

THE NIGERIAN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION AND UTILISATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES FOR REFORMATION OF INMATES IN AKWA IBOM STATE

Helen Emmanuel Bassey¹

*Directorate of Public Order and Information Management,
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Uyo, Uyo*

Okoro Sunday Asangausung²

*Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences,
Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus, Nigeria*

Prof. Peter Archibong Essoh³

Department of Sociology and Sociology

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Uyo, Uyo

Correspondence Author: okoroasangausung@aksu.edu.ng

Abstract

The study ascertains the academic programmes and vocational training programmes in the custodial centres for reformation of the inmates of Nigerian Correctional Service. The study was guided by the assumptions of the Human Capital Theory developed by Gary Becker in 1964. The study adopted an exploratory survey research design. The Nigerian Correctional Service, Akwa Ibom State Command comprises the Medium Security Custodial Centre, Uyo, the Medium Security Custodial Centre, Ikot Ekpene, the Medium Security Custodial Centre, Eket and the Medium Security Custodial Centre, Ikot Abasi. The population comprises convicted inmates and personnel of the Nigerian Correctional Service in Akwa Ibom State Command. A total of 49 respondents were selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. The instruments for collection of data were the Focus Group Discussion and Key Informant Interviews. The qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis method while the socio-demographic data were presented using frequency tables and simple percentages. The findings showed that academic and vocational training programmes were needed by inmates across the custodial centres but they were constrained by lack of facilities, equipment and lack of resource persons. The study recommended among others that the management of correctional centres should give adequate attention to implementing academic and vocational training programmes for inmates so that the rate of recidivism could be reduced.

Keywords: *Nigerian Correctional Institution, Utilisation, Educational Programmes, Reformation, Inmate*

Introduction

Convicted inmates in the custodial centres are supposed to enjoy academic and vocational skills while serving their jail terms for the purpose of their reformation. The essence of such programmes in the custodial centres was to reduce the rate of recidivism among inmates. The study aimed at examining how the Nigerian correctional institution utilise educational programmes in the reformation of inmates in Akwa Ibom State Command, Nigeria. Global statistics showed that there are more than 11 million people in the custodial centres worldwide (UNESCO, 2021) and many of them are males (Davis, Bozick, Steele, Saunders and Miles, 2013). Walmsley (2018) cited in UNESCO (2021) observed that between 2000 and 2018, the population of inmates in the custodial centres has increased by 24 per cent. The Correctional Institution is one of the components of the criminal justice system (CJS) all over the world. The reformation of inmates to become useful citizens to the society upon release from the correctional facility is one of the responsibilities of the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS). Reformation involves correcting, educating, re-orientating and rehabilitating the inmates so that they could become better citizens after serving their jail term (Mboho and Ataire, 2018; Ogbaka, Ewelum, and Anthony, 2017).

According to Afujue (2004), some functions of the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) are to treat, train and reform those legally charged and convicted so that on their discharge they could be useful to themselves and the society at large. Afujue further stated that those who have committed crimes should be assisted to live a good life rather than removing them completely from society because of the crime they committed. This view is predicated upon the understanding that those (offenders) who have broken the collective norms and laws of their societies as expressed in criminal laws of their societies are those who have had problems of adaptation and conformity with the general value system of their societies. Therefore, when they commit crimes, they are sent to the correctional institutions for reformation.

In Nigeria, Section 14(1) of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act (2019) provides that correctional service shall provide opportunities for education, vocational training as well as training in modern farming techniques and animal husbandry for inmates. The total inmates population across Nigeria as at November 2020 is 65, 988 with 17,085 (26 per cent) convicted while 48, 903, representing (74 per cent) are awaiting trial. But of this figure, only about 649 inmates are enrolled in National Open University (NOUN) for higher education with 10 pursuing doctorate programmes (Adebuntimi, 2020). The statutory function of the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) is to reform the inmates and prepare them for crime free life (Human Rights Commission, 2005).

According to Ogundipe (2008), the NCoS has developed pragmatic educational strategies for the reformation of inmates across Nigeria. These reformation strategies include academic programmes, technical or vocational training programmes, religious education, family life education, civic education, recreation, health education, and basic literacy among others (Ogundipe, 2008). The vocational education programmes aim at empowering the inmates with

the needed skills for self-sustenance and actualization. It enables inmates to learn skills in vocations such as tailoring, plumbing, carpentry, among others. Adult and remedial education programmes are designed to help inmates who were pursuing one academic programme or the other before their conviction and incarceration (Ogbaka, Ewelum, and Anthony, 2017).

Ostriecher (2003) cited in Ngwu and Uche (2021) observed that preparing prisoners for release is key to ensuring public safety. This can be done by education and vocational skills for ex-offenders to redirect their minds away from crimes. They need transitional services such as life skills, anger management, basic education, job training and placement. Ayuk (2004) cited in Ngwu and Uche (2021) asserts that prison must be centre for reformation and not for punishment. The skills they gain enhance chances of engaging in gainful employment and minimize the chance of returning to criminal activities. Curtis (2005) cited in Ngwu and Uche (2021) and Mboho and Udoh (2018) opined that vocational training and formal education would provide opportunities for healthy development of positive potentials in the ex-convicts. Research shows that former prisoners who have a stable home on release are 15 per cent less likely to re-offend. Those with job are less likely to commit another crime. The difficulties that former prisoners face are compounded by the shadow of their criminal past. Successful integration of ex-offenders is an important aspect of social inclusion.

From the foregoing, this study examined the utilisation of educational programmes for reformation of inmates in the Nigerian Correctional Service in Akwa Ibom State. Measured variables in the study included the educational programmes and reformation of inmates, vocational training programmes and reformation of inmates and challenges faced by the management of the Nigerian Correctional Institutions in the reformation of inmates.

