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Examining the Effectiveness of Management Training Programmes on Organisational Performance: A Case Study of Middle Management Staff in the Zambia Correctional Service

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Abstract

This study examined the effectiveness of management training programmes on organisational performance, focusing on middle management staff in the Zambia Correctional Service (ZCS). Zambia Correctional Service, like other public institutions in Zambia, has continued to invest in staff training and capacity development, there is limited evidence on the extent to which these training programmes have contributed to improved employee performance. The study was guided by three specific objectives: to identify the management training programmes available to middle management staff in the ZCS, to assess the effect of management training on employee performance, and to identify the factors influencing the success or failure of these programmes. Guided by Human Capital Theory, the study adopted a case study design and used a quantitative approach. Purposive sampling was used to select ZCS officers who had participated in middle management training programmes in 2021 and 2024. Data was collected using self-administered semi-structured questionnaires and analysed using STATA. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, including Pearson correlation and simple linear regression, were used to analyse the quantitative data, while responses to open-ended questions were analysed thematically. The findings showed that respondents had participated in both general management and role-specific training programmes. The training was associated with improvements in leadership, decision-making, communication, problem-solving and productivity, with 86.7% of respondents indicating that their job performance had improved after training. However, several challenges limited the effectiveness of the programmes, particularly inadequate funding, limited training resources, insufficient time for training, and weak post-training follow-up. The study concluded that management training is an important investment in developing human capital and improving organisational performance. Its benefits can be strengthened when training is adequately funded, relevant to employees' roles and supported through structured mentorship, follow-up and evaluation.

Keywords: Management Training, Organisational Performance, Employee Performance, Middle Management, Human Capital Theory, Zambia Correctional Service

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

In an increasingly competitive and dynamic global environment, organisations both in the private and public sectors are under constant pressure to improve efficiency, effectiveness and service delivery. Central to achieving these outcomes is the capacity of human resources, particularly management, to drive organisational goals and ambitions. Management training has therefore emerged as a critical strategy for enhancing employee competencies, strengthening leadership capabilities and improving organisational performance. Globally, organisations invest significantly in training and development programmes to equip employees and managers with the skills and knowledge required to navigate complex operational environments and achieve strategic objectives. Empirical evidence suggests that organisations that prioritise training and development tend to experience improved productivity, better service delivery and sustained competitive advantage (Management World, 2024) [32].

Despite the recognised importance of management training, public sector organisations, particularly in developing regions, continue to face significant performance challenges. Across many African countries, public institutions are often characterised

by inefficiencies, weak leadership capacity, and limited ability to meet service delivery expectations. While training and development initiatives are commonly implemented, their effectiveness is frequently constrained by poor programme design, lack of alignment with organisational goals, and inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems (Nzulwa, 2018) [37]. As a result, the anticipated improvements in organisational performance are not always realised. Additionally, challenges such as limited financial resources, outdated training methods, and insufficient institutional support further undermine the impact of training programmes in the public sector (Management World, 2024) [32].

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the need for effective management training has become increasingly important due to ongoing public sector reforms aimed at improving governance, accountability, and service delivery. Governments across the region have introduced capacity-building initiatives to strengthen institutional performance; however, empirical evidence suggests that these efforts do not always translate into measurable performance improvements. For example, studies conducted in countries such as Nigeria and South Africa indicate that while training programmes are in place, their impact is often limited by poor implementation, weak institutional frameworks, and lack of follow-up mechanisms (Ezeani and Oladele, 2013) [18]. This highlights the importance of not only providing training but also ensuring its effectiveness in achieving desired organisational outcomes.

In Zambia, the public sector has undergone various reforms aimed at enhancing service delivery and improving institutional efficiency. Capacity building through training and development has been a central component of these reforms, with particular emphasis on strengthening management and leadership competencies. Evidence from the health sector indicates that management and leadership training can significantly improve organisational performance, including service delivery outcomes and system efficiency (Mutale *et al*., 2017) [34]. However, despite these efforts, challenges remain regarding the effectiveness of training programmes in the public sector. These challenges include inadequate alignment between training content and organisational needs, limited evaluation of training outcomes, and constraints related to financial and human resources.

Middle management staff in ZCS play a pivotal role in translating policy into practice, supervising daily operations, and ensuring organisational performance. Their roles require a combination of technical, administrative, and leadership competencies, making management training essential for enhancing their effectiveness.

This study examined the effectiveness of management training on organisational performance, with a specific focus on middle management staff in the Zambia Correctional Service. By assessing the relationship between training and performance outcomes, this study aims at contributing to the existing body of knowledge and provide evidence-based insights that can inform policy and practice in public sector management and capacity development in Zambia.

1.2 Statement Of The Problem

In the context of Zambia, public sector reforms have emphasised capacity building and management development as key strategies for improving service delivery. However, similar challenges persist. Training initiatives are often implemented without sufficient assessment of their impact on organisational performance, raising concerns about their overall effectiveness (Kayumba, Dubeka and Matafwali, 2024) [26]. Furthermore, public institutions continue to face issues such as inefficiencies, weak leadership capacity, and limited institutional performance improvements despite ongoing investments in training and development (Kayumba, Dubeka and Matafwali, 2024) [26]. Middle management staff in ZCS play a crucial role in translating policy into action, supervising operations, and ensuring institutional performance. However, there is limited empirical evidence on whether management training programmes provided to this group effectively enhance their performance and contribute to improved organisational outcomes. This lack of evidence creates a knowledge gap, particularly in understanding the extent to which training interventions influence organisational performance within the Zambian public sector. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the effectiveness of management training on organisational performance, with a specific focus on middle management staff in the Zambia Correctional Service.

1.3 General Objective

To examine the effectiveness of management training on organisational performance in the Zambia Correctional Service.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

1. To identify the management training programmes available to middle management staff in the Zambia Correctional Service.
2. To assess the effect of management training on employee performance among middle management staff in the Zambia Correctional Service.
3. To identify the factors that influence the success or failure of management training programmes in the Zambia Correctional Service.

1.4 Research questions

1. What are the management training programmes available to middle management staff in the Zambia Correctional Service?
2. What is the effect of management training on employee performance among middle management staff in the Zambia Correctional Service?
3. What factors influence the success or failure of management training programmes in the Zambia Correctional Service?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The study is guided by **Human Capital Theory**, developed by Becker (1964) [9] and Schultz (1961), which explains that investment in education and training enhances employees' knowledge, skills, and productivity. In this study, management training is viewed as an investment in the capabilities of middle management staff in the Zambia Correctional Service. The theory suggests that improved leadership, decision-making, supervisory, and administrative skills gained through training can contribute to better employee performance, operational efficiency, service delivery, and overall organisational performance.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study is significant in practical, policy, and theoretical

terms. Practically, it will provide the Zambia Correctional Service with information on the effectiveness of management training and its contribution to employee and organisational performance. From a policy perspective, the findings may assist government and relevant stakeholders in improving training and capacity-building strategies within public institutions. Theoretically, the study will contribute to knowledge on human resource development and management training, particularly within the correctional service and the broader public sector context.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the effectiveness of management training on organisational performance within the Zambia Correctional Service, with particular emphasis on middle management staff. It will be limited to selected correctional facilities and departments where middle managers are involved in organisational operations and training implementation. The study is confined to the Zambian public sector and will not cover other institutions or lower- and upper-level management staff.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Effect of Management Training on Employee Performance

