of tertiary education to prisoners.

Key words: Prisoners' education, tertiary education, educational access, lifelong learning, social justice.

1.0 Introduction

Tanzania has 126 prisons (all public), which hold over 33,000 prisoners (Msoroka, 2018; The United Republic of Tanzania, 2017c). However, the capacity of all Tanzanian prisons is 29,552 inmates (Mikongoti, Mlowe, & Wazambi, 2016; The United Republic of Tanzania, 2017c), implying an excess of almost 4,000 prisoners. Studies indicate that such trend of overcrowding prisons is common in Tanzania due to high recidivism rates (Inmate Rehabilitation and Welfare Services Tanzania, 2014; Msoroka, 2018). One can argue that having overcrowded prisons is an indication of a poor functioning prison system.

Originally, prisons were intended to punish offenders so that such persons and others are deterred from committing crimes (Kemp & Johnson, 2003; Pollock, 2014; Stohr & Walsh, 2012). The assumption is that, "offenders and potential offenders will fear the punishment mandated by state and federal governments to the extent that they will not engage in criminal acts" (Kemp & Johnson, 2003, p. 11). This paper considers punitive view of imprisonment is a conservative philosophy (Pollock, 2014). However, it is argued here that the current Tanzanian prison boom and high recidivism rates (47%) are an indication that prisons provide '*unintended consequences*' (Shay, 2012). In due regard, prisons have failed to deter people from committing crimes.

Literature suggests that due to poor functioning of the original punitive (conservative) philosophy of prisons, prison systems, especially in the developed countries, are taking highly liberal approaches to imprisonment (Cullen, Jonson, & Nagin, 2011; Pollock, 2014). It is argued that the conservative approach to imprisonment does not address the root cause of crime [(poor educational background, lack of work skills, and poverty) (Cullen et al., 2011). The liberal philosophy to imprisonment supports education for prisoners, including tertiary education, which is known to help prisoners reintegrate into society.

1.1 Rehabilitation: The Conception

According to Campbell (2005), *rehabilitation,* in a prison context, is "the process of helping a person to readapt to society or to restore someone to a former position or rank." Rehabilitation includes all activities carried out in prisons that intend to improve inmates' behaviour. In this modern and liberal era, reduction in reoffending is believed to be best achieved

through rehabilitation programmes (Workman, n.d.). Over time, methods for prisoners' rehabilitation have evolved. They started with:

> "Silence, isolation, labour, and punishment, then moving onto medically based interventions including drugs and psychosurgery. More recently, educational, vocational, and psychologically based programs, as well as specialised services for specific problems, have typically been put forward as means to reform prisoners during their sentence" (Campbell, 2005, p. 831).

Programmes such as literacy education, general education, vocational training as well as college education are part of prison education and it is argued they improve prisoners' rehabilitation (Campbell, 2005; Cullen & Gendreau, 2000). These programmes are suggested to improve prisoners' attitudes, motivation, awareness including social, personal, and occupational functioning (Workman, n.d.), and they have been reported to positively impact on prisoners' lives (Callan & Gardner, 2007; Davis, Bozick, Steele, Saunders, & Miles, 2013; Davis et al., 2014). The said programmes contribute to preparing prisoners for their reintegration into society and at the same time reduce recidivism (Klein, Tolbert, Bugarin, Cataldi, & Tauschek, 2004; The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2012).

1.2 Tertiary education for prisoners: Review of selected developed countries

Two developed countries from the Southern hemisphere (New Zealand and Australia) and one from the Northern hemisphere (USA) were selected for discussion on issues related to tertiary education for prisoners. It is expected that such discussion will contribute to understanding of the Tanzanian prison education context. This section begins with discussion of tertiary education for the United States of America (USA) prisoners.

In the USA, authorities are believed to be *tough on crime* (The National Institute for Literacy, 2002; Whitaker, 2016). Giving prisoners a chance to undertake prison education is considered to be *soft on crime* (Whitaker, 2016). Consequently, the USA does not have a stable policy on tertiary education for prisoners and policies in education have been changing over the years. Following the 1971 rebellion in Attica prison, the USA Government introduced college education in prisons (Zahn, 1997). Prisoners who undertook college education were allowed to benefit from the *Pell Grants* - A college financial aid program established to provide monetary

