

Influence of Vocational Education on Prison Inmates' Interest in Vocational Activities in Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract

A lot of Nigerians, both young and old are clamped in the prison where they are deteriorating socially, morally, psychologically and intellectually. Life in the prison is a painful experience for prisoners. The aim of the Nigeria prison service is not just to punish and deprive them of their liberty, but to reform, rehabilitate and reintegrate them back into the society. In order for the stated aim to be achieved, vocational activity was introduced into the prison system. It is in line with this, that the study was therefore designed to investigate the influence of vocational education on the interest of prison inmates in vocational activities. To carry out the study, four research questions were developed. The casual comparative research design was used. The population of the study consists of 129 convicted prisoners. The sample of the study consists of 100 inmates consisting of both male and female. The sample of the study was drawn from two (2) prisons using simple random sampling. Data was collected using a 31-item questionnaire. The instrument was validated by experts and had the reliability coefficient of 0.78. Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and mean. The result of the analysis revealed that vocational education is done in Enugu prisons, but the practical aspect of it which is the vocational activities is not really carried out, there is low interest on the part of the prison inmates toward the available vocational activities owing to the fact that the vocational activities they are interested in are not available. Nevertheless, there is influence of the study amongst others are that, emphasis should be made on vocational activities that previous knowledge and interest and make them available and the professional knowledge of the counselor should be utilized.

Keywords: Influence, Vocational Education, Prison Inmates, Interest, Vocational Activities, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Breaking the existing societal rules and regulation is a common phenomenon. Throughout history, societies have had some form of punishment and correctional methods for their erring members in order to make offenders realize that they have offended the society. These methods of punishment ranged from banding, flogging, confiscation of wives and imprisonment. Deportation of criminals to a foreign land was one of the earliest methods employed by various European countries to clear their societies of the existence of criminals (Nigeria Prison Service, 2006). In Europe, the idea of

imprisonment according to Igbo (1992), which officially started within the first decade of the 18th century as an alternative to other methods of treating criminal, replaced the practice of deportation to foreign lands. The aim of imprisoning the criminal was not at all centred on their ultimate reformation and subsequent reintegration in the society but on ridding society of all men of questionable characters. Nevertheless, in spite of all the effort of society to eliminate the criminal, either temporarily or permanently, they have persisted in the society and this ugly situation often puzzles well-meaning individuals in the society. Therefore, a penal system that incarcerates offenders without commensurate facilities to reform them is self-defeatist.

Prison is disciplinary in nature in that it purports to transform the individual criminal into a normal, law-abiding citizen by transforming the individual's attitude to work, his physical training, moral attitude, state of mind and moral conduct among other (Dambazu, 2007). Prison is a place delimited and declared as such by the law of the state and created to ensure restraint and custody of individuals accused or convicted of violating the criminal laws of the state. These individuals known as prisoners or inmates are kept in continuous custody on a short or long-term basis. Individuals who commit heinous crimes are sent to prison for more years (Opara, 1998). The more serious the offence, the longer the prison term imposed (Ayo, 2008). A prison, correctional facility, detention center, jail, (Gaol in dated British English), Penitentiary (sometimes used in American English), or remand centre is a facility in which inmates are forcibly confined and denied a variety of freedoms under the authority of the state as a form of punishment after being convicted of crimes. Prisons are most commonly used within a criminal justice system: people charged with crimes may be kept in prison custody until they are brought to trial; those pleading or being found guilty of crimes at trial may be sentenced to a specified period of imprisonment (Douglas, 2013). Prisons are established confinement for the safekeeping of those legally interned for awaiting trials (Omagbemi & Odunewu, 2008).

For the purpose of this study, prison is a correctional institution where offenders or crime committers or those awaiting trials, are securely housed and given some sort of training while in confinement to prepare them for re-integration into the larger society on release. Imprisonment has been defined as a term of judicial sentence available for a convicted offender of adult age, involving incarceration in prison for either life or a specified period of time (Walsh & Poole, 2007). The early 1900s industrial revolution in the United States created demand for workers to support the industrial

revolution. According to Eggleston and Gehring (1986), prisons in the United States developed vocational programs for inmates in order to help meet the demand for skilled labourers. The focus toward job skills training is one of the earliest examples where the correctional education structure was market driven. During the 1960s, the field of correctional education gained an identity and a place of recognition as an integral part of the total correctional process. During the late 1960s, the concept of rehabilitation became a dominant factor in planning and implementing correctional systems in the United States (Ryan, 1995). Correctional education soon became a key factor upon which rehabilitation would be based.