Human capital theory provides the theoretical foundation for this body of work, holding that investment in employee training increases productivity and generates measurable returns for both employees and organisations (Becker, 1964) [9]. This premise is supported extensively across the empirical literature: training has been shown to improve decision-making, leadership capacity, and problem-solving skills, translating into improved workplace performance (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020) [2], and is widely identified as the most essential determinant of employee performance, particularly when it complements and refines skills already developed through job experience (Ul Afaq & Khan, 2005). Several studies confirm a direct positive relationship between training and organisational performance: training exerts a major impact on task execution (Prabhu *et al*., 2020) [41], enhances employees' ability to carry out responsibilities effectively (Cooke *et al*., 2020) [13], and improves productivity and coordination (Wood & Bischoff, 2020), a pattern corroborated by Gbolahan (2012) and by Ahmed *et al*. (2024) [3], who found that structured training improves productivity, team effectiveness, and overall organisational performance. Thang and Buyens (2008) further argue that firm success is determined by human resources rather than physical assets, underscoring training as a strategic rather than discretionary investment, while Tsaur and Lin (2004) and Olaniyan and Ojo (2008) similarly emphasise that well-designed training directly shapes both employee and organisational performance.

The effectiveness of training, however, is not uniform, and depends heavily on design, relevance, and delivery. Noe (2017) [36] argues that the extent of training's impact depends on how well it is designed and aligned with job roles and organisational needs, a view echoed by Hasyim and Bakri (2023) [24], who found generic training less effective than programmes contextualised to local organisational culture. Delivery mode also matters: Collins and McNulty (2020) [14] found that off-the-job training improved efficiency more than on-the-job training, which offered more immediate but less strategically transferable learning. Evaluation is similarly critical to determining whether design translates into impact. Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2006) [27] developed the widely used four-level framework, evaluating reaction, learning, behaviour, and results, while the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) offers a structured approach to training design whose success depends on rigorous evaluation at every stage (Dayanti *et al*., 2023) [17].

Beyond productivity, training generates significant effects on employee attitudes and retention. Guest (2011) [19] finds that training enhances employee commitment, reduces turnover, and increases productivity, while Guest *et al*. (2020) [21] similarly link successful training to both skill effectiveness and job satisfaction. Choudhary's research team, as cited in Abdullah and Othman (2019) [1], found training closely linked to work motivation and organisational engagement, and Lamba's work further demonstrates that training strengthens employees' sense of belonging. Abdullah and Othman (2019) [1] additionally note that organisations committed to long-term training investment experience greater retention and better outcomes than those treating training as a short-term or casual measure. Training also plays a role in aligning employee capability with external demands: Alserhan and Shbail (2020) [4] argue that training connects marketplace needs with organisational expectations, and that interventions such as re-orientation, workforce preparation, refresher courses, and formal safety training improve both employee wellbeing and workplace safety.

Leadership development is closely linked to training's effect on performance. Salas *et al*. (2012) [44] find that leadership commitment motivates employees to participate in and apply training, while Liu, Swatdiku, Chen, and Sagboo (2022) [29] found that leadership skills have a comprehensive, context-dependent impact on employee performance, with different leadership styles producing different outcomes depending on organisational context. Capacity-building research in nonprofit and public-sector contexts offers further nuance. Sobeck *et al*., as cited in Bryan (2017), found that nonprofit executive directors reported increased managerial knowledge after capacity-building programmes, but did not necessarily demonstrate improved managerial skill, highlighting the gap between knowledge acquisition and applied competence. Bryan and Brown (2015) [7] similarly found that capacity-building programmes generate individual-level gains in managerial and leadership knowledge and governance understanding, while Carman and Bies, as cited in the same study, emphasise that leadership development is central to strengthening nonprofit organisations specifically. In public-sector and developing-country settings, Tahir (2015) found that capacity building produces significantly stronger performance gains when combined with organisational support for career development (OSCD) than when implemented alone, and that empowerment resulting from capacity development, characterised by stronger self-esteem, confidence, and willingness to innovate, further amplifies these effects (Ortenblad, Abrahamson, & Sheaf, 2016) [39]. Comparable findings emerge from East and Southern African institutions: Otibine (2016) [40] found that capacity development, coaching, and job shadowing at DFID Kenya improved staff confidence and supported smoother skills transfer during turnover; Utete (2023) found that professional development provision and a supportive

internal environment enhanced the performance of designated employee groups in a Durban organisation; and Makau (2017) found a significant effect of performance management and capacity building on employee performance within a Kenyan insurance company.

2.2 Factors that Influence the Success or Failure of Management Training of Employees

Whether management training succeeds or fails depends on a set of interrelated factors, the first of which is need-based training design. Noe (2017) [36] argues that training tailored to organisational needs outperforms generic programmes, and Ahmed *et al*. (2024) [3] similarly emphasise that training designed on the basis of needs assessments significantly enhances participant motivation, knowledge transfer, and behavioural impact. Hasyim and Bakri (2023) [24] reinforce this, finding that generic training is less effective than training contextualised to local organisational culture, though such needs assessment is resource-intensive and risks narrowing training too tightly around present rather than future demands.

A second determinant is the use of instructional and evaluation models. Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick's (2006) [27] four-level framework (reaction, learning, behaviour, results) remains the dominant evaluation tool, while the ADDIE model provides a structured design approach (Dayanti *et al*., 2023) [17]. However, several studies note that organisations frequently stop at the reaction and learning levels, leaving the true behavioural and organisational impact of training unmeasured.

Third, leadership and organisational support strongly shape whether training transfers into workplace behaviour. Hussien *et al*. (2021) [25] find that active leadership support for integrating training outcomes significantly increases adoption and effectiveness, since leaders serve as role models who reinforce training's strategic importance. Salas *et al*. (2012) [44] and Armstrong and Taylor (2020) [2] similarly stress that leadership commitment and a supportive organisational culture are essential for training transfer, though overreliance on individual leaders introduces vulnerability, since effectiveness can fluctuate with leadership turnover and shifting management priorities.

Fourth, technology has become a transformative but double-edged factor in training delivery. E-learning platforms, simulations, and virtual classrooms expand access, flexibility, and scalability, and support blended learning approaches with data-driven insight into learner progress. However, digital divides may exclude employees with limited access or proficiency, and overreliance on technology can reduce the interpersonal interaction that management training often requires.

Finally, structural and contextual constraints frequently undermine capacity-building efforts in public-sector settings. Danjuma, Goni, and Satomi (2019) [15], in a study of Nigerian public-sector organisations, identify unreliable needs assessment, inadequate funding, the marginalisation of capacity building within organisational policy, weak evaluation of outcomes, and a shortage of credible, well-briefed trainers as recurring barriers to effectiveness. Their study further identifies low staff morale arising from inadequate recognition, poor selection of training participants, a persistent disconnect between theoretical training content and practical application, and the routine non-evaluation of training outcomes as compounding challenges. Taken together, this literature indicates that training's contribution to performance is contingent rather than automatic: it depends on need-based design, sustained leadership and organisational support, appropriate use of technology, and rigorous evaluation, underscoring the importance of context-specific rather than generic approaches to training design and implementation.