support to low-income, undergraduate students (Mastrorilli, 2016; Zahn, 1997). Gaining access to the Pell Education Grant increased prisoners' entry into tertiary education. By 1991, 14 percent of prisoners were admitted to college education (Zahn, 1997). In 1994, the USA Government amended the law and excluded prisoners as beneficiaries of the Pell Grants (Klein *et al*., 2004; Spangenberg, 2004; Torre, 2005; Zahn, 1997). It has been reported that change of the policy negatively affected prisoners because they were left with no reliable funds to support their tertiary education (Mastrorilli, 2016; Zahn, 1997). Mostly, prisoners' access to tertiary education was heavily dependent on self-funding. Hence, prisoners' participation in tertiary education programmes in state prisons dropped from 14 percent in 1991 to 7 percent in 2004 (Davis *et al*., 2013; Phelps, 2011). Only 33 percent of state prisons were reported to offer tertiary education opportunities to prisoners (Davis *et al*., 2013). In recent years, there has been a move to reinstate prisoners' eligibility for Pell Grants. Notable initiatives include moves in 2015 and later on in 2016, to introduce the Restoring Education and Learning (REAL) Act, "which would have reinstated access to Pell Grants for people in prison" (Strait & Eaton, 2017, p. 3). The moves were never successful. Another initiative was a United Stated of America dollars (US$) 30 million pilot project called the *Second Chance Pell Pilot*, backed by President Obama that was introduced in 2015 and it was successful (Davis, 2019). The project aimed at providing 12,000 prisoners access to Pell Grants to undertake tertiary education (Strait & Eaton, 2017). Although there is inconsistency of research literature on prisoners' access to tertiary education, it is argued that the USA situation is still much better than most of African countries, whose economy fails to support prison education (Sarkin, 2008).

In New Zealand, the 2004 Corrections Act is the main legal framework that enforces prison education (Devine, 2007). Section 78 of the Act allows prisoners to undertake further education, provided that it helps to reduce inmates' recidivism and improves the possibility of prisoners' reintegration into the community (New Zealand Government, 2004). With the law, the Department of Corrections is now collaborating with the Open Polytechnic to offer tertiary education to eligible prisoners (Department of Corrections, n.d.-b). It is noted in Section 78(2) that the New Zealand Government is not committed to offering tertiary education for free (Devine, 2007). Like with any other student who undertakes tertiary education outside prisons

(Department of Corrections, n.d.-a), prisoners who undertake tertiary education are allowed to access students' loans through a Study-Link. For instance, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and the Department of Corrections enabled allocation of more than 8 million New Zealand Dollar to fund institutions that offered tertiary education to prisoners between 2017 and 2018 (TEC, 2017). It is estimated that about 25 percent of New Zealand prisoners gain qualifications from the Open Polytechnic (NZ House of Representatives, 2017).

In contrast to New Zealand, Australia does not have a common policy on prison education. Although the Australian Human Rights Commission (n.d.) named education among the rights of prisoners, the Australian states have different Prison Acts, which stipulate prison education in different weights. In the Victorian Corrections Act, for instance, prison education is mentioned in several Sections and the most important one is Section 47(1)(o). The Section provides prisoners "the right to take part in educational programmes" (Victoria State, 1986, p. 99). In the Western Australia Prison Act (Western Australia, 1981), prison education is mentioned only once in Section 95(2)(f). The section provides "opportunities for prisoners to utilise their time in prison in a constructive and beneficial manner by means of educational and occupational training programmes and other means of self-improvement" (Western Australia, 1981, p. 84). (Western Australia, 1981)The Queensland's Corrective Services Act does not explicitly grant prisoners an opportunity to education (Queensland Government, 2017a). Education is not even mentioned among the rights of prisoners in Queensland (Queensland Government, 2017b). However, no part of the said Prison Acts mention tertiary education for prisoners. From this perspective, one would expect Australian prisons to have different focuses on the issue of prison education, especially tertiary education. Reports suggest a high prisoners' access to vocational training in most Australian prisons (Callan & Gardner, 2007; Giles *et al.*, 2007; Wynes, 2007). However, little is known about prisoners' involvement in tertiary education. Some readings suggest that in Australia, "higher education is not seen as a priority in correctional education" (Farley, Pike, Demiray, & Tanglang, 2016, p. 152). Recent reports show that the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) has started to deliver online university courses in Queensland's prisons (Farley *et al.*, 2016; Tlozek, 2014). It is estimated that about 1,000 offenders have been served tertiary

preparation courses in 13 Queensland prisons (Tlozek, 2014).