The philosophy of correctional education in the 1970s according to Hobbler (1999) began to change from that of teaching the typical adult education (ABE) skills of reading, writing, and math toward an emphasis on changing the behaviours of inmates. The author further stated that vocational training alone is not effective rehabilitation rather; an educational system must prepare inmates not just to earn a living, but to meet their total needs as well. Rehabilitation simply implies the reforming of the personality and behaviour of convicted offenders through a well designed educational programme which may or may not include therapeutic treatment, ensuring that the individual offender is returned back to the society as a complete, self-supporting and accepted member of the society (Ameh, 2010). Rehabilitation services in Nigerian prisons have been defined as services provided for prison inmates in order to restore them to fullest physical, mental, psychological, social, vocational and economic usefulness which they are capable of (Nigeria prison service, 1989).

Historically, imprisonment as a type of punishment for the crime had been determined by economic and political relationship, rather than by the public policy. In early English and German law, a system of adjusting wrongs and injuries existed whereby, the offender was able to buy off the vengeance against him and his kin by compensation, fines, Mutilation, banishment, enslavement, and death so, long-term imprisonment was virtually unknown until modern times. Imprisonment as a form of punishment of offenders was known in different ways to many. (Aboki, 2007). The evolution of the Nigerian prison is divided according to Egu (1990) into pre-colonial and early colonial eras. In Nigeria for instance, there were traditional institutions that served as prisons before British rules, like the Ewedo of Edo group and Ogboni of Yoruba. In the northern part of the country the Fulani's had similar institutions while among the Tivs and Igbo's, there were indications of functional equivalents of prisons and many others in the pre-colonial Nigeria. The Lagos blue books show the existence of a place of confinement at Faji where culprits were imprisoned and employed mainly in street cleaning. Between 1873 and 1900 this place of confinement was referred to as a goal and its staff as "gang drivers" because of the nature of the job in which the prisoners were employed. When the British government assumed responsibility for the administration of Lagos in 1861, the evolution of an organized prison system began as

one of the government earliest terms of administration of justice (Aboki, 2007).

During the early colonial era, the British overlord opened the broad street prison in Lagos designed to accommodate 300 prisoners which modelled that of the prison in British in 1872. Indigenous system of confinement and incarceration was not taken into consideration, rather British prison system was introduced and accepted hook, line and sinker understandably because Lagos was a British colony. By 1909 prison had been established in Calabar, Sapele, Onitsha, Degama, and Benin City but like the British prison system. The colonial British system was a decentralized system governed by different forms of administration ranging from that of British commission to the residents, to that of native authorities. It is important to note that these courts and prisons were active only in name, as the traditional native court and the system of punishment of offenders still continues unrecognized by the British government (Elias, 1968). As noted by Ekpe (1977) the British system in 1832, did not go beyond the division into juveniles, felons, and those awaiting trial. In 1885, some measure of national training was introduced at the administrative level. A uniform penal system was introduced after the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914. The prison was controlled by the directors of prisons and operation by prison administrative officers. As regards the condition in the prison and their staffing situation, the prison system suffered from lack of good staff, poor health, sanitation conditions, and the absence of any clear idea of the purpose of prison. There were no provisions for guarantee facilities for the infected prisoner (Awe, 1968).