Statement of the Problem

The primary goal of the correctional institution globally, is reformation of convicted inmates. The aim is to reduce the level of recidivism. Some of these educational programmes may include basic literacy programmes, secondary school equivalence programmes, vocational trainings and tertiary education. In some countries, the educational programmes are basically provided, managed and funded by the correctional system through government budgeted funds (Ogbaka, Ewelum, and Anthony, 2017).

It is observed in recent time that in Nigeria, Akwa Ibom State in particular, many ex-convicts after serving their jail terms in different custodial centres have returned to their communities without any means of livelihood and in most cases constitute nuisance to the public. It is quite true that recidivism is a serious problem in Nigeria as many ex-convicts have returned to the life of crime as if there was no reformation in the previous jail term. At this point one could imagine the kind of reformation that is being provided by the correctional institutions in Nigeria that seems not to be sustainable.

Scholars admitted that on average, convicted inmates have lower levels of education than the general public (Davis *et al.*, 2013; Ewelum, Omeriyang and Ugochukwu, 2015; Ogbaka *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, administering and attending educational programmes in the correctional

facilities can be difficult. Staff and budget shortages, a lack of educational resources and computers and the transfer of inmates between facilities are common barriers. Convicted inmates may be reluctant to participate, often due to past educational failures or a lack of motivation. For the purpose of reformation, correctional institutions in Nigeria have adopted educational programmes as one of the strategies for reformation of inmates.

Over the years, there have been budgeted allocations for educational programmes in the Nigerian Correctional Service, yet the rates of convicted inmates enrolled in educational programmes within the custodial centres in Akwa Ibom State remain low and attempts to increase funding for educational programmes in the correctional institutions have been opposed. Opponents argue that educational programmes for convicted inmates are considered a waste of resources because to them convicted inmates do not deserve such benefit.

There is a plethora of studies on utilisation of educational programmes in the reformation of inmates. For instance, Ewelum, Omeriyang and Ugochukwu (2015) conducted a research in Anambra State, Nigeria to examine the challenges and strategies involved in the reformation of inmates through adult education programmes. Ogbaka et al. (2017) conducted a study in Nigeria to examine the utilization of educational programmes in reformation of prison inmates. However, there is a gap in literature particularly on the effectiveness of academic programmes towards convicted inmates' reformation in Nigerian Correctional Service, Akwa Ibom State Command.

To bridge this gap in the body of knowledge, this study was carried out to assess the utilisation of educational programmes in the reformation of inmates in the Nigerian Correctional Service, Akwa Ibom State Command with particular attention to the following variables: (i) academic programmes and reformation of inmates; (ii) vocational training and reformation of convicted inmates; and (iii) challenges facing NCoS personnel towards effective utilisation of educational programmes in the reformation of convicted inmates.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the Nigerian Correctional Institution and utilisation of educational programmes for reformation of inmates with specific attention to the Nigerian Correctional Service, Akwa Ibom State Command. The specific objectives were to:

- i. Ascertain how effective are the academic programmes in the custodial centres for reformation of convicted inmates;
- ii. Examine the effectiveness of the vocational training programmes in the custodial centres for reformation of convicted inmates; and
- iii. Identify the challenges facing the management of NCoS towards the utilisation of academic and vocational training programmes in the reformation of inmates to enhance the sustainability of public order in the State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. How effective are the academic programmes in the custodial centres for reformation of inmates?
- ii. How effective are the vocational training programmes in the custodial centres for reformation of inmates to enhance the sustainability of public order in the State?
- iii. What are the challenges facing the management of NCoS towards the utilisation of academic and vocational training programmes in the reformation of inmates to enhance the sustainability of public order in the State?

Literature Review

Academic Programmes and Reformation of Inmates

According to the Legislative Analyst's Office (2017), the academic education programmes in the correctional facilities which could be used for inmates' reformation include adult basic education, general education development (GED) certification, the high school diploma programme and various college programmes. Davis, Bozick, Steele, Saunders and Miles (2013) conducted a study to evaluate the effectiveness of correctional education among incarcerated adults. The study adopted meta-analytic techniques to synthesize the effects of correctional education programmes administered to adults across multiple studies. The findings revealed that receiving correctional education while incarcerated reduces an individual's risk of recidivating after release. Also, inmates who participated in high school/GED programs had 30 per cent lower odds of recidivating than those who had not. In general, studies that included adult basic education (ABE), high school/GED, postsecondary education, and/or vocational training programmes showed a reduction in recidivism.

The study recommended that the state and federal policymakers and foundations to invest in well-designed evaluations of correctional education programmes to inform such policy questions. Also, researchers and programme evaluators need to strive to implement rigorous research designs to examine questions related to potential bias and programme dosage and to measure both proximal and distal outcomes. Funding grants and guidelines can help further the field by requiring the use of more rigorous research designs. Such funding would also enable correctional educators to partner with researchers and evaluators to undertake rigorous and comprehensive evaluations of their programmes. Last, a study registry of correctional education

evaluations would help in further developing the evidence based in this field to inform policy and programmatic decision making.

Duwe and Clark (2014) evaluated the effectiveness of prison-based educational programming by examining the effects of obtaining secondary certificates and Degree from tertiary institutions on recidivism and post-release employment outcomes among offenders released from Minnesota prisons between 2007 and 2008. Obtaining a secondary degree in prison significantly increased the odds of securing post-release employment but did not have a significant effect on recidivism or other employment measures such as hourly wage, total hours worked or total wages earned. Earning a Degree certificate in prison, however, was associated with greater number of hours worked, higher overall wages and less recidivism.