It is clear from literature that the selected countries (the USA, New Zealand, and Australia) have different policies and approaches to tertiary education for prisoners. However, one lesson can be learned that all selected countries consider the importance of college education. Consequently, they all put some efforts (at different levels) to increase prisoners' access to tertiary education. This lesson may be of interest for the Tanzanian prison education context.

1.3 Tertiary education for prisoners: Review of selected African countries

Three African countries [South Africa (SA), Uganda, and Kenya] were selected to investigate tertiary education in the African prison context prior to analysis of the Tanzanian context. Selection of these countries was based on their liberal policies on prison education. In South Africa, prison education is controlled by the South African Correctional Service Act. Section 42 requires every prison to form a Case Management Committee to assess prisoners' rehabilitation needs, including education. Section 41(1) and (2) state:

> "(1) The Department must provide or give access to as full a range of programmes and activities as is practicable to meet the education and training needs of sentenced prisoners. (2) Sentenced prisoners who are illiterate or children may be compelled to take part in the educational programmes offered in terms of Subsection (1)" (The Republic of South Africa, 1998, p. 42).

Although tertiary education is not clearly mentioned in this Act, it is argued that South Africa is one of the few African countries that have developed a legal framework for prison education. Studies suggest that some prisoners in South Africa have access to tertiary education (Johnson, 2015; Jules-Macquet, 2014; Quan-Baffour & Zawada, 2012). Although there are no clear data on the extent of prisoners' access to tertiary education, a very recent study conducted in three South African prisons found 12 prisoners undertaking tertiary education (Johnson, 2015). Such number of prisoners undertaking tertiary education in the three prisons is exceptionally high when taking into consideration the Tanzanian situation. Thus, it can be argued that South Africa is more advanced than Tanzania when it comes to tertiary education for prisoners.

In Uganda, Section 57 (d) of the Prison Act considers access to education as one of prisoners' rights (The Government of Uganda, 2006). It can be argued that such (legal) educational recognition has contributed to contemporary reports that suggest some Ugandan prisoners attend formal education (Asiimwe & Kinengyere, 2011; Serwanjja, 2014; Ssanyu, 2014). Nevertheless, like many other African countries, little is known regarding prisoners' access to tertiary education in Uganda. Literature suggests that in 2009, Uganda Prison Service teamed up with Makerere University Business School (MUBS) to enable prisoners in Luzira prison with pre-requisites to undertake a diploma course in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management (Ssanyu, 2014). As a result, several prisoners have successfully gained their diplomas. Other reports (African Prisons Project, 2016, n.d.; Serwanjja, 2014; Ssanyu, 2014) suggest that the African Prison Project (APP) offers Ugandan prisoners with scholarships, which allow prisoners with pre-requisites to undertake diploma and degree courses in law from the University of London, through Distance Learning. Thus, it can be argued that Uganda has better arrangements to support tertiary education in prisons than Tanzania.

In Kenya, the Prison Act has sections that allow educational activities in prisons (The Republic of Kenya, 2012). Section 63, for instance, has four subsections. Three of them (Subsections 1, 2, and 3) are highly focused on prison education. They state that,

"(1) The officer in-charge shall take all steps that he considers practicable to arrange evening educational classes for the prisoners in his charge, and shall permit prisoners in their leisure time to study by means of courses approved and arranged by him and to practise handicrafts; and special attention shall be paid to the education of illiterate persons.

(2) Whenever possible, there shall be a library in each prison, and prisoners shall be permitted to draw books from the library in accordance with such directions as the Commissioner may from time to time make.

(3) The officer in charge may arrange for lectures, concerts and debates for prisoners to take place outside the hours of labour" (The Republic of Kenya, 2012, p. 64).

Although the Kenyan Prison Act does not clearly state tertiary education, mentioning prison education allows prisons to offer college courses for

prisoners. Studies related to tertiary education in Kenyan prisons are scarce. However, reports suggest that some prisoners have been able to study for Law Degree at the University of London, through APP scholarships (Anonymous, 2017; Coughlan, 2014). According to a recent report, 16 prisoners in Kamiti prison studied for their degrees through this programme (Anonymous, 2017). Such access to tertiary education is mainly attributed to cooperative partnerships between the Kenya Prisons Service and the APP. In comparison to the Tanzanian context, Kenyan Prisons Service has done very well in tertiary education compared to Tanzania. Having 16 prisoners undertaking tertiary education (from one prison) is a commendable effort.