Very few major changes occurred in the development of the prison system until the Second World War. The main reforms of Dolan include the treatment of offenders, administration of prison system, education and training of warders, paying attention to female prisoners introduced an earning scheme and aftercare provision and expanded leisure facilities in prisons, brutal institution and four more reformatory schools were opened, trained and upgraded the quality of prisons personnel, particularly wardresses, permanent employment was offered and included among them educated persons (Awe, 1968). The outline of the administrative structure and content of the prison system set in motion by Dolan has not significantly changed up till now. Many prisons have been established before and after independence in Nigeria. The prison has the duty to keep in safe custody persons legally sentenced to jail and identify the causes of their inherent anti-social behaviour and treat and reform them to become law-abiding citizens. The prison has also the responsibility to train inmates in trades that will make them useful to themselves and the society (Aboki, 2007). In Nigeria, the constitutional amendment provision Decree No. of 1986 and prison act No. 366 of 1990 provides for the objectives of the Nigerian prisons thus:

- a) To keep safe custody of prisoners interned
- b) To identify the causes of their anti-social behaviour, treat and reform them to become disciplined and law-abiding citizens of a free society;

- c) To train them toward their eventual reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration to the society after their discharge;
- d) To generate funds for the government through prison farms and industries (Jama, 1999). According to the Nigerian Prison Service Manual (2011), the realization of one of the major objectives of the prisons service – the reformation and rehabilitation of convicts, are to be done through a complicated set of mechanisms consisting among others: conscientization, group work, casework session, recreational activities, religious services and adult and remedial education programmes, educational development projects, skills acquisition programmes, mid-range industrial production, agricultural service and after-care service programmes. The prison's services providers should not only identify the causes of the prisons' inmates anti-social behaviour but also endeavour to set them on the road to reform through induced self-rediscovery and eventual change for the better.

The Nigerian Prison Service (NPS) operation under prison Act (1990) CAP 366, laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria section 15 and 16 of the act provide for regulation to achieve its goals (Aboki 2007). The idea was that in consonance with the stipulation of decree no 9 of 1972, there was a need to introduce specialized units to take care of specific areas of the prison services. These divisions are technical, inspectorate and welfare units while technical division takes charge of general administration, the inspectorate sees to staff recruitment, deployment, training, discipline, promotion, punishment and dismissal. The welfare division caters for inmates treatment, training, and rehabilitation. The decree 9 of 1972 prison act stipulated the importance of welfare division to the prisoners, as it was to see to inmates' treatment, training and rehabilitation. It also oversees the medical needs of the prisoners in addition to liaising between the prison and voluntary and humanitarian organizations that assist in the treatment and rehabilitation of prisoners. The division also sees to the maintenance of a proper environment in the prisons through the environmental health section by fumigation of cells, provision of portable water, maintenance of sewage systems and general environmental orderliness. These are complemented by skills acquisition programmes in various vocations like carpentry, tailoring, painting, and building among others, in the course of serving their terms of imprisonment.

Welfare services or social welfare administration according to the Encyclopedia (2004) is over the years, the provision of welfare services to inmates. In Nigerian prisons, these services have been far from satisfactory, many prisons do not meet up to the minimum standard rules for the treatment of prisoners while others violate the right to minimum feeding, allocation, accommodation, privacy, adequate lighting, medical services and the likes as stipulated by rule thirty-one (31) of the minimum standards of prison (Agozino, 2001). However, today, the emphasis is no longer primarily on the punishment of criminals but reformation and rehabilitation of criminals (Igbo, 2007). The Nigerian prison service is

assigned the onerous responsibilities of assuring the safe custody of offenders as well as their reformation and rehabilitation. These responsibilities are discharged through carefully design and well articulated administrative, reformation and rehabilitative programmes aimed at inculcating discipline, respect for law and order and dignity of honest labour (Igbo, 2007). These programmes include education and vocational training programmes.