Vocational Training Programmes and Reformation of Inmates

Ngwu and Uche (2021) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between vocational skills training and rehabilitation of ex-convicts in Calabar South Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. The design of the study was the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was staff of correctional centre and secondary sources. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 50 staff from the correctional centre. The instrument was validated by experts in Test and Measurement and counselors. The reliability index of the instrument was .62. Data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The result showed that vocational skill training has significant relationship with rehabilitation of ex-convicts. Based on the finding of the study, it was concluded that the skill acquired enhances the chances of engaging in gainful employment and minimizes the chances of returning back to criminal activities. It was therefore recommended that rehabilitation of ex-convict through vocational skills training will help them to have employable skills which will help them to be self-sustainable and employable. Counseling on change of attitude and behaviour could help ex-convicts change their mind-set and re-integrate into the society and become better citizens. Successful reintegration of ex-convicts is central to crime reduction.

Inusa (2021) conducted a study to assess the perceived impact of vocational skills acquisition on reformation and reduction of recidivism by ex-convicts of Gombe Central Correctional Centre, Nigeria. The study used 30 ex-convicts who were jailed between six months and eight years. The instrument used for data collection was structured questionnaire which was validated by specialists in measurement and evaluation and reliability test conducted in Faculty of Education, University of Maiduguri. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed that most of the ex-convicts were male, with informal education and age range of between 21 and 40 years. The respondents engaged more in carpentry (37%) and Welding (33%). The vocational skills acquired by inmates had great and positive impact on their reformation. The study therefore recommended that there is need for the Nigeria Correctional Service authorities to introduce more vocational skills acquisition programmes in Gombe Central Correctional Centre, Collaborative provision should be made between the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS) and other agencies as well as other Vocational

and Technical Education (VTE) centres towards promoting the rehabilitation of prison inmates through vocational skills acquisition programme.

Challenges Facing the Management of NCoS towards the Utilisation of Academic and Vocational Programmes in the Reformation of Inmates

Ewelum *et al.* (2015) conducted a study in Anambra State to examine the reformation of prison inmates through adult education programmes, taking into consideration challenges and strategies for improvement. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised all the prison staff and inmates in Anambra State. The sample consisted of 300 persons i.e. 200 inmates and 100 prison staff selected through simple random sampling. Questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. Data collected were analysed using Mean statistics. The findings of the study were that overcrowding, poor funding, poor sanitation, poor facilities militated against reformation of prison inmates while provision of adequate facilities, recruitment of professional educators and administrators, adequate counseling services, adequate funding of correctional institutions among others were challenges in the reformation of convicted inmates in Anambra State. The study recommended that government should be encouraged through advocacy to fund the entire correctional services, recruit professional prison administrators and educators and provide functional medical facilities, among others. However, poor accessibility to rehabilitation services in Nigeria has added to the frustration of the programmes in the Country, (Effiong, Udousung and Udoh, 2018).

Ajah and Nweke (2017) conducted a study to examine the challenges facing vocational training of prison inmates in Nigeria. The sample was drawn from 307 respondents: 117 inmates awaiting trials, 147 convicts, 5 lifers and 38 prison staff. The samples were drawn using stratified sampling method. Questionnaire and in-depth interviews were used to generate data for the study. The results revealed that the following vocational facilities do not exist in the Nigerian prison system: barbing and hair dressing saloon (52.1%), auto repairs and mechanics (79.5%), shoe making (65.8%), fashion designing (84.0%), carpentry and electrical repairs (91.2% respectively). Also, the recreational facilities that are lacking include: table tennis (64.8%), basketball (77.6%) and volleyball (84.7%). The only recreational facility available is football (82.4%). In addition, the Nigerian prison system also lacks the following educational facilities: library (95.7%) and teaching aids (97.7%). Level of education of prison officers was found to be significant with awareness of the expected correctional facilities in prisons at $p = .004$ level of significance. There was no significant relationship between sex and attribution of availability of skill acquisition facilities as a prerequisite for effective correction of inmates at $p = .091$. The study therefore recommended the provision of vocational, educational and recreational facilities in the Nigerian prison system. This becomes necessary in order to overcome recidivism in the Nigerian prison system.

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the assumptions of the Human Capital Theory developed by Gary Becker in 1964 (Wuttaphan, 2017). The major assumption of the Human Capital Theory was that human beings can increase their productive capacity through greater education, training and skills. It is believed that individuals and society gain substantial economic benefits from investments in people. The theory is applicable to this study because the whole essence of educational and vocational programmes in the custodial centres is to equip the inmates with requisite intellect, knowledge, ideas and skills that could enable them become self-reliant upon release from the correctional facility. Basic services in most rehabilitation institutions, according to Effiong and Ekpenyong (2017), is limited but it is noteworthy here that the Nigerian Correctional Service has an important role in the reformation and rehabilitation of inmates, and this they do through introduction of academic programmes, vocational training programmes, family life education, health education programmes among others. In this regard, academic and vocational training programmes are strategies for human capital development. With these measures put in place, the level of recidivism would be reduced to the barest minimum.

Materials and Method

Research Design: This study adopted an exploratory survey research design. Exploratory survey research design is used to investigate a research problem that is not clearly defined, understood and germane. It provides researchers with a deeper understanding of a research problem and its context before further research could be carried out. Data from exploratory studies tend to be qualitative according to George (2023).

The Research Area: The study was conducted in the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS), Akwa Ibom State Command. The Command has four (4) custodial centres. These are the Medium Custodial Centre, Uyo, the Medium Ikot Ekpene, the Medium Custodial Centre, Eket, and the Medium Custodial Centre Ikot Abasi

Population of the Study: The population of this study comprised convicted inmates and personnel of the Nigerian Correctional Service in Akwa Ibom State Command. The total population of convicted inmates and personnel of the Nigerian Correctional Service, Akwa Ibom State Command is 1,045 (see Table 1).