Studies hold that prisoners who have undergone tertiary education while in prisons have improved their discipline. They have greater chance to change their perspectives on life and smoothly reintegrate into society thereby increase their ability to compete in the labour market (Fine *et al.*, 2001; Winterfield, Coggeshall, Burke-Storer, Correa, & Tidd, 2009). This is arguably the main reason countries such as New Zealand, Australia, and the United Kingdom (UK) attempt to find a way to provide prisoners with an opportunity to acquire tertiary education (Reuss, 1997; Tlozek, 2014; Torre, 2005).

Despite the said positive impacts of tertiary education on prisoners (Fine *et al.*, 2001; Winterfield *et al.*, 2009), issues related to prison education and tertiary education, in particular, are not well researched in Tanzania (Msoroka, 2018). It can be argued that this is a reflection of society's perspective – including researchers and prison staff – that prison is not an establishment for studies, but rather, it is for punishment (Quan-Baffour & Zawada, 2012).

This article intends to respond to one major research question, "What are barriers to tertiary education in Tanzanian prisons?" In addressing this question, the context of tertiary education for Tanzanian prisoners – issues related to policies and funding – is discussed in this article. This article is expected to bring people's attention, especially Tanzanians to importance of tertiary education for Tanzanian prisoners. It is hoped that this article may be a stepping stone for further discussions on tertiary education for Tanzanian prisoners.

2.0 Methods

An interpretivist research paradigm, which holds that meaning is subjective and multiple (Collins, 2010; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Snape & Spencer, 2003) guided this qualitative project. In this study, five prisons were involved. Four ex-inmates, 28 inmates, 14 prison officers, an ex-senior prison officer, an Open University (OUT) representative, and three other participants from outside prisons were involved in this project. Most of the participants were purposively selected, while a snowballing sampling procedure was used to find ex-inmates. Data were gathered through individual interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and documentary analysis. Because participants of this study were Tanzanians who were fluent and comfortable with Kiswahili language, all interviews were conducted in Kiswahili. Then the researcher transcribed and translated all interviews into understandable English, while maintaining the original meaning conveyed by participants. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the findings from this study. To ensure privacy and anonymity, this piece of work avoids use of actual names of participants.

3.0 Results

This section discusses findings from this study. The findings are presented based on themes that emerged from the analysis. The following section was developed from the data generated from document analysis.

3.1 The context and status of prison education in Tanzania

Penal incarceration was unknown to mainland Tanzanians (Tanganyikans) "prior to the European conquest, when colonial regimes built prisons on a massive scale for deterring political opposition and enforcing African labour" (Bernault, 2003, p. 2). The Prison Service in mainland Tanzania (Tanganyika) was established in 1931 during British rule (Mboje, 2013; The United Republic of Tanzania, 2017c). During the German era (from 1880s to 1919), prisons in Tanzania were under the Police Force. Throughout the colonial periods (the German and British), prisons mainly served the purpose of keeping prisoners in custody for hard work and racism that were dominant (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2017a; Williams, 1980). The two colonial governments used prisons as their coercive instruments (Nyoka, 2013; Williams, 1980). There is no evidence of prison education activities in prisons during the colonial periods.

At the time mainland Tanzania (Tanganyika) became independent (1961), about 85 percent of Tanzanian (Tanganyikan) population was illiterate (Mushi, 2009). For that reason, in the early years of independence, Tanzania put much effort into reducing illiteracy. Primary schools were used as centres of adult education (Msoroka, 2011; Mushi, 2009) while many other adult education classes were carried out under trees, in market places, factories, bars, churches, social halls, dispensaries, and in street as well as village leaders' houses and so forth (Ishumi & Anangisye, 2014; Mushi, 2009). Literature suggests that adult education activities were also conducted in prisons during that period (Msoroka, 2018).

However, studies suggest that for a long time, even after independence, the Tanzania Prisons Services (TPS) has been following a similar pattern to that of the colonial prison systems – keeping prisoners in custody for punishment (Nyoka, 2013). Since the 1990s, the TPS has been attempting to adopt modern philosophies of imprisonment. It is now claimed that TPS considers humanity in treating offenders, and that its main focus is on rehabilitation of prisoners (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2017a). This study contributes to understanding the manner tertiary education has become part of rehabilitation approaches to imprisonment within the Tanzanian context.