2.3 Factors Influencing the Success or Failure of Management Training Programmes in the Zambia Correctional Service

Management training is an important component of human resource development because it equips managers with knowledge, skills and competencies required for effective leadership and organisational performance. However, evidence suggests that participation in training does not automatically translate into improved workplace performance. Training outcomes are influenced by factors including the relevance of training content, trainee motivation, training methods, organisational support, supervisory support, availability of resources, opportunities to apply acquired skills, and post-training monitoring (Burke & Hutchins, 2007; Franke & Felfe, 2012; Yaqub, Singh & Dutta, 2021).

From a global perspective, literature indicates that training effectiveness depends largely on the transfer of knowledge and skills from the training environment to the workplace. Burke and Hutchins (2007) identify learner characteristics, training design and the work environment as major determinants of training transfer. Similarly, Franke and Felfe (2012) found that motivation to transfer leadership skills and organisational support contribute to the successful application of managerial competencies. Supervisor support is also significant because managers and supervisors can provide feedback, encouragement and opportunities for employees to practise newly acquired skills (Govaerts & Dochy, 2014). These findings suggest that management training should be viewed as a continuous process rather than a one-time activity.

At the African regional level, evidence from correctional institutions highlights the importance of institutional capacity, leadership, resources and continuous professional development. In Kenya, Ombima and Were (2014) found that training and development and leadership were significantly associated with the performance of prison officers. In South Africa, challenges such as inadequate facilities, shortages of personnel and limited management support have been reported as constraints to the implementation of correctional education programmes (Mafilika & Marongwe, 2024). These findings demonstrate that the organisational environment can either facilitate or constrain the benefits of training.

In Zambia, staff development is formally recognised within the Zambia Correctional Service (ZCS), with the Correctional Staff Training College responsible for training recruits, cadet officers and serving officers. The government has also implemented management training programmes, including middle-management courses, in response to the changing role of correctional institutions and the shift towards rehabilitation. However, available Zambian literature and institutional reports largely focus on training provision, targets and resources rather than examining the factors that determine whether training produces sustained changes in managerial practice.

The literature therefore reveals a research gap regarding the specific factors influencing the success or failure of management training programmes within the Zambia Correctional Service. In particular, limited empirical attention has been given to the influence of training relevance, trainee motivation, training methods, supervisory support, organisational culture, resource availability, opportunities for application, and post-training monitoring. Addressing this gap can provide evidence on how management training programmes within ZCS can be strengthened and translated into improved managerial practice and correctional service delivery.

2.4 Personal Critique of the Literature Review

The reviewed literature generally agrees that management training contributes positively to both employee performance and overall organizational effectiveness. This consensus is valuable because it establishes a strong theoretical foundation for understanding the role of training in capacity building. However, a critical examination reveals notable limitations in the scope and context of existing studies. Most of the research has been conducted in private sector organizations and within developed countries, where resources, infrastructure, and institutional frameworks differ significantly from those in developing contexts such as Zambia. This creates a gap in applicability, as findings from these environments may not fully capture the realities of public institutions operating under resource constraints.

Another weakness in the literature is the limited attention given to middle management. While senior leadership and frontline staff are often emphasized, middle managers play a crucial role in translating strategic objectives into operational outcomes. Their position as a bridge between top management and employees makes them central to the success of training initiatives. Yet, few studies explicitly explore how training impacts this group, leaving an important dimension under-researched. This oversight reduces the comprehensiveness of existing frameworks and limits their relevance to institutions like the Zambia Correctional Service, where middle management is vital in ensuring effective logistics and service delivery.

Furthermore, many studies treat employee performance and organizational performance as separate constructs rather than integrating them into a single framework. This fragmented approach overlooks the interdependence between individual capacity and institutional outcomes. For example, improved employee skills should logically contribute to organizational efficiency, but the literature often fails to connect these two levels of analysis. This gap weakens the explanatory power of existing studies and highlights the need for more holistic research designs.

In light of these limitations, there is a clear need for context-specific research that addresses the realities of public sector institutions in developing countries. The Zambia Correctional Service provides a unique case where transport and logistics challenges directly affect service delivery, inmate welfare, and institutional credibility. By focusing on middle management and integrating employee and organizational performance within a unified framework, future research can generate more relevant insights and practical recommendations. Without such studies, the literature risks remaining overly generalized and detached from the pressing challenges faced by institutions in contexts like Zambia.

2.5 Establishment of research gaps

From the reviewed literature, several research gaps are identified. Firstly, there is a contextual gap, as most studies on management training and performance are conducted in private sector or developed country settings, with limited focus on African public institutions such as correctional services. Secondly, there is a conceptual gap, as existing studies often examine either employee performance or organisational performance separately, rather than establishing a direct link between management training, employee performance, and organisational performance within one framework.

Thirdly, there is an empirical gap in relation to middle management staff, as few studies specifically investigate how management training impacts this critical group, despite their central role in implementing organisational policies and strategies. Lastly, there is a methodological gap, as many studies rely on general surveys without in-depth case study approaches that allow for detailed understanding of institutional dynamics. Therefore, this study seeks to address these gaps by examining the effectiveness of management training on organisational performance, with a specific focus on middle management staff in the Zambia Correctional Service.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a case study research design focusing on the Zambia Correctional Service as the institutional case. A case study design facilitates an in-depth investigation of a specific institution or phenomenon (O'Leary, 2010). The study primarily employed a quantitative approach, which involved the collection and statistical analysis of numerical data through questionnaires. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to examine management training within the specific organisational context of the Zambia Correctional Service and establish relationships between management training and employee job performance.

3.2 Target Population

The target population comprised Zambia Correctional Service officers from selected correctional facilities who had undergone middle-management training courses in 2021 and 2024. This population was selected because the officers had direct experience of management training and were therefore able to provide relevant information concerning the implementation, effectiveness and outcomes of management training programmes within the Service.

3.3 Sampling Design

The study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are deliberately selected because they possess characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Babbie, 2013) [6]. Middle-management officers who had participated in management training were specifically selected because of their direct experience with the programmes and their responsibility for supervising staff, implementing institutional policies and applying management skills in their workplaces. Purposive sampling enabled the researcher to obtain information from

respondents with relevant knowledge and experience of the phenomenon under investigation (Cohen, 2007).

3.4 Sample Size Determination

The study determined a sample size of 73 respondents using the Cochran (1963) [11] formula. A 95% confidence level, a 5% margin of error and an estimated population proportion of 5% were used in the calculation. The formula provided a statistically acceptable sample size within the available time and financial resources. The resulting sample was considered adequate for conducting the planned descriptive and inferential statistical analyses.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

Data were collected using self-administered semi-structured questionnaires containing both closed- and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions generated quantitative data that could be statistically analysed, while open-ended questions allowed respondents to provide additional explanations and views regarding management training. Questionnaires were distributed using a blended approach involving physical administration and online platforms, including Google Forms. This approach facilitated access to respondents from selected correctional facilities and enabled the collection of information relevant to the study objectives.