Table 1: Population of Officers of NCoS, Akwa Ibom State Command and Convicted Inmates

S/N	Population	Location				Total
		Medium Security Custodial Centre, Uyo	Medium Security Custodial Centre, Eket	Medium Security Custodial Centre, Ikot Ekpene	Medium Security Custodial Centre, Ikot Abasi	
1	Convicted Inmates	112	43	212	62	328
2	Officers of NCoS, Akwa Ibom State Command	228	113	175	100	616
Total		340	156	387	162	1,045

Source: Human Resource Department of NCoS Akwa Ibom State Command as at 2022

Sample Size: A sample is a specific group that you will collect data from. The size of the sample is always less than the total size of the population, (Bhandari, 2023). The sample size for this study was determined based on the number of participants in the focus group discussion (FGD) and Key informant interview (KII). In the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), forty (40) respondents voluntarily participated in the study while nine (9) respondents were involved in the Key Informant Interview (KII). The composition of respondents according to custodial centres is given thus:

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents according to their location, population and Sample

S/N	Location	Population				Sample Size
		Convicted Inmates	Controller of Corrections	Deputy Controller of Corrections	Chief of Superintendent of Corrections	
1	Medium Security Custodial Centre, Uyo	10	1	1	1	13
2	Medium Security Custodial Centre, Eket	10	-	1	1	12
3	Medium Security Custodial Centre, Ikot Ekpene	10	-	1	1	12
4.	Medium Security Custodial Centre, Ikot Abasi	10	-	1	1	12
Total		40	1	4	4	49

Source: Field data (2023).

Sampling Technique: The multi-stage sampling technique was employed for selection of sample for the study.

Stage 1: The Nigerian Correctional Service, Akwa Ibom State Command was divided into Medium Security Custodial Centre, Uyo; Medium Security Custodial Centre, Eket; Medium Security Custodial Centre, Ikot Ekpene and Medium Security Custodial Centre, Ikot Abasi were purposively selected for the study (See Table 2).

Stage 2: NCoS Personnel, Akwa Ibom State Command (The Controller of Corrections, Deputy(s) Controller of Corrections and Chief Superintendent(s) of Corrections) were selected for the purpose of the Key informant interviews (See Table 3).

Stage 3: Convicted inmates were purposively selected from the custodial centres in NCoS, Akwa Ibom State Command for the purpose of the focus group discussions (See Table 3).

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to research instruments

S/N	Population	FGD	KII	Total
1	Convicted Inmates	40	-	30
2	Controller of Corrections	-	1	1
3	Deputy Controller of Corrections	-	4	4
4	Chief Superintendent of Corrections	-	4	4
	Total	40	9	49

Source: Field data (2023).

Sources of Data: The data for the study were gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected from the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key

Informant Interviews (KIIs) while the secondary data were gathered from text books, journals and online materials (Google Scholar, Research Gates, Scopus, among others).

Method of Data Collection: A pilot study was conducted before the field work. The researcher collected a letter of introduction from the Directorate of Public Order and Information Management, University of Uyo in order to direct access to the Custodial Centres and the officials of NCoS. Two (2) Research Assistants (RAs) were trained for the purpose of data collection. The researcher served as the moderator while RAs did the job of note taking and translation. All interviews were conducted in both English and Ibibio languages. All interview sessions were conducted within the premises of the custodial centres where there was less noise. The focus group discussion was mainly designed for the convicted inmates, while KII was for NCoS personnel. Every interview session lasted between 10 to 45 minutes. Data were collected within three (3) working days (29th August- 1st September, 2022).

Instrumentation: The focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) were instruments of data collection adopted in the study. An interview guide was designed by the researcher to help in the collection of primary data. The interview guide was designed in sections. Section ‘A’ elicited information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents while the rest of the sections handled questions that bother on the study objectives and variables.

Method of Data Analysis: The qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis method while the socio-demographic data were presented using frequency tables and simple percentages. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and selected excerpts were used for data analysis.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Table 4: Distribution according to socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (N = 49)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex:		
Male	37	75.51
Female	12	24.49
Age (years):		
18-23	3	6.12
24-29	5	10.20
30-35	8	16.33
36-39	11	22.45
40-45	5	10.20
46+	17	34.69
Religion:		
Christianity	47	95.92
Islam	2	4.08
ATR	0	0.00
Marital Status		
Married	29	59.18
Single	20	40.82
Widowed	0	0.00
Divorced	0	0.00
Level of Education:		
No formal education	0	0.00
Primary education	27	55.10
Secondary education	18	36.73
Tertiary education	4	8.16

Source: Field data (2023)

Table 4 revealed the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents that participated in the study. Results revealed that 37 (75.51%) respondents were male while 12 (24.49%) respondents were female. This implies that majority of convicted inmates across the custodial centres were male. More so, age brackets showed that 3 (6.12%) respondents were between 18-23 years of age; 5 (10.20%) respondents were between 24-29 years of age; 8 (16.33%) respondents were between 30-35 years of age; 11 (22.45%) respondents were between 36-39 years of age; 5 (10.20%) respondents were between 40-45 years of age; while 17 (34.69%) respondents were 46 years and above. This implies that those below 40 years of age were majority of participants in the study. Religious affiliation shows that 47 (95.92%) are Christians; and 2 (4.08%) are Muslims. There was no worshipper of African Traditional Religion. Christianity was more predominant in the study area. Marital status shows that 29 (59.18%) respondents are married and 20 (40.82%) respondents are single. There was not respondent that chose widowed and divorced. This implies that majority of respondents are married. Level of education reveals that 27 (55.10%) respondents have primary education; 18 (36.73%)

respondents have secondary education, while 4 (8.16%) respondents have tertiary education. It therefore, means that there is high level of literacy among the respondents.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

