

Assessment of the Participation of Jos Central Prison Inmates in Vocational Training Programmes in Plateau State, Nigeria.

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Abstract. This study examines the participation of Jos Central Prison Inmates in Vocational Training Programmes, Plateau State. The objectives of the study are; to assess factors that determine Jos prison inmate's decision to participate or not to participate in vocational training, the attitude of Jos prison inmates towards vocational training, and establish whether or not socio-economic background is a factor that justify Jos prison inmate's decision to participate in vocational training among others. The population of the study consisted of all the convicted inmates in Jos prison. Cluster sampling technique was used to choose an intact group and used as sample of the study. The instrument adopted to generate data for the study was structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire for Prison Inmates". Simple percentage was used to analyse the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using chi-square. Findings of the study indicate that participation in vocational training by prison inmates is not determined by their level of prior education. Also, that prison inmates who participate in vocational training perceived the training as beneficial and that inmate's socio-economic background influences their decision to participate in vocational training. Recommendations given are: that prison based-educational programmes should provide incentives for inmates' participation in vocational training, and inmates that are serving less than six months in their sentence length should be provided with vocational skills that can be acquired within a short period of time.

Keywords: Assessment, Prison, Inmates, Prison Education, Vocational Training, Programmes, Participation.

1. Introduction

Today's world education is seen as the best means of emancipating people from abuse, ignorance, unemployment, vulnerability and poverty. In pursuing this noble aim of emancipation, the constitutions of countries are expected to make provision for educating all citizens including prison inmates or so-called 'law breakers'. Education and training for prison inmates is thus currently gaining currency in many democratic countries. In most countries, including Nigeria, prison education is not only seen as a constitutional right but also a foundation stone for rehabilitation The Reformer (2010). In the South African context, it is regarded as common-sense knowledge that much crime committed is motivated by poverty as a result of the lack of relevant skills and knowledge for employment. Prison education therefore seeks to equip prison inmates with knowledge and skills that may assist them to reintegrate into their respective communities and to find employment or create self-employment, and in this way to prevent future crimes. Although prison education may not be the panacea to crime, the general assumption is that once prison inmates are equipped with the basic knowledge and relevant skills most of them could engage in self-employment activities instead of criminal activities. As the saying goes

‘the devil finds work for the idle’. The guiding notion behind prison education is that once prison inmates learn specific skills they are likely to engage in useful socio-economic activities. In the context of prisoners, education is seen as more than the ordinary understanding of socialization or teaching and learning. The meaning of education in the prison context is much wider than this common notion. We can describe this reality as the growth, change or development of a person. When we maintain that we have to discern different contexts and personal growth and change.

Nigeria had witnessed serious crimes over the years. Crime rate in our society is on the astronomical increase. It occurs in every sector of human endeavour, and is perpetrated by young and old, male and female, literate and illiterate, religious and atheists, leaders and followers, government and governed as well as members of the law enforcement agents. Criminal behaviours and delinquency are common occurrence in Nigeria. This high rate of occurrence is of great concern to the society and behaviour modifiers (Enuku 2001). In recent time, recidivism has not only been on the increase in sub-Saharan Africa, but has become a major social problem to the society, governments, multinational humanitarian organisations and the world over Lochner & Moretti (2004).

In Nigeria, the rate at which released inmates return into the prisons (recidivist) few months upon release have attracted the attentions and interest of criminologists, sociologists and scholars from other disciplines. Recidivism is the reversion to criminal acts of an offender who has been subjected to punitive sanctions/acts. There is no consensus of opinion among social science scholars especially criminologists on the significant determinants of recidivism among prisons inmates. Recidivism is now a common phenomenon among inmates in the Nigerian prisons. These include both the male and female offenders/inmates in the Nigerian prison custody. (Enuku 2001) reported that the prevalence rate of criminal recidivism in Nigeria in 2001 was 37.3%. Also, (Obioha 2010) estimated the prevalence of recidivism in Nigeria prisons at 52.4% in 2010. Since then,

there has not been any indication that the trend has declined. This trend in the high prevalence of recidivism shows that in Nigeria and in many other countries globally, prison consensus results have shown high rate of inmates’ release and high rate of inmates’ recidivism. As a result of this, crime by former inmates alone account for a substantial share of current and future crimes. From this background, peace, safety of lives and property are threatened thereby affecting the rate of investment in social and economic growth and developmental advancement.