3.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were coded, cleaned and analysed using STATA software. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, were used to summarise respondents' views. The coefficient of variation (CV), calculated as CV = (SD/Mean) × 100, was used to determine the degree of variation and consensus among respondents. Inferential analysis included Pearson pairwise correlation to examine the relationship between management training and employee job performance and simple linear regression to determine the effect of management training on job performance at a 5% significance level. Qualitative responses from open-ended questions were analysed thematically to identify recurring themes and patterns. The integration of descriptive, inferential and thematic analysis provided a comprehensive interpretation of the study findings.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

The study had several limitations. The use of purposive sampling limited the generalisability of the findings beyond the selected respondents. Reliance on self-administered questionnaires also created the possibility of response bias, including exaggeration or withholding of information. The study focused primarily on middle-management officers in selected correctional facilities and therefore did not capture the views of lower- and senior-level management. Furthermore, time, financial constraints and institutional protocols affected access to some respondents. Despite these limitations, the researcher implemented appropriate procedures to enhance the reliability and validity of the collected data.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed throughout the study to protect the rights, privacy and welfare of participants. Ethical clearance from Information and Communications University and an authorisation letter from the Commissioner General of the Zambia Correctional Service were obtained before data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation and their right to withdraw at any time. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents, while confidentiality and anonymity of the collected information were maintained. Participants were also informed that the information provided would be used strictly for academic purposes, thereby ensuring transparency and respect for research ethics.

4. Research Findings and Discussion of Results

4.1 Background characteristics of the respondents

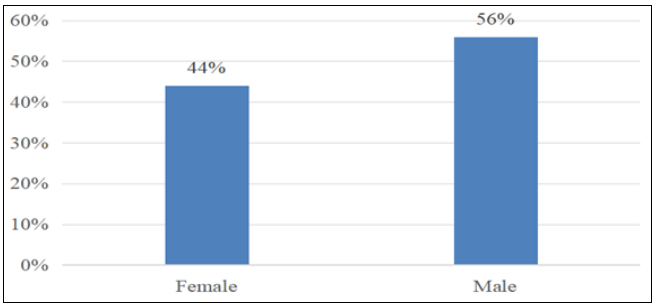


Fig 4.1.1

The findings indicate that 63.3% of respondents were male, while the remaining 36.7% were female. This is relevant to the study because it describes the sex composition of the middle management staff who have gone through management training in the Zambia Correctional Service, providing context for interpreting the training-related perceptions reported later in this chapter.

Age

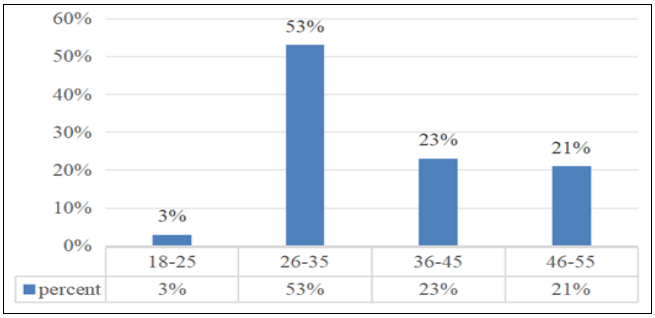


Fig 4.1.2

The findings show that the majority of respondents, 53%, were aged between 26 and 35 years, followed by 23% aged between 36 and 45 years, 21% aged between 46 and 55 years, and only 3% aged between 18 and 25 years; no respondents were aged 56 years or above.

Marital status

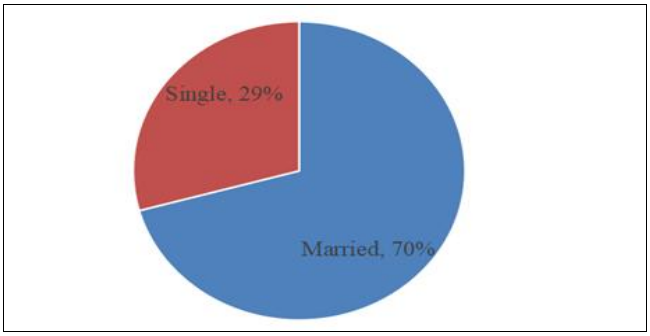


Fig 4.1.3

The findings show that 73.3% of respondents were married, while the remaining 26.7% were single; none reported being separated, divorced or widowed. This is relevant to the study because marital and family responsibilities can influence an employee's availability for, and engagement with, training programmes that require time away from station.

Education level

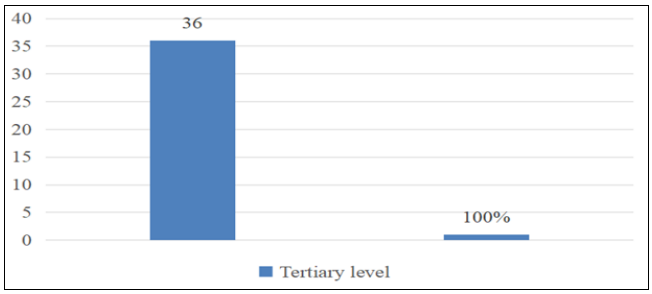


Fig 4.1.4

The findings reveal that all 35 respondents (100%) had attained tertiary level education as their highest level of educational attainment. This is directly relevant to the study because it establishes that the middle management staff who received training already possessed a strong educational foundation before undergoing management training.

When did you undergo capacity-building training

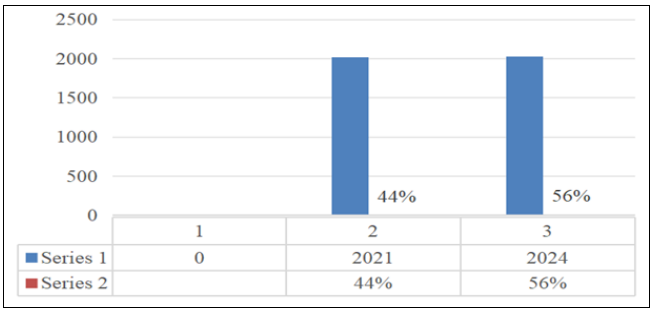


Fig 4.1.5

The findings show that 65.5% of respondents underwent middle management training in 2024, while 31.0% were trained in 2021; one respondent did not indicate the year of training. This is relevant to the study because it establishes how recently respondents' training experiences occurred, which has a bearing on the reliability of their recollections of training content and its immediate effects.

Position Level at the Facility

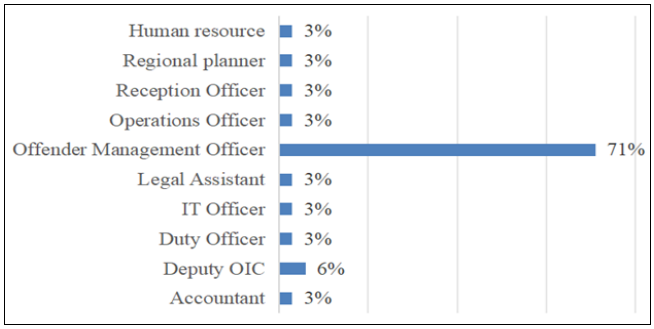


Fig 4.1.6

The respondents held a wide range of positions across correctional facilities, including Deputy Officer-in-Charge, Offender Management Officers, Reception Officers, and various technical and administrative posts such as accountants, IT officers, and human resource officers.

Level of Job in the Organization

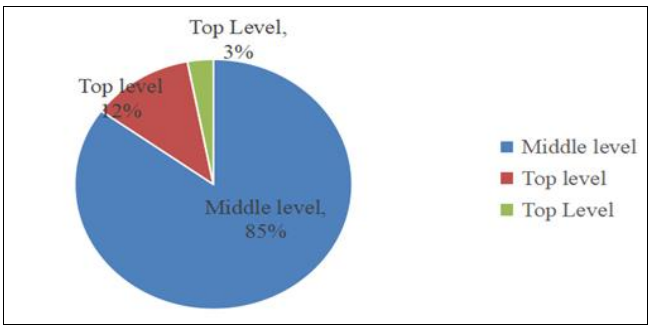


Fig 4.1.7

As expected, given the purposive sampling strategy that targeted middle managers, the overwhelming majority of respondents (83.3%) classified themselves at the Middle Level of the organisation, while 13.3% classified themselves as Top Level and 3.3% as Lower Level. This distribution confirms that the sample was drawn overwhelmingly from the intended target population of middle managers, which strengthens the validity of the study's findings in relation to its central objective of examining training effectiveness among this specific cadre.