Academic Programmes and Reformation of Inmates

Respondents during FGDs and KIIs revealed the plight of convicted inmates in the Nigerian Correctional Service, Akwa Ibom State Command. The respondents desired for effective academic programmes to be introduced in the custodial centres as a reformation strategy. The respondents acknowledged the importance of academic programmes for inmates while serving their jail term. They believed that making academic programmes available for inmates in the custodial centres will enable them to further their education to any level of their choice in life. However, available custodial centres in Akwa Ibom State have primary education for their inmates but many of the inmates have passed the level of acquiring primary education. Some of the custodial centres have an existing secondary education programmes for their inmates while some are yet to commence. It was also observed that none of the custodial centres in Akwa Ibom State have tertiary education programmes for inmates. However, the Controller of Corrections, Akwa Ibom State Command had made arrangement with the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) to establish a Study Centre in Ikot Ekpene Custodial Centre to help inmates serving their jail term to achieve university education. The excerpts of the interviews were as follows:

One of the convicted inmates stated:

I had City and Guild, London before I came to this custodial centre. I would like to continue my advance studies while serving in the correctional centre. Government should wake up and do something. This is because education is very important for all categories of persons in the society. We are supposed to have facilities in this custodial centre to ensure inmates are educated. The government will have more benefits if the inmates are properly educated. A little that we have learnt here, we are able to realise our mistakes which we did not know in the past. For that reason, education is key to human capital development and government has to make academic programmes available for us (FGD-1/P4/Male/Convicted Inmate/Medium Security Custodial Centre, Eket/29th August, 2022).

Another convicted inmate said:

Before I came to this custodial centre, I had an Ordinary National Diploma (OND) in Electrical/Electronic at Heritage Polytechnic, Eket. I also went to Akwa Ibom State University, Ikot Akpaden, where I studied Mathematics and Statistics but I was in my final year when I had this issue that made me to become a convicted inmate. I have the intention to further my education and I would be grateful if I am given that opportunity while serving my jail term. I am still communicating with my Lecturers and they used to assure me that when I complete my jail term, they will help me to complete my degree programme. While doing my OND programme, I realised that I can do something with my

hands. I believe I can achieve my dreams when I am able to complete my studies in the university (FGD-1/P2/Male/Convicted Inmate/Medium Security Custodial Centre, Eket/29th August, 2022).

Yet, another convicted inmate opined:

I had already finished my secondary education at National High School before I was brought to this facility. I would like to further my education to enable me have a good qualification so that I can function very well in the society when I leave this place. However, I am not satisfied with the type of academic programme available in this custodial centre because I had already finished my secondary school. So, going back to primary is something ridiculous (FGD-1/P6/Male/Convicted Inmate/Medium Security Custodial Centre, Eket/29th August, 2022).

Other participants offered their opinion thus:

I stopped schooling at JSSI before I came to this custodial centre. Since then, I have not attended any school and I have intention to further my education because education is good and it will help me to achieve my goals. I equally participated in the primary school education programme in this facility but I have passed this level of learning. I need an advance programme not primary education (FGD-2/P8/Male/Convicted Inmate/Medium Security Custodial Centre, Ikot Ekpene/30th August, 2022).

Education is very essential to me. Although, I stopped at Primary Six, I have the intention to further because it will enlighten me the more. It helps in a time like this (FGD-1/P4/Male/Convicted Inmate/Medium Security Custodial Centre, Eket/29th August, 2022).

I am not satisfied with the type of academic programme in this custodial centre because there is no tertiary education programme in this place. I cannot go back to primary school and there is no secondary education here. However, the elementary education has helped those that need this type of education. Many of us have passed this level. For me, I was already a secondary school teacher and I teach Mathematic, Physics and Chemistry. I wish we have tertiary education programme in this place it will be better (FGD-1/P4/Male/Convicted Inmate/Medium Security Custodial Centre, Eket/29th August, 2022).

I had my primary six before I came here but I was not satisfied with the result which I had to register it again and wrote the said examination while in the custodial centre. Academic programmes for inmates in the correctional centre are good but frankly speaking, it is only primary education that is obtainable in this facility and inmates are yet to benefit from secondary and tertiary education programmes (FGD-3/P3/Male/Convicted Inmate/Medium Security Custodial Centre, Uyo/1st September, 2022).

The personnel also contributed thus:

The importance of academic programmes in custodial centre can never be overemphasized. We hear inmates attest to the fact that if they had acquired the knowledge they now have, they wouldn't have committed the crime that brought them to prison. Also, the programmes will change their academic status. Many of them are able to acquire FSLC and WACE after leaving the custodial centre. We have the elementary education, secondary education, and we have just gotten approval for tertiary education. This programme had been since the inception of this facility. The syllabus that is invoked in secondary schools in the State, notes of lessons are also the same. We have teachers from intellectual inmates, prison officers and religious organisations also come in on volunteer basis. The academic programme is effective. We train them on daily and monthly programmes. Well, so many of them have graduated. I cannot vividly tell you the exact number. As at last year, we turn out 15 from the primary section and 7, from the secondary level. (KII/R2/Male/Personnel/Medium Security Custodial Centre, Ikot Ekpene/30th August, 2022).

The benefits of education are enormous. It is necessary for inmates in the correctional centre to acquire qualitative education. I would like to agree with you that education can help in the reformation of inmates. That is why we have primary and secondary education programmes for our inmates. These academic programmes are currently on going and we have students enrolled in the programmes. We have over 50 students that have graduated and they graduated within the time frame and it also depends on the period that the inmate has to spend in the facility (KII/R5/Male/Personnel/Medium Security Custodial Centre, Uyo/1st September, 2022).