As stated previously, the current number of prisoners in Tanzania exceeds prison capacity by almost 4,000 prisoners (Mikongoti *et al*., 2016; The United Republic of Tanzania, 2017c). There is no recent official study related to reoffending rates in Tanzania. However, the most recent quoted reoffending rate is 47 percent (Inmate Rehabilitation and Welfare Services Tanzania, 2014). It should be noted that offending and reoffending are usually associated with skills deficit – low levels of formal education, illiteracy, and low/no job skills (The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2012) – Tanzanian offenders are not free from skills deficit. For instance, reports indicate that about 75 percent of Isanga prisoners (Dodoma, Tanzania) were illiterate (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2014) thereby suggesting the necessity of prison education. Some prisons (including Isanga, Wami, and Luanda) are reported to introduce literacy education to address illiteracy problem among prisoners (Msamada, 2013; Msoroka, 2018). As presented in the following sub-sections, tertiary education has never been given enough attention in Tanzania.

3.2 Policy on prison education and funding: Implication for prisoners' access to tertiary education in Tanzania

3.2.1 Prison education policy context

In Tanzania, the 1967 Tanzania Prison Act Number 34 is the main document that guides prison activities. However, unlike South Africa, Uganda, and Kenyan laws, the Tanzanian Prison Act does not explicitly offer prisoners an opportunity to prisoners' education (Msoroka, 2018; The United Republic of Tanzania, 1967). There is no section in the Act that stresses prison education. This study suggests that the 2011 Prison Education Guide (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011) is the only policy document that offers the possibility for Tanzanian prisons to provide prison education. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Prison Education Guide is not a legally binding document. Findings from this research illustrate that prisons are not legally required to offer prison education. Prison education is not a mandated part of rehabilitation programmes and therefore, prisoners cannot insist on their access to education. Most importantly, there is nowhere in the Prison Education Guide that tertiary education is mentioned. The results from this research indicate that lack of policy clarity has impacted on Tanzanian prisoners' access to tertiary education as will be seen in the following sub-sections.

3.2.2 Prison education funds

The findings from this study suggest that Tanzanian prisons are not allocated budgets by the government for prison education. During interviews, most prison staff complained about this problem. Some said that,

"Our prison doesn't have a budget for prison education purposes. We can't afford to buy chalk, notebooks, pens, and textbooks. Sometimes, we are completely out of chalk to run our classes.

Our main challenge is financial constraint. We need funds to buy books and other teaching and learning materials, including tools for workshops. The problem is that the government usually sets funds for prisoners' meals and medication. It doesn't focus on prisoners' education. I think they forget that prisoners need education for their rehabilitation, which is the main purpose of this prison.

The main problem is how to get those resources. Our prison doesn't have a budget to buy notebooks, pens, chalk and books."

It is argued that such lack of funds is intentional. It reflects the Ministerial general budget. Although the Minister for Home Affairs claimed that the Ministry focuses more on prisoners' rehabilitation, in the 2017/2018 budget, the Government allocated no funds for prison education (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2017b). Despite the pledge to offer rehabilitation programmes, Tanzania does not have a clear policy on prison education funds and thus, it indicates poor focus on prison education. Literature suggests that wealthier countries such as New Zealand allocate funds for prison education and in particular, tertiary education within prisons (TEC, 2017). However, this might be difficult to achieve in African countries because of their weak economies (Sarkin, 2008). Countries such as Uganda and Kenya are also faced with a similar challenge (Gumi, 2014; Kalid, 2011). It is for this reason that the author of this article calls for wide involvement of society – including other institutions, NGOs, and individuals – in supporting prison education.

3.3 Implications for prisoners' access to tertiary education in Tanzania

The previous two subsections discuss issues on prison education policies and funding. This section discusses implications of such policies and funding to tertiary education in Tanzania. Findings from this study suggest that very few prisoners had access to tertiary education in Tanzanian prisons. At the time of this study, two prisoners had completed a Bachelor of Law (LLB) degree, the third one was in the process of completing his Bachelor of Law and the fourth had completed a Diploma in Education. All four prisoners underwent their studies through the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) in the Open and Distance Learning mode. The first prisoner graduated in 2007, the second in 2009, and the third one (the diploma graduand) graduated in 2016. Two of the successful prisoners were out of prison. They formed an NGO, which serves prisoners.

One can ask how a prison system with more than 30,000 inmates had only four prisoners who accessed tertiary education in 57 years of independence. This study suggests that lack of clear policy on prison education and funding are among issues that influenced on prisoners' poor participation in tertiary education. During interviews with one ex-inmate who underwent tertiary education, he revealed that,

"Tuition fee was the first obstacle in my studies. Prison management told me that they couldn't allow me to take up studies if I didn't have a sponsor."