The quality of the training programme(s) participated in

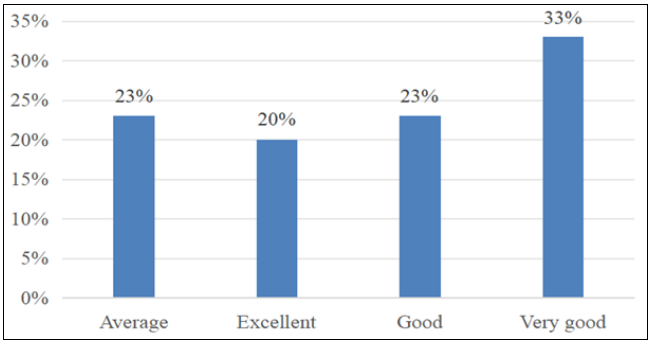


Fig 4.1.8

Respondents' ratings of training quality were generally positive, with 33.3% rating it "Very good", 23.3% "Good",

23.3% "Average" and 20.0% "Excellent". Taken together, more than three-quarters of respondents rated the quality of training as average or better, with over half rating it good or above This is relevant to the study's second objective because the perceived quality of training has a direct bearing on the extent to which employees are able to apply what they have learned in the workplace.

Relevant of management training programmes received

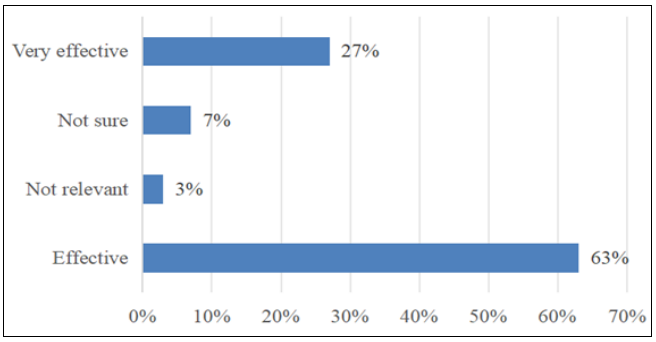


Fig 4.1.9

The majority of respondents found the training relevant to their work, with 63.3% rating it "Effective" and a further 26.7% rating it "Very effective", giving a combined 90% who viewed the training as relevant. Only 6.7% were unsure and 3.3% considered it not relevant.

4.2 Management Training Programmes Attended in the Past Five Years

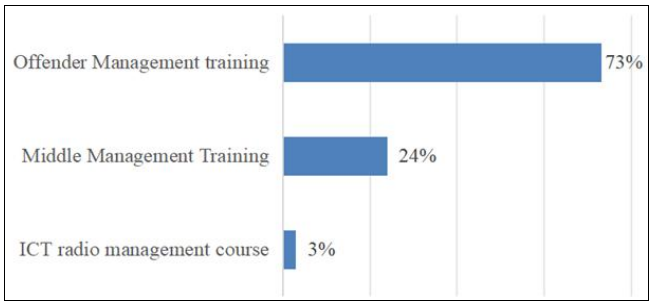


Fig 4.2.1

The findings show that 73.3% of respondents had attended Offender Management Training, 23.3% had attended the Middle Management Training programme, while 3.3% had attended an ICT Radio Management course.

Effect of Management Training on Employee Performance

Influenced of training programmes on middle manager performance Respondents' open-ended descriptions of how management training influenced their performance as middle managers converged on three broad themes. The first, raised by two of the three respondents, was greater clarity regarding job descriptions, policies and procedures; one respondent explained that training "highlighted the specifications on job descriptions and how certain jobs are supposed to be done and handled", while another noted that it "helped me to understand policies and procedures better, which has made me more accountable and efficient in my role". The second theme was improved communication and coordination between management levels, illustrated by a Deputy Officer-in-Charge who explained that training had strengthened their ability to "bridge the gap between senior management and junior officers" by improving how they communicated instructions and coordinated activities. The third theme was strengthened leadership, decision-making and planning skills, with one respondent describing gains in "leadership skills, decision-making, planning, and communication" that left them feeling "more confident, organized, and results-oriented". Although only a small number of respondents answered this particular open-ended question, their accounts are consistent with, and reinforce, the quantitative findings presented next, which show that most respondents perceived clear improvements in their job performance following management training.

Has management training programmes helped improve job performance

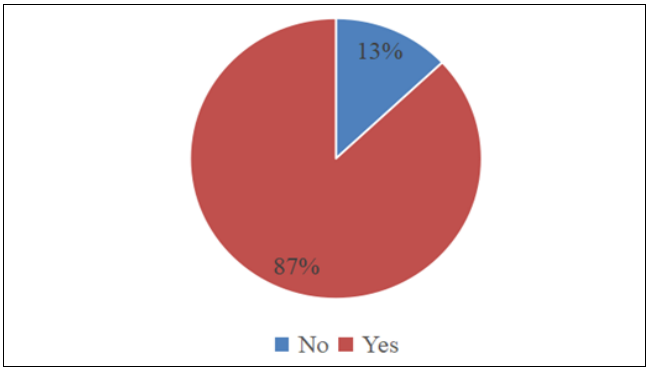


Fig 4.2.2

An overwhelming majority of respondents (86.7%) affirmed that management training programmes had helped improve their job performance, while 13.3% did not agree. This finding is central to the study's second objective, which sought to assess the effect of management training on employee performance among middle management staff.

Impacts experienced from management training programmes

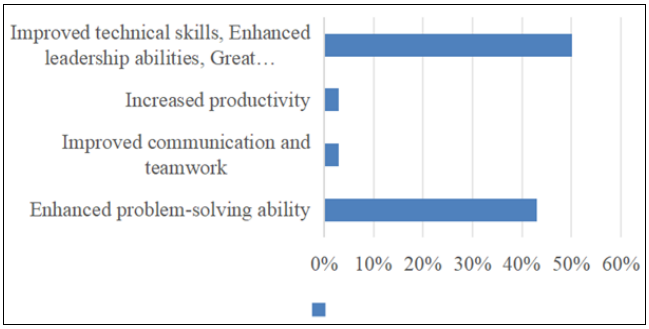


Fig 4.2.3

The most frequently reported impact was increased productivity (50.0%), followed closely by enhanced problem-solving ability (43.3%). A small proportion reported improved communication and teamwork (3.3%), and one respondent (3.3%) selected multiple impacts simultaneously (improved technical skills, enhanced leadership abilities, greater confidence in decision-making, improved communication and teamwork, increased productivity, and enhanced problem-solving ability).