Vocational Training Programmes and Reformation of Inmates

Data gathered from the interviews revealed that vocational skills in the custodial centres have the capability of reforming the convicted inmates. Some of the convicted inmates were already professionals in different vocations before they were convicted and their conviction restrained them from continuing in their professions. However, all the custodial centres in Akwa Ibom State have made provision for vocational skills for inmates but the inmates are dissatisfied with the level of vocational skills due to poor facilities and lack of equipment and resource persons to train the inmates. The convicted inmates were eager to get involved in vocations that could make them to become self-reliant after their jail term but the reality of vocational skills in various custodial centres in the state is that there are limited facilities, lack of equipment and few resource persons to train them. The respondents said thus:

I was Auto mechanic before I came here. I am also a beneficiary of vocational skills in this facility. I have acquired barbing skill in this centre. (FGD-3/P5/Male/Convicted Inmate/Medium Security Custodial Centre, Uyo/1st September, 2022).

Other respondents said thus:

I came here as a seamstress. I have been trained here in liquid soap making and how to produce custards. It is a good move for reformation (FGD-3/P9/Female/Convicted Inmate/Medium Security Custodial Centre, Uyo/1st September, 2022).

Vocational education is very important for inmates in the custodial centre. For me, I was already a professional auto mechanic even before I came here. I have the intention to have more skills if that opportunity is given so that I would be able to take care of myself when I leave this place. In this facility, there is an automobile workshop and I used to go there to see what people are doing and sometimes I do train other inmates as well. However, I am not satisfied with the level of vocational training in this place because they don't have the required tools. If the required are provide, it will be of great benefit to the inmates to be properly reformed (KII/R1/Male/Personnel/Medium Security Custodial Centre, Eket/29th August, 2022).

It is one of aspects of reformation. Because if you acquire a skill it will go a long way to help you achieve what you want. So it is important we impart these skills on them so that they can be useful to themselves and the society. Without these skills custodial centres will not live to their expectations. We have vocations like carpentry, barbing confectionery, painting, tailoring and laundry. The vocational skills are as old as the prison. We have workshop managers, tailor masters, and officers who train the inmates in different vocation. Yes, they are very effective. We have so many of them who have been certified in different skills. We have a lot of them. After the period of their training, they are issued with certificates. We have been having graduates. The programmes for convicted inmates are not extensive, so between six months and one year, they graduate (KII/R2/Male/Personnel/Medium Security Custodial Centre, Ikot Ekpene/30th August, 2022).

Challenges facing the Management of NCoS in the Utilisation of Academic and Vocational Programmes in the Reformation of Inmates

The data collected revealed that the custodial centres in Akwa Ibom State have faced a number of challenges in the utilisation of academic and vocational programmes in the course of reforming the convicted inmates. These challenges were lack of political will to fund the correctional institutions, lack of equipment, poor facilities, out-dated books in the libraries, lack of resource persons and access to modern computers among others. Also, there is no support from NGOs and individuals and community members due to their perception towards the inmates. The respondents submitted their opinions thus:

Although, the management is trying to make academic and vocational programmes available for us, there are a lot of challenges especially in terms of equipment and facilities, they are not enough. In fact, management should step up

their game. These challenges could be resolved if there is a political will to fund the provision of both academic and vocational skills (FGD-3/P6/Male/Convicted Inmate/Medium Security Custodial Centre, Uyo/1st September, 2022).

Other respondents said that:

Some of the challenges faced are insufficient teaching staff, inadequate reading materials, lack of Internet services, and lack of access to information (FGD-3/P6/Male/Convicted Inmate/Medium Security Custodial Centre, Uyo/1st September, 2022).

I think it is lack of facilities. Most tools are personal tools owned by the staff (KII/Male/Personnel/Medium Security Custodial Centre, Eket/29th August, 2022).

The challenges are lack of tools, books, stationery, inadequate teachers, workshops and classrooms. Also, construction of workshops, provision of tools, and more teachers should be employed (KII/Male/Personnel/Medium Security Custodial Centre, Ikot Ekpene/30th August, 2022).

The challenges include lack of tools and outdated machines. There no new machines, writing materials and books in this facility (KII/Male/Personnel/Medium Security Custodial Centre, Uyo/1st August, 2022).

Discussion of Findings

- i. The results showed that the use of academic programmes in the custodial centres is an important strategy in the reformation of inmates. However, the management of the Nigerian Correctional Service, Akwa Ibom State Command are yet to provide tertiary education for inmates while some custodial centres have only elementary and secondary education. Many inmates who have finished secondary schools were found in the elementary classes while some refused to become pupil after they had finished primary school. No tertiary education programme for the inmates was found across the custodial centres visited. Many convicted inmates that participated in the study were eager to further their education while serving their jail term only if more academic programmes will be introduced. It was observed that textbooks in the facility Library were out-dated, there no computers, lack of resource persons and inmates were yearning for current reading materials.
- ii. Another results showed that vocational skills across the custodial centres in Akwa Ibom State were effective and it was considered a better strategy for the reformation of convicted inmates. It was observed that all the custodial centres have vocational training programmes for their inmates. These vocational programmes include carpentry, hair dressing, barbing, tailoring, auto mechanic, auto electrician, painting, and shoe making, weaving, and catering. However, most of these vocational programmes are not given

adequate attention due to lack of funds, facilities and the like and this has in a way increased recidivism.

- iii. Further results showed that there are existing challenges bedevilling the management of Nigerian Correctional Service to achieve its desired objectives, particularly in the area of reformation of convicted inmates. These challenges include but not limited to lack of funding, lack of adequate learning facilities, lack of learning materials and personnel to deliver quality education, lack of motivation and absence of community support either from companies or organisations, and discriminatory laws among others.