When asked how he succeeded, he stated that,

"I was lucky enough to get a sponsor. He paid for my first and second years of study. He was just a Good Samaritan [a white man] from Nairobi. He volunteered to pay for two consecutive years. That person was one of the leaders in a Pentecostal Denomination and he was also involved in the Life Challenge Africa Project. My final year's tuition fee was paid by one of the OUT leaders, but I don't know him/her even today. That person insisted on remaining anonymous forever. I remember that he/she paid Tanzanian Shillings 300,000 [equivalent to about US$350 according to the exchange rate at the time] for the final year."

The case presented here is a strong indication that Tanzania had no clear policy on tertiary education for prisoners, especially on the issue of funding. Reports suggest that the TPS was teamed up with OUT to offer scholarships to prisoners wanting to undertake OUT programmes (Kazinja, 2014). On the contrary, this study revealed that such scholarship was not in practice. An OUT representative said that,

"We have a plan to provide scholarships to prisoners who would like to study through OUT. We announced it during Bakari's graduation [in 2007], but we have not secured a source of funding for that scholarship. We have sponsored no one among those graduated prisoners. All of them have found their own ways to cover for the learning costs."

Thirteen years after its commitment, the OUT has never been able to support any prisoner. As mentioned previously, after Bakari's graduation, two prisoners graduated through OUT – one with a Bachelor of Law (2009) and the other with a Diploma in Education (Magai, 2016). Another prisoner was studying a Bachelor of Law degree. All mentioned prisoner-learners found their own sources of funds. It is argued that shortage/lack of funding limits prisoners' access (those who are interested and qualify) to tertiary education in the Tanzanian context. This argument is consistent with a report from Ukonga prison (Head of Ukonga Prison, 2016), which identified five prisoners who were interested and qualified to attend tertiary education, but had no means to finance their education. It is probable that there are other prisoners in Tanzanian prisons who fail to take up tertiary studies because of the funding problem.

4.0 Limitations

This qualitative study involved a few prisoners and prison officers from five prisons, and only four ex-prisoners. This may not be a fully representative sample of all prisons and ex-prisoners in Tanzania. It is up to readers to decide relevance of the findings of this article to their contexts.

5.0 Conclusion

This article discusses problems of accessing tertiary education in Tanzanian prisons. It is argued in this article that Tanzania does not have a clear policy on tertiary education for prisoners, which has limited inmates' access to tertiary education. Unlike Uganda and Kenya, whose prisoners are able to access the African Prisons Project scholarships to undertake tertiary education (African Prisons Project, 2016; Coughlan, 2014; Serwanjja, 2014), Tanzanian prisoners did not have such opportunities. This paper holds that lack of funding opportunities for Tanzanian prisoners is exacerbated by lack of clear policies on prison education. However, the argument for lack of support such as those provided by the African Prisons Project could be due to Tanzanian prisons being "total institutions," which refer as a kind of restricted and isolated organisations with minimal interactions with other organisations and people outside (Amundsen, Msoroka, & Findsen, 2017; Msoroka, 2018).

The author of this paper is aware that prisons, especially those still employing the conservative philosophy to imprisonment are entirely for punishment (Pollock, 2014; Stohr & Walsh, 2012). The conservative philosophy to imprisonment, which Tanzania is presumed to still hold onto, does not support prison education. However, considering that such approach to imprisonment has failed to address reoffending (Cullen *et al.*, 2011), imprisonment philosophies are shifting towards the liberal approach, which insists on prison education (Pollock, 2014). One possible reason countries such as Tanzania hold onto the punitive aspect of imprisonment per se is the weak economy of the country (Sarkin, 2008). One can argue that it is worthless for a country such as Tanzania, whose economy cannot sustain the social needs of the population to spend on prisoners' education, especially tertiary education. Nevertheless, because tertiary education has higher impacts on shaping inmates' behaviours, reduction of recidivism, and post-release employment (Fine *et al.*, 2001; Winterfield *et al.*, 2009), this article calls for Tanzanian

prisons to collaborate with other stakeholders to increase prisoners' chance to access tertiary education. Two things are suggested here to improve the current situation: first, to develop a clear policy on prison education that will consider all possible avenues to improve prisoners' education. Second, prisons should become highly open and invite learning institutions – IAE, OUT, UDSM, UDOM and so forth. – and other education institutions to support prison education, including tertiary education. This is a call for a wide range of social participation because the (Tanzanian) Government alone cannot offer the possibility of prison education, especially tertiary education.

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