Effectiveness of management training programmes attended in improving job performance

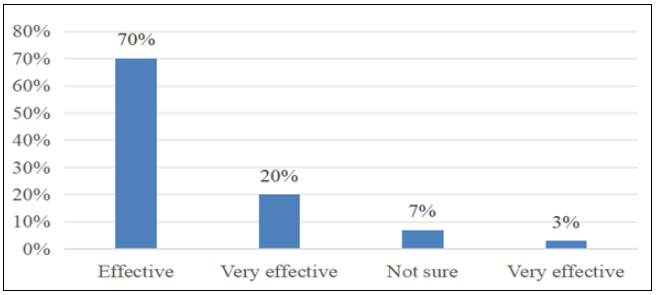


Fig 4.2.4

The majority of respondents rated the training as Effective (70.0%) or Very Effective (20%) in improving their job performance, a combined 90% positive rating, while 3% were not sure. This finding reinforces the study's second objective by providing a direct measure of how effective respondents considered their training to have been in improving their own job performance. The combined 90% positive rating indicates a strong overall perception of training effectiveness among ZCS middle managers, suggesting that the training programmes reviewed in section 4.2 are, on the whole, achieving their intended developmental purpose.

Relevance of management training programmes to employee efficiency and productivity

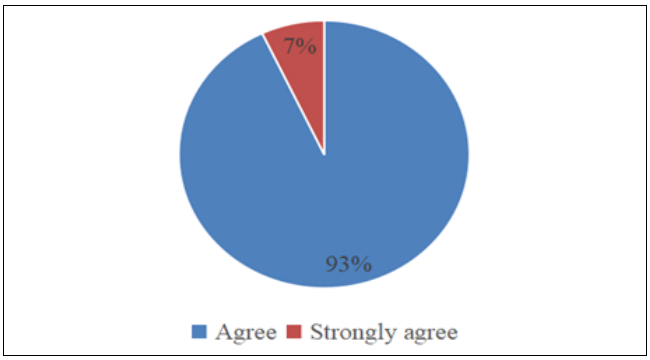


Fig 4.2.5

Virtually all respondents agreed (93.3%) or strongly agreed (6.7%) that management training programmes are relevant to employee efficiency and productivity, with no respondent disagreeing. This near-unanimous finding is significant to the study because it demonstrates that respondents did not merely experience training passively but actively recognised its value in relation to their day-to-day efficiency and output. The complete absence of disagreement suggests a strong, shared perception among ZCS middle managers that management training is a worthwhile investment, consistent with the Human Capital Theory view that training-related returns are most likely to be realised when employees perceive training as directly relevant to their roles (Becker, 1964; Noe, 2017) [9, 36].

Management training programmes have improved the ability to contribute to organizational performance

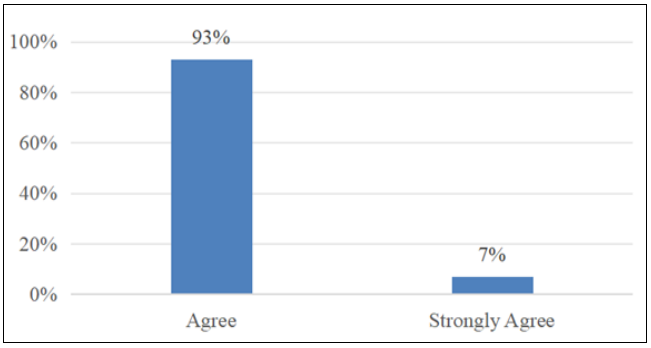


Fig 4.2.6

93.3% of respondents agreed and 6.7% strongly agreed that management training programmes improved their ability to contribute to organisational performance, with no disagreement recorded. This finding is directly relevant to the overarching aim of the study, which sought to examine the effectiveness of management training not only on individual employee performance but also on broader organisational performance. The unanimous agreement recorded suggests that respondents view the benefits of training as extending beyond their personal competencies to the wider institutional goals of the Zambia Correctional Service, such as improved supervision, service delivery and policy implementation. This lends strong support to the study's underlying Human Capital Theory framework, which holds that investment in individual employee capabilities ultimately translates into organisational-level returns (Becker, 1964) [9].

Rate of resources provided during training

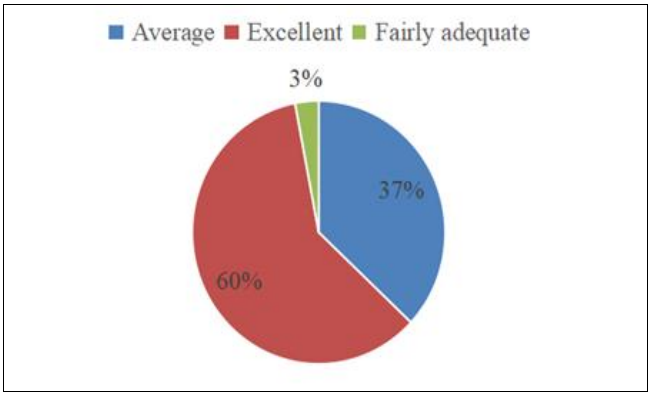


Fig 4.2.7

Sixty percent of respondents (60.0%) rated the resources provided during training (materials, trainers, facilities) as "Excellent", 37% as "Average", and 3% as "Fairly adequate". While the majority view on resourcing is positive, the sizeable minority (36.7%) rating resources as merely average points to inconsistencies in resource provisioning across training cohorts or facilities.

4.3 Success/Failure Factors

Factor that most influence the success of management training programmes

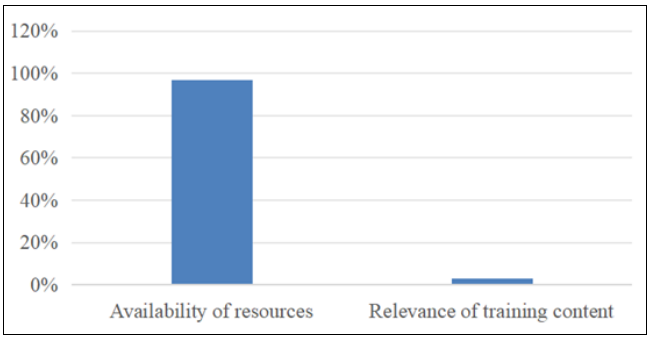


Fig 4.3.1

An overwhelming 97% of respondents identified "availability of resources" as the factor most influencing the success of management training programmes, with only 3.3% citing relevance of training content. This finding directly addresses the study's third objective of identifying the factors that influence the success or failure of management training programmes in the ZCS.

Biggest barrier to effective training implementation

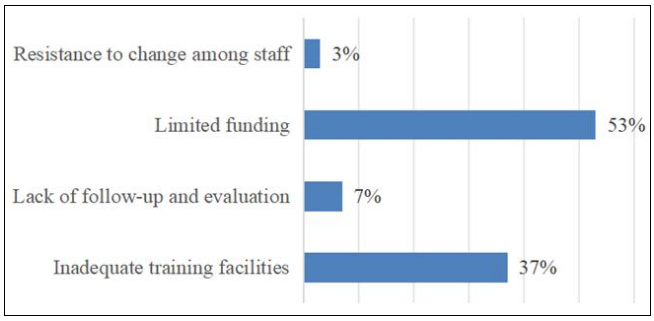


Fig 4.3.2

Limited funding was identified as the biggest barrier to effective training implementation by 53.3% of respondents, followed by inadequate training facilities (36.7%), lack of follow-up and evaluation (6.7%), and resistance to change among staff (3.3%) This finding reinforces the preceding result on the factors influencing training success and provides further evidence in support of the study's third objective.