The term vocational education is general and includes every form of education that aims at the acquisition of qualifications related to a certain profession, art or employment or that provides the necessary training and the appropriate skills as well as technical knowledge, so that students are able to exercise a profession, art or activity, independently at their age and training level, even if the training program contains also elements of general education. (Kotsikis, 2007). Vocational education are those aspects of the education process involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of the economic and social life. What is fundamental in vocational education is the acquisition of skill in occupational preparation. It is a training given to a learner in a chosen occupational field. UNESCO, (2001). The development of vocational skills is vital to economic development for two important reasons. First, vocational skills are needed for enterprise productivity and profitability, as well as for national productivity and wealth creation. The second reason for the development of vocational skills is because it is essential for individual prosperity (Oyebolu, 2011). Skills enable the individuals to increase productivity and income. This is especially important for those seeking out a living in the informal sector of the economy. This is in line with Agbiokoro (2010), view that vocational education is the bedrock for national development and poverty alleviation. Vocational Education and Training signals both creation of a different and special way of training ad a whole field of learning. In general terms this type of education refers mostly to manual professions opposed to cultivation of the mind. There is a primal distinction between knowledge and action, theory and practice, as technical education seeks to supply the participants with the practical skills and the necessary craftsmanship in order to cope with the demands of specific professions (Moondi, 2002). The author further stated that, vocational education programs delivered in prison involve instruction for a specific trade, occupation, or vocation such as welding, auto repair, building maintenance, and graphic arts. The primary goal of vocational education is to help offenders develop marketable job skills upon release to the community.

A visit to the prison in the area of the study showed that in prison A, the vocational training opportunities for prisoners are carpentry, tailoring, shoemaking laundering, electrical, Mason, barbing, labour and agriculture, and the rate of participation of the prisoners is rather poor with 4,7,1,2,1,3,3 and 5 participants respectively. In prison B, the vocations are tailoring, welding and carpentry with 8, 21, ad 20 people respectively out of 93 convicted people comprising 84males and 9 females. The vocational training programme, like any

other educational programmes, are established by the government to serve the needs of the individual, society and the country at large and to bring out whatever changes expected in the behaviour, character, skill level and life of the individual (Kneith, 2003). The prisoners in Nigeria suffer from enforced idleness and spend a greater part of their time in prison in idleness. Further, many facilities capable of exposing the inmates to the acquisition of skills which are likely to keep them busy in and out of prisons are not in existence (Aduba, 2007). It is said that an idle mind is a devil's workshop. Therefore, the state of idleness in the prison falls short of international standards and leave much to be desired.

Over congestion have been long-standing problems alongside poor funding as one of the fundamental causes of much of the bestiality in prison as well as the failure of Nigerian prison in their reformatory and rehabilitative roles. Staffing is also inadequate. Generally, the condition deteriorated day by day as overpopulation in prison combined with inadequate staff, poor physical structure, low morale and a general decrease or non-availability of other basic resources create a nightmare of daily health, epidemics and limited or virtually non-existent observance of the human right of the inmates (Onyekachi, 2016). It must be stated that incarceration by itself is already a punishment without further worsening the mental state of the convict. Building more prisons to house a growing number of inmates is not a long-term solution. There is, therefore, need to address the cause of the problem and proffer remedial alternative rather than locking a larger and larger portion of the population behind bars, who after discharge may likely

come back due to involvement in the same crime. Research consistently demonstrates that participation in educational, and vocational training, and other forms of rehabilitative programs while incarcerated reduces recidivism rates by increasing an individual's ability to successfully rejoin mainstream society upon release from prison (Chappell, 2004).

Research Questions

The following research questions are generated to guide the study:

1. What is the level of vocational education give to prison inmates in Enugu prison?
2. To what extent is vocational activities made available for prison inmates?
3. What is the vocational interest of prison inmates?
4. What is the influence of vocational education on prison inmates' interest in vocational activities?

RESEARCH METHOD

Design of Study

Expo facto design was used to carry out the study.

RESULT

Research Question One

To what extent is vocational education given to prison inmates?

Mean Score of the prison inmates' response to the extent of vocational education in Enugu State.

S/N	ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	MEAN	DECISION
1	Vocational education is carried out in prison.	11	35	28	10	2.6	Accept
2	Prison inmates are informed about the purpose of vocational education.	5	40	22	17	2.2	Reject
3	Prison inmates are given the knowledge about vocational activities in the prison.	29	21	23	11	2.8	Accept
4	Prison inmates are aware of the benefits of vocational activities.	16	28	16	24	2.5	Accept

N-84, criterion mean-2.50

The table above shows the frequency and mean scores of prisons inmates' response to the extent of vocational education in prison in Enugu State. The result revealed that the respondents accept items 1, 3 and 4 as being the extent of vocational education in prison in Enugu State with the mean

scores of 2, 6, 2.8 and 2.5. This is because the mean scores are above the criterion mean of 2.50. However the prisoners rejected item 2 with the mean score of 2.2 Nonetheless, the overall result value of 2.5 shows that the respondents accept that extent of vocational education in Enugu prison is high.