Academic Programmes and Reformation of Inmates

The results showed that academic programmes for convicted inmates in all custodial centres in Akwa Ibom State are yet to be effective. Academic programmes designed for convicted inmates in the custodial centres have the capacity to reform and rehabilitate them to become useful members of society. This finding is supported by the works of Ewelum *et al.* (2015). However, the Nigerian Correctional Service, Akwa Ibom State Command is still in the process of implementing effective and advanced academic programmes for convicted inmates serving their jail term in their correctional facilities. The inability to run academic programmes beyond elementary education in various custodial centres in the state has truncated the dreams of school completion and enrolment among the convicted inmates. This could be as a result of poor funding and lack of political will. It is believed that many custodial centres do prepare inmates for life after release for effective integration into the society. Government has been making provision for the education of the prisoners, yet, not much has been done to help the convicted inmates. The standard of education in the correctional facilities is inadequate and unacceptable. This may contribute to the educational status or standard of the ex-convicts not to improve. This result has answered the question “How effective are academic programmes for convicted inmates in the custodial centres for the purpose of reformation?”

Vocational Training Programmes and Reformation of Inmates

The results showed that there is high level of compliance in vocational training programmes running across the custodial centres in NCoS, Akwa Ibom State Command and the convicted inmates have embraced the various vocations. The findings of the study aligns with the previous work done by Effiong and Ekpenyong, (2017), as well as Ngwu and Uche (2021) that the skill acquired from vocation training programmes enhances the chances of engaging in gainful employment and minimises the chances of returning back to criminal activities. Inmates who enrolled in vocational training programmes while incarcerated had lower recidivism rates than those who did not attend the programmes. Inmates need training programmes to provide them with the necessary skills that promote a positive transition to society when they are released. The result has answered the research question “What is the level of compliance in the advancement of vocational training for reformation of convicted inmates in the custodial centres?”

The Challenges faced by Management of NCoS in the Utilisation of Academic and Vocational Programmes for Reformation of Inmates

The finding showed that management of the Nigerian Correctional Service, Akwa Ibom State Command has faced numerous challenges that bedevilled them from achieving the desired objectives of reformation of convicted inmates in its various custodial centres. These challenges include but not limited to lack of funding, lack of adequate learning facilities, which include modern learning tools like computers and inadequate numbers of motivated correctional officers with capacity to facilitate education of inmates. There are no schools or library structures in some of the correctional centres. Other issues are lack of learning materials and personnel to deliver quality education, lack of motivation and absence of community support either from companies or organisations. The congestion of some of the centres, especially those in urban areas, is a big issue as the high number of inmates, particularly those awaiting trial makes reformation difficult. Of particular concern is the discriminatory law against ex-inmates participation in socio-economic and political activities. When seeking employment, there is always that question: Have you been convicted of any crime? Once the answer yes, that is the end of the road. This has to be urgently addressed. They have served their punishment, why sentence them again to a life of rejection and social isolation?

Government should lead the way by repealing and abrogating those discriminatory laws. This result is supported by the works of Ewelum *et al.* (2015) and Ajah and Nweke (2017). This has answered the research question “What are the challenges faced by the NCoS personnel in the custodial centres toward effective utilisation of educational programmes in the reformation of convicted inmates?”

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined the correctional institution and utilisation of educational programmes for reformation of convicted inmates in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Results showed that academic programmes were relevant in the custodial centres for inmates’ reformation. However, all the custodial centres in Akwa Ibom State are yet to introduce tertiary education programme for convicted inmates. Further findings revealed that some convicted inmates are still clamouring for opportunities to further their academic programmes while serving their jail term in the custodial centre. Results also showed that vocational training programmes have been adopted in all the custodial centres. The convicted inmates were eager to have skills while in the custodial centre but there were a lot of challenges. Findings also showed that there challenges include lack of funding, lack of adequate learning facilities, lack of learning materials and personnel to deliver quality education, poor power supply, and lack of motivation and absence of community support either from companies or organisations, and discriminatory laws among others.

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that reformation of inmates is a core function of Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) which can be achieved through academic and vocational training programmes to equip the convicted inmates with the required skills before their release. Educational programmes in the custodial centres will open up opportunities for inmates, enlighten convicted inmates and build their self-confidence which has been depleted by incarceration. It is expected that when these programmes are fully implemented, the problem of recidivism would be reduced to the barest minimum. Vocational skill training is a means used in

the correctional institutions for the rehabilitation of inmates with concerned on employment, and it is obvious that vocational education is an indisputable means of combating crime and decreasing recidivism in the society. When the inmate acquires the relevant skills, it can go a long way to better their livelihood and improve their income as well as contribute to the development of the country. This training culminated into change in behaviour of the ex-convicts. When ex-convicts' behaviour is changed positively, there will be reduction in recidivism resulting from abstinence from crimes.

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations were provided:

- i. The Controller General of the Nigerian Correctional Service should introduce academic programmes in all the custodial centres for convicted inmates in Nigeria. There is need for appropriate teaching aids and qualified officers for teaching. Adequate budgetary provision should be made for education of inmates if we must get their correction right. Funding for education of inmates should not be left in the hands of donor agencies; government should consciously work on this to ensure effective reformation of inmates. This should be accompanied by systematic strategies to ensure that inmates that are able to acquire education while in custody are put to effective use. To encourage inmates that embrace such programmes, economic empowerment in terms of employment is critical to proper reintegration into the society, while implementation of the provision on non-discrimination is quite important.
- ii. The existing vocational training programmes in the custodial centres should be strengthened with adequate funding and support. Convicted inmates who have successfully completed their trainings should be properly empowered and reintegrated with their families and communities they come from. Vocational skills workshops should be well equipped and professionals brought in to manage these for optimal performance. Also, there should also be an effective plan for equipping each graduate with tools or equipment for a start-up when released. Government needs to work hard in coming up with a strategic after care programme that follows up with ex-inmates' progress and success story.
- iii. The challenges that bedevilled personnel of the Nigerian Correctional Service from utilising educational programmes in the custodial centres should be tackled as soon as possible for proper reformation of convicted inmates in Nigeria especially in the areas of academic and vocational training programmes among others. It is even more important for government to demonstrate willingness to ensure that these persons are not stigmatised, in terms of getting jobs upon release. Already the NCoS Act has a progressive provision around this. Sections 14 (5) provides for the issuance of certificate of good behaviour by the Controller General of Corrections to an inmate who had demonstrated good conduct, including those who have acquired training through formal and informal education, aimed at facilitating their reintegration, while Sec.14 (6) provides that a person who is issued with the certificate of good behaviour shall not be discriminated against on grounds of his custodial sentence. What is required now is the political will to ensure implementation.