Challenges faced in applying the knowledge gained from management training programmes

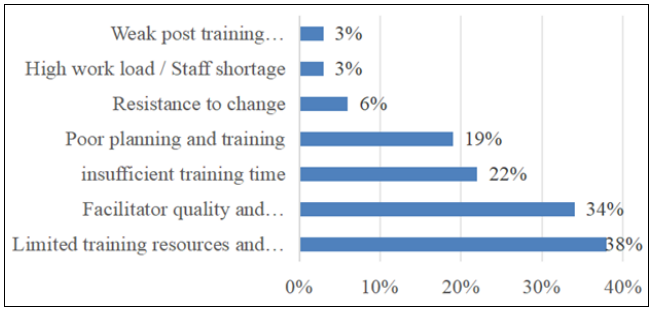


Fig 4.3.3: Thematic distribution of challenges faced in applying training

The findings show that limited training resources and infrastructure (38%) and facilitator quality and professionalism (34%) were the two most frequently mentioned challenges, followed by inadequate funding, allowances and incentives (22%) and insufficient training time (22%). Poor planning and training design (19%), resistance to change (6%), weak post-training follow-up (3%) and high workload (3%) were mentioned less frequently.

Influence of management training programmes on performance and the overall success of the organization

Respondents' open-ended descriptions of how management training influenced their performance, and the overall success of the organisation, converged on several recurring themes. The most common theme, raised by around a third of respondents, was strengthened administrative, procedural and compliance knowledge; one respondent explained that training had “equipped me with relevant knowledge of how to handle administrative duties and comply with policies and laws that govern the smooth handling of key decisions”. A closely related theme, raised by roughly a quarter of respondents, was enhanced leadership, decision-making and planning skills, illustrated by a respondent who reported that training “builds leadership skills, improves communication, boosts decision-making and confidence”. A similar proportion described improved communication, coordination and customer-service skills, including easier interaction with colleagues and stakeholders from different backgrounds. Around a quarter of respondents also linked training to greater confidence and professional growth, with several using the word “confidence” directly to describe its effect on them. A smaller number of respondents highlighted exposure to specialised knowledge or systems previously unfamiliar to them, such as the parole system, with one respondent noting they were “happy that we have introduced it now” and looking forward to applying what they had learned. A small minority of respondents, however, reported limited or no perceptible change in their performance, with one stating plainly that training “was irrelevant” to their role. This finding is directly relevant to the study's second objective of assessing the effect of management training on employee performance, as it shows, in respondents' own words, the specific competencies that training is perceived to have strengthened. The dominance of administrative, leadership and communication-related themes is consistent with the quantitative findings presented earlier in this section, where most respondents reported improved job performance and productivity following training. The presence of a small number of respondents who perceived little or no benefit, however, indicates that training outcomes are not entirely uniform, reinforcing the importance of the resourcing, relevance and facilitation factors examined later in this chapter. It can therefore be concluded that management training in the ZCS is, for the substantial majority of respondents, translating into tangible gains in leadership, administrative competence and confidence, even though a small minority experienced more limited benefit.

Challenges management training programmes faced during training

When asked about the challenges experienced during the training itself, three related themes emerged from

respondents' open-ended responses. The most common concern, raised by two of the five respondents, was a combination of insufficient follow-up after training, limited resources and heavy workload, illustrated by the response that there were "insufficient follow-ups after the training, limited resources and heavy workload". A second theme concerned the physical training environment and logistics, with respondents describing the setting as "not conducive" and citing "logistical challenges such as accommodation (dilapidated hostel), and allowances that affected full participation". The third theme concerned facilitation, with one respondent noting "limited facilitation by trainers with direct experience in correctional service management". This is relevant to the study's third objective because it distinguishes challenges that arise during the delivery of training from those that arise afterwards, when trainees attempt to apply what they have learned. The recurrence of logistical, resourcing and facilitation concerns, even among this small group of respondents, reinforces the pattern already identified in the wider sample: that the conditions under which training is conducted, and not only its content, have a strong bearing on how much value trainees are able to draw from it. It can therefore be concluded that improving the immediate training environment, ensuring adequate follow-up, and engaging facilitators with relevant correctional experience, would meaningfully improve the training experience of ZCS middle managers.

Ways in which management training programmes in the Zambia Correctional Service can be improved with regard to middle management training

Respondents' suggestions for improving management training programmes clustered around six broad themes. The most frequently mentioned theme was the need for greater and more reliable funding and logistical support, covering training materials, diet, accommodation, electricity and transport arrangements; several respondents simply stated that "training should be funded" or recommended measures such as a solar power station or generator to address unreliable electricity. A second theme concerned making training more practical, extended and context-specific, with respondents recommending "role-plays, case studies, and field visits within correctional facilities", an extended training duration, and content "aligned with actual institution challenges" such as inmate management, staff welfare and rehabilitation. A third theme related to facilitator quality and experience, with respondents recommending the use of "experienced facilitators from within the Zambia Correctional Service who understand our unique challenges" and calling for lecturers to be trained and benchmarked locally and internationally. A fourth theme concerned the training environment and infrastructure, including calls for a more "conducive training environment", reliable network connectivity, and improved communication systems. A fifth theme was the need for structured post-training support, with respondents recommending refresher courses, mentorship and monitoring to ensure that skills learned were applied on the job. Finally, a smaller number of respondents raised suggestions about the training administration process itself, including allowing sufficient time to screen participants' qualifications before selection and providing opportunities for internships. These recommendations are directly relevant to the study's third objective, as they identify, from the perspective of trainees themselves, concrete measures that could address the resourcing, facilitation and follow-up challenges already identified in this chapter. The close correspondence between these suggestions and the challenges reported earlier strengthens confidence that respondents' accounts are internally consistent, and provides a practical foundation for the recommendations made in Chapter Five of this study.

The qualitative findings presented above provide further texture to these quantitative findings. Recurring themes across the open-ended responses on challenges applying training, challenges faced during training, and suggestions for improvement include: (i) inadequate funding, allowances and logistical support; (ii) insufficient time allocated to training; (iii) concerns about the qualifications and professionalism of some facilitators; (iv) poor training environments and infrastructure (accommodation, network connectivity, sanitation); and (v) a lack of structured follow-up, mentorship or evaluation after training. These themes correspond closely to the four HRM-perspective factors identified in the literature review (section 2.2): need-based training design, instructional and evaluation models, leadership and organisational support, and integration of technology, with resourcing and follow-up evaluation emerging as the most pressing concerns for ZCS middle managers specifically.

4.4 Discussion of research findings

4.4.1 Discussion of findings on objective one: Management training programmes available to middle management staff in the Zambia Correctional Service

The first objective sought to identify the management training programmes available to middle management staff in the Zambia Correctional Service. The findings showed that respondents had attended Middle Management Training, Offender Management Training and an ICT Radio Management course. The results therefore indicated that training within the ZCS combined general management and supervisory development with role-specific training. This finding was consistent with the Human Capital Theory perspective discussed in section 1.5, particularly the distinction between general human capital and organisation-specific human capital (Nafukho, Hairston & Brooks, 2004) [35]. The general management components provided transferable leadership and supervisory competencies, while role-specific programmes developed skills applicable to particular functions within the Service. The finding also supported Noe (2017) [36], who argued that training had a stronger effect when it was relevant to employees' job roles and organisational needs. The diversity of positions represented in the sample further suggested that management training needs differed according to functional responsibilities. This supported the literature's argument that training should be tailored to organisational and contextual requirements rather than treated as a generic intervention.