Research Question Two

Mean scores of prison inmate’s response to the extent vocational activities are carried out for inmates.

S/N	ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	MEAN	DECISION
5	Mechanical works are always done in prison.	7	5	31	41	1.7	Reject
6	Shoemaking is always taught to prison inmates.	16	9	17	42	1.9	Reject
7	Hairdressing is done in prison.	21	15	19	27	2.3	Reject
8	Inmates are always taught how to do dry cleaning.	16	30	23	15	2.5	Accept
9	Prison inmates are taught bricklaying work.	5	8	28	43	1.7	Reject
10	Prison inmates are taught electrical work.	19	16	32	17	2.4	Reject
11	Inmates are taught on how to cut hair.	45	21	8	10	2.8	Accept
12	Prison inmates are taught on how to wield irons.	17	21	14	32	2.3	Reject
13	Carpentry work is always carried out in prison.	44	25	9	6	3.3	Accept
14	Tailoring is taught to prison inmates.	40	27	8	9	3.2	Accept
15	Prison inmates are taught on how to farm.	21	16	17	30	2.5	Accept
16	Prison inmates are often contracted as labourers.	23	19	8	34	2.4	Reject

The above table shows the frequency and means scores of prison inmates response to the extent vocational activities are carried out in Enugu prisons. The result reveals that the respondents accept items 8,11,13,14 and 15 as being the extent to which vocational activities are carried out in Enugu prison is low.

Research Question Three

What the Vocational interest rating of prison inmates?

Mean scores of prison inmate’s response to vocational interest available in prison.

S/N	ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	MEAN	DECISION
17	I like engaging in mechanical work.	16	21	33	14	2.5	Accept
18	I like engaging in carpentry activities	26	12	27	19	2.5	Accept
19	I like hairdressing	17	19	12	36	2.2	Accept
20	I derive pleasure in tailoring	18	22	20	24	2.4	Reject
21	I prefer to engage in shoemaking	13	9	34	29	2.1	Reject
22	I like engaging in dry cleaning activities.	28	18	14	24	2.6	Accept
23	I like electrical work.	24	25	18	17	2.7	Accept
24	I derive pleasure from doing bricklaying work.	8	13				Reject
25	I like barbing.	23	26				Accept
26	I like wielding work.	17	14				Accept
27	I like farming.	18	17	21	28	2.3	Reject

The table above indicates the vocational interest rating of prison inmates towards vocational activities in prison. The result revealed that the respondents agreed to items 17, 18, 22, 23 and 25 as being the interest of prison inmate in the available vocational activities in Enugu State with the mean scores of 2., 2.5, 2.6, 2.7 and 2.7. This is because the mean scores are above the criterion 2.5. However, the inmates reject the items, 19, 20, 21, 24 and 27 with the mean scores 2.2, 2.4, interested in mechanical, carpentry, dry cleaning, electrical, welding and barbing to hairdressing, bricklaying ad farming in Enugu State prisons.

Research Question Four

To what extent does vocational education influence prison inmate’s interest in vocational activities?

Mean scores response to the influence of vocational education on prison inmates’ interest in vocational activities.

S/N	ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	MEAN	DECISION
28	Vocational education makes prison inmates get involved in the available vocational activities						
29	Vocational education makes prisoners understand the need for participation in vocational activities.						
30	Vocational activities that prisoners are interested in are made available.						
31	Vocational education is not relevant to me since I already have a skill before coming to prison.						

The above table shows the frequency and mean response to the influence of vocational education prison inmate’s interest in vocational activities in Enugu prisons. The result revealed that the respondents accept items 28, 29 and 31 with the mean scores of 3.2, 2.8 and 2.8 but reject item 30 with the mean score of 2.1. However, the overall result value of 2.7 shows that the respondents agreed that vocational education influences the inmates, except those that have been established in an area of interest before imprisonment.