The role of education and training in prison serve two purposes: increasing opportunities for employment after release, but also most importantly, improving self-esteem and self-confidence to assist in avoiding the negative lifestyle temptation that contributed to the initial incarceration of offenders (Callan & Gardner 2005). As a result of these change in priorities, a greater emphasis has been placed on education opportunities for the prisoners including career placement. Even so participation in education and training remains low with just 35 percent of eligible prisoners in 2009-10 participating accredited in education and training courses (The Reformer 2010). The decision to participate in education and training depends on a number of factors including the length of a prisoner’s sentence, the constraint of sentence management plans, the capacity of education officers, the demand and flexibility of prison jobs and most importantly, the availability of the programme (The Reformer 2010).

This study seeks to assess participation of prison inmates in vocational training in Jos central prison. The study will examine the factors that determine the prison inmate’s decision to participate in vocational education, educational status of prison inmates who participate in vocational training, the relationship between inmate’s participation in vocational training and perception of expected benefits, the age group that participate more in vocational training, socio-economic background of inmates who participate in vocational training and the relationship between inmates length of sentence and participation in vocational training.

2. Statement of the Problem

Participation of prison inmates in vocational training is a matter of concern to behaviour modifiers who would want a successful integration of former prison inmates into society. However, a good number of prison inmates have recidivated in Nigeria over the years. Several studies of recidivism like Callan and Gardner (2005) have systematically compared recidivism rate between prison inmates that participate in vocational training during incarceration and those inmates that did not participate in vocational training during incarceration. These studies claimed that inmates that, participate in vocational training have less chances of reoffending, and those who did not participate in vocational training on the other hand have greater chances of reoffending due to lack of adequate skills and knowledge to survive in a competitive society like Nigeria. For instance, a meta-analysis of studies from five states' corrections departments together with data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics showed lower recidivism rates among offenders who had participated in General Educational Development (GED) and postsecondary education programming as well as vocational education while incarcerated. A West Virginia study showed that inmate who had participated in vocational and General Educational Development (GED) programming had a recidivism rate of 6.71%, while recidivism among inmates who did not participate in educational or vocational training was 26% (Gordon & Weldon 2003). But little attention has been given to some of the factors that determine the inmate's decision to participate or not to participate in vocational training during incarceration. Thus, this study intends to examine some of the factors responsible for inmate's low participation in vocational training in Jos prison.

3. Objectives of the Study

- (i) To determine factors that determine Jos prison inmate's decision to participate or not to participate in vocational training.

- (ii) To determine the attitude of Jos prison inmates towards vocational training.
- (iii) To determine the relationship between inmate's participation in vocational training and perception of expected benefits.
- (iv) To establish whether or not age is a determinant of Jos prison inmate's participation in vocational education.
- (v) To establish whether or not socio-economic background is a factor that justify Jos prison inmate's decision to participate in vocational training.

4. Research Questions

- What is the educational status of prison inmates who participate in vocational training?
- What is the association between inmates' participation in vocational training and perception of expected benefits?
- Which age group participate more in vocational training at Jos central prison?
- Is length of sentence a determinant of Jos prison inmates' participation in vocational training?
- What is the socio-economic background of inmates' who participate in vocational training in Jos central prison?

5. Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no significant association between inmates' prior education and their decision to participate in vocational training during incarceration.

Ho2: There is no significant association between inmates' participation in vocational training and perception of expected benefits.

Ho3: There is no significant association between age and inmates' participation in vocational training in Jos prison.

Ho4: There is no significant association between inmates' length of sentence and inmates' decision to participate effectively in vocational training.

Ho 5: There is no significant association between inmates' socio-economic background and their decision to participate in vocational training.

6. Methodology

Descriptive case study was used by the researcher to investigate the participation of prison inmates in vocational training in Jos central prison Plateau state, Nigeria. The researcher used a case study design because of its descriptive and explanatory nature. The design entails seeking information from a group about issues, events and relationship within that group. All of the Jos prison convicted inmates both male and female participants and non-participants of vocational training constituted the population of the study. The entire population as at the time of this study constituted a total number of two hundred and sixty (260) convicted inmates, from which the researcher collected data from both participants and non-participants of vocational training numbering 65 in all. A structured questionnaire with 22-item related to the purpose of the study was used. The instrument used for data collection was called

“Questionnaire for prison Inmate”. The procedure for the instrument development was centered on a design which comprises of two sections. The first section contains the personal data of the respondent involving four (4) items while the second section deals with issues relating to relevant information about the problem under assessment with 18 items each with four (4) response scales which ranges from agree (A), strongly agree (SA), disagree (D), strongly disagree (SD). In analyzing the data obtained from the field survey, descriptive and inferential statistics which include the sample percentage (%) and chi-square (χ^2) respectively were used. The instruments were validated by experts in the Unit of Test and Measurement, Department of Educational Foundations, University of Jos. The reliability of the appropriate instrument was obtained through a split half test method. The researcher tested the instrument on some respondents outside the sample. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was .67 (Questionnaire for prison Inmate). Based on this index the instrument was found reliable for the study.

7. Results

Research Question One: What is the educational status of prison inmates who participate in vocational training?

TABLE 1: EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF PRISON INMATES WHO PARTICIPATE IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Educational Status	Frequency		Percentage	
	Participate	Not participate	Participate	Not participate
Primary	6	4	9.23%	6.15%
Secondary	24	14	36.92%	21.54%
Diploma	8	4	12.31%	6.15%
Degree	3	2	4.62%	3.08%
M.Ed	0	0	0	0
Ph.D	0	0	0	0
Total	41	24	63.08%	36.92%

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The table shows that qualification of prison inmates who participate in vocational training range from primary education to graduates with degree, but those with secondary school certificate are the highest participants.

Research Question Two: What is the association between inmates' participation in vocational training and perception of expected benefits?

TABLE 2: ASSOCIATION BETWEEN INMATES PARTICIPATION IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND PERCEPTION OF EXPECTED BENEFITS.

Participation in vocational Training	Frequency		Percentage	
	Perception of negative	Expected benefit Positive	Negative	Positive
Participate	0	41	0%	63.08%
Not participate	21	3	32.31%	4.61%
Total	21	44	32.31%	67.69%

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The table shows that inmates who participate in vocational training perceived the benefit as positive while those who do not perceived the benefits as negative.

Research Question Three: Which age group participate more in vocational training at Jos prison?

TABLE 3: ASSOCIATION BETWEEN AGE AND INMATES PARTICIPATION IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

AGE	Frequency		Percentage	
	Participate	Not participate	Participate	not participate
18-25	9	8	13.85%	12.31%
26-35	13	11	20%	16.92%
36-45	10	4	15.38%	6.15%
46-55	8	1	12.31%	1.54%
56-above	1	0	1.54%	0%
Total	41	24	63.08	36.92%

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The table shows that the participation cut across all the age groups identified. This means inmates no matter their age groups have tendency of participating in vocational training.

Research Question Four: Is length of sentence a determinant of Jos prison inmate's participation in vocational training?

TABLE 4: THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN LENGTH OF SENTENCE AND PRISON INMATES PARTICIPATION IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Length of Sentence	