4.4.2 Discussion of findings on objective two: Effect of management training on employee performance among middle management staff in the Zambia Correctional Service

The second objective assessed the effect of management training on employee performance among middle management staff. The findings demonstrated a strong positive perception of the contribution of training to employee performance. A total of 86.7% of respondents

indicated that management training had improved their job performance, while 90% rated the training as effective or very effective in improving job performance. In addition, 93.3% agreed and 6.7% strongly agreed that management training improved their ability to contribute to organisational performance. Respondents specifically reported improvements in leadership, decision-making, planning, communication, supervision, problem-solving, confidence and productivity. These findings closely agreed with the literature reviewed in section 2.1, particularly Armstrong and Taylor (2020) [2], who emphasised that management training developed technical and managerial competencies that translated into improved workplace performance. They also supported Salas *et al*. (2012) [44], who maintained that well-designed training promoted learning and transfer of skills to the work environment. The reported increases in productivity and problem-solving also agreed with Prabhu *et al*. (2020) [41], Cooke *et al*. (2020) [13], and Wood and Bischoff (2020), whose studies associated training with improved task execution, efficiency and organisational performance. The findings further reflected Tahir *et al*. (2015) [47] and Otibine (2016) [40], who linked capacity building and training opportunities to improved employee capability, confidence and performance. From the perspective of Human Capital Theory, the findings suggested that the investment made in the knowledge and skills of middle managers generated perceived returns through improved individual performance and greater contribution to organisational objectives (Becker, 1964) [9].

4.4.3 Discussion of findings on objective three: Factors that influence the success or failure of management training programmes in the Zambia Correctional Service

The third objective identified the factors that influenced the success or failure of management training programmes. The findings showed that availability of resources was identified by 97% of respondents as the factor that most influenced training success. Limited funding was the most frequently identified barrier to effective implementation at 53.3%, followed by inadequate training facilities at 36.7%. Open-ended responses further identified insufficient training time, inadequate allowances and logistical support, poor network connectivity, inadequate infrastructure, concerns about facilitator experience and professionalism, heavy workloads, resistance to change, and inadequate follow-up and mentorship. These findings were strongly consistent with the literature reviewed in section 2.2, particularly Danjuma, Goni and Satomi (2019) [15], who identified inadequate funding, weak needs assessment, insufficient evaluation, lack of credible trainers and difficulties in transferring learning as constraints on capacity-building programmes. The findings also supported Noe (2017) [36], who emphasised the importance of needs-based and relevant training design.

The concerns about follow-up and evaluation were consistent with Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2006) [27], who argued that training effectiveness should be assessed beyond participants' immediate reactions and learning to determine whether behaviour changed and whether organisational results were achieved. Similarly, the reported concerns about organisational support and the training environment agreed with Salas *et al*. (2012) [44] and Armstrong and Taylor (2020) [2], who stressed the importance of management support and a supportive work environment for transferring learning to the workplace. The findings also supported the literature on technology, particularly Ahmed *et al*. (2024) [3], who found that the benefits of digital enablement for training depended on reliable technological infrastructure; ZCS respondents' reports of poor network connectivity as a practical barrier to research and learning during training illustrated exactly this dependency. Overall, the results indicated that the effectiveness of management training depended not only on the content delivered but also on resources, institutional support, training conditions, practical relevance and post-training evaluation.

4.4.4 Overall discussion of findings

Taken together, the findings showed that management training was perceived as beneficial to middle management staff in the Zambia Correctional Service, but the extent to which its benefits could be sustained depended on the conditions under which training was designed, delivered and transferred to the workplace. This pattern was consistent with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, which indicated that training could improve performance when it was aligned with organisational needs, supported by management, adequately resourced and evaluated. The findings therefore reinforced the central proposition of Human Capital Theory that investment in employee knowledge and skills could generate improved productivity and organisational outcomes (Becker, 1964) [9]. At the same time, the challenges reported by respondents demonstrated that investment in training alone was insufficient. Without adequate funding, facilities, experienced facilitators, sufficient time, practical learning opportunities and follow-up support, the expected returns from training could be reduced. This was particularly important in the ZCS context because middle managers served as a link between senior management and operational staff and were responsible for translating policies into practice. The findings therefore addressed the contextual and empirical gaps identified in Chapter Two by providing evidence from a Zambian public correctional institution and by examining the relationship between management training, employee performance and organisational performance within the same study.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that management training programmes play an important role in improving the performance of middle management staff in the Zambia Correctional Service. The findings show that respondents participated in different programmes, including Middle Management Training, Offender Management Training and an ICT Radio Management course. These programmes combine general management competencies with role-specific knowledge, reflecting the importance of both transferable and organisation specific human capital.

The study further concludes that management training have a positive effect on employee performance. Most respondents reported improvements in job performance, productivity, problem-solving, leadership, communication, decision-making, planning, supervision and confidence. The high proportion of respondents who regarded the training as effective and relevant indicated that the training contributed to employees' ability to perform their responsibilities and contribute to organisational performance.

However, the study also conclude that the effectiveness of management training affect contextual and institutional

factors. Availability of resources emerged as the strongest factor influencing training success, while limited funding and inadequate training facilities are major barriers. Qualitative findings additionally identified insufficient training time, poor network connectivity, inadequate logistical support, concerns about facilitator professionalism and experience, heavy workloads, resistance to change and limited post-training follow-up. These findings confirm the literature's argument that training outcomes depend on programme relevance,organisational support, adequate resources, learning transfer and systematic evaluation.

Overall, the study concludes that management training constitutes a strategic investment in human capital in the Zambia Correctional Service. Nevertheless, the expected organisational returns from this investment is more likely to be realised when training is adequately funded, practically oriented, context-specific, supported by management and followed by mentorship, monitoring and evaluation.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Based on the findings and conclusions, the study made the following recommendations: Adequate funding should be provided for management training programmes to ensure that training materials, facilities, allowances, accommodation and other logistical requirements are adequately supported.
2. Management training should be made more practical and context-specific. Role-plays, case studies, field visits, internships and correctional-service-based practical exercises should be incorporated to strengthen the transfer of learning to the workplace.
3. Training content should be aligned with the actual responsibilities and challenges of middle managers in the Zambia Correctional Service, including leadership, decision-making, communication, conflict management, staff supervision, offender management, rehabilitation, staff welfare and administrative procedures.
4. The duration of management training should be adequate to allow participants sufficient time to understand, internalise and apply the content. Compressing too many courses into a short period should be avoided.
5. Experienced and professionally prepared facilitators should be engaged. Facilitators should have appropriate knowledge of management training and, where possible, practical experience within correctional-service contexts.
6. A structured post-training support system should be established through refresher courses, mentorship, coaching and supervisory follow-up. This would help middle managers apply and sustain the knowledge and skills acquired during training.
7. Training programmes should be systematically evaluated beyond participants' immediate reactions. The Zambia Correctional Service should assess learning, behavioural change and organisational results in line with the principles of Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick's (2006) [27] four-level evaluation framework.
8. Training infrastructure and technological support should be improved, including reliable internet connectivity, electricity, adequate accommodation, sanitation and facilities that support academic research and learning.
9. The selection of participants should be based on clearly identified training needs and job responsibilities to ensure that training resources are directed to officers who can apply the acquired competencies within the organisation.
10. Future studies should examine management training across a wider range of ZCS facilities and include perspectives from lower-level staff, senior management and training administrators so that the organisational effects of training can be assessed more comprehensively.

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