DISCUSSION

The discussion was done following the sequence of the research questions. The first question sought to ascertain the extent of vocational education in Enugu State prisons. The findings reveal that vocational education is carried out in the prison, inmates are aware of the benefits of vocational activities and also given the knowledge about the vocational activities in Enugu prisons. This is in line with the provision of Nigeria prison service manual (1998) that described vocational education as the encouragement given to inmates to make them abstain from unwanted behaviour by providing them with social, education and vocational facilities to such an extent to conform to social pattern of life outside the prison walls. In the same vein, Enebe (2000) highlights the significant roles which vocational education can play in curbing social vices, youth restiveness, unemployment, crime and in providing the needed skilled labour for industrialization.

The second research question sought to ascertain the extent to which vocational activities are carried out in Enugu state prisoners. The findings reveal that to a high extent, vocational activities are not carried out in prisons. This is in line with that the review of offenders education and training according to Uden (2003), correctional officers gave low priority to training by comparison with other programs. There were perceived conflicts between the desire to deliver training and the competitive opportunities available to prisoners to engage

in prison duties (for example, jobs in the kitchen, gardening, library assistants) or workshops which offers them wages for their work. Furthermore, the trend to turn workshop into commercial workshops was reducing the training opportunities for prisoners.

The third research question sought to ascertain the vocational interest of prison inmate in vocational activities in Enugu state prisons. The result reveals that prison inmates lack the vocational interest in the available vocational activities. It is in line with this that Ettah (2008) stated that the prisoners are expected to pick amongst the therapeutic service or skills available in the prison, nevertheless, idleness among prison inmates is still a common sight in prison. According to Igbo (2007) medical, academic, vocational, recreational and religious programmes (in the prison) have a rehabilitative potential. They can improve a prisoner’s health, skills and interest. However, the author pointed out that it is doubtful whether those programmes have a very widespread rehabilitative effect out that it is doubtful whether those programmes have a very widespread rehabilitative effect on prisoners who are hard to reach on a large impersonal situation, adding that many prisoners do not want to be reached by constructive programmes. The author also adds that almost everything which could possibly contribute to debating and demoralization of human personality characterizes the present day prison and the contemporary methods of penal administration.

The findings on the influence of vocational education on prison inmate’s interest in vocational activities revealed that there is the influence of vocational education on prison inmate’s interest. Rehabilitation of prison inmates succeeds through vocational education. To be truly rehabilitated, all people need to understand their purpose in life both as individuals and as citizens who contribute to the whole purpose and good of the society (Morris, 1995).

CONCLUSION

From the analysis of the data carried out in the study, vocational activities is a means used in prison for the rehabilitation of prisoners which is skilled – oriented and employment motivated, and it is obvious that vocational education is an indisputable means of combating and the reduction in the high rate of recidivism in the society. This can be achieved through the acquisition of the relevant vocational skills and abilities required for the work. However, according to the findings, vocational activities are not adequately carried out, prison inmate are merely educated on the purpose and benefits of vocational activities, but the actual vocational activities are not made practical. Also, prison inmates are not interested in the vocational activities. Notwithstanding there is an influence of vocational education on prison inmate interest in vocational activities. However, these problems can be transformed to better opportunities if stakeholders develop a framework to further widen the prospects of vocational education.

RECOMMENDATION

From the findings of this research work, these recommendations are made:

1. Emphasis should be made on the vocational activities that inmates have previous knowledge and interest and make them available.
2. Nigeria prison service as a matter of urgency should begin repairing the entire damaged machine in various workshops in Enugu prison. This will facilitate the engagement of a considerable number of the prisoners in vocational activities.
3. New vocational activities should be introduced and strengthened, this way, it might raise the inmates' interest towards vocational activities, while the old ones that prison inmates do not participate in should be scrapped.
4. The available vocational activities should be constantly evaluated in order to ensure its effectiveness, and there should be an increase in the number of prison trainers so that the vocational activity will be beneficial for inmates.
5. The professional knowledge of the counsellor should be utilized.

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