References

- Adebuntimi, A. (2020). How improved prison education can decongest correctional centres, reduce crime, by experts. <https://guardian.ng/features/how-improved-prison-education-can-decongest-correctional-centres-reduce-crime-by-experts/> (Retrieved on 28th August, 2022).
- Afujue, C. R. (2004). Case for prison reform. *Reformer*, 1(5): 34-46.
- Ajah, B. O. and Nweke, J. O. (2017). Challenges facing vocational training of prison inmates in Nigeria: a study of Abakaliki and Awka Prisons. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*, 25(7), 1458-1468. DOI: 10.5829/idosi.mejsr.2017.1458.1468
- Ayuk, A. (2004). Congestion of Nigeria prisons and its impacts on rehabilitating, the inmates: A case study of Ikom. An Unpublished BSc Project, University of Calabar, Calabar.
- Becker, S. G. (1964). Human capital: a theoretical and empirical analysis. *Journal of Political Economy*, 70(5), 9-42.
- Bhandari, P. (2023). *Population vs. sample, definitions, differences and examples*. <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/population-vs-sample/> (Retrieved on 7th August, 2022)
- Curtis, P. (2005). MPS. Condemn prison education. www.guardian.co.uk/print/0.05100078-108100 (Retrieved 5th June, 2023).
- Davis, L. M., Bozick, R., Steele, J. L., Saunders, J. and Miles, J. N. V. (2013). Evaluating the effectiveness of correctional education: a meta-analysis of programs that provide education to incarcerated adults. https://bja.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh186/files/Publications/RAND_Correctional-Education-Meta-Analysis.pdf (Retrieved on 27th August, 2022).
- Duwe, G. and Clark, V. (2014). The effects of prison-based educational programming on recidivism and employment. *The Prison Journal*, 94(4), 454-478. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885514548009>
- Effiong, U. and Ekpenyong, O., (2017). Effect of Community Based Rehabilitation Services and Livelihood Enhancement among People with Disabilities in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Economic Development Research and Investment*, 8(1), 15 – 30.
- Effiong, U. and Ekpenyong, O. (2017). Community Based Rehabilitation Services and Livelihood Enhancement for Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria: A Case Study of Akwa Ibom State. *Journal of Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology in Practice*, 8 (1), 62-77.

- Effiong U., Udousung I. and Udoh E. (2018). Herdsmen/Farmers Crisis and Rehabilitation of Victims: A Study of Middlebelt-Nigeria. *Uyo Journal of Sustainable Development*, 3(2), 163-169.
- Ewelum, J. N., Omeriyang, M. C. and Ugochukwu, M. K. (2015). Reformation of prison inmates through adult education programmes in Anambra State of Nigeria: challenges and Strategies for Improvement. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 3(3), 205-212.
- George, T. (2023). Exploratory research: definition, guide and examples. <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/exploratory-research> (Retrieved on 5th June, 2023).
- Inusa, D. (2021). Perceived impact of vocational skills acquisition on reformation and reduction of recidivism by ex-convicts of Gombe Central Correctional Centre. *Kashere Journal of Education*, 2(2), 120-126. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/kje.v2i2.15>
- Legislative Analyst's Office (2017). Improving in-prison reformation programmes. <https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/3720> (Retrieved on 27th August, 2022).
- Mboho, K. S. and Ataire, A. C. (2018). Skill acquisitions of prison inmates and economic development in Nigeria: A study of Akwa Ibom State Prison, Uyo. *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 3(1), 58-68.
- Mboho, K. S. and Udoh, E. R. (2018). Poverty alleviation programme in Nigeria: a study of United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) Micro-Credit Scheme in Uyo LGA of Akwa Ibom State. *AKSU Journal of Management Sciences*, 3(1), 68-73.
- Ngwu, M. and Uche, R. D. (2021). Vocational skills training and rehabilitation of ex-convict in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. *Prestige Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 4(2), 164-173.
- Ogbaka, L. C., Ewelum, J. and Anthony, A. (2017). Utilization of educational programmes in reformation of prison inmates in Nigeria. *Asian Journal of Education and Training*, 3(2), 86-91. DOI: 10.20448/journal.522.2017.32.86.91
- Ogundipe, O. A. (2008). Education behind bars: The Nigerian experience. *Reformer*, 3(3), 32-38.
- Ostriecher, L. (2003). When a prisoner come home. Printer friendly formative. www.gottengazareicom/.article/2002,0117/15/11870 (Retrieved 5th June, 2023).
- UNESCO (2021). Education in prison: a literature review. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning Feldbrunnenstrasse 58 20148 Hamburg, Germany.

Walmsley, R. (2018). World prison population list. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED615405.pdf>(Retrieved on 27th August, 2022).

Wuttaphan, J. (2017). Human capital theory: the theory of human resource development, implications, and future. *Rajabhat Journal of Science and Humanities*, 18(2), 240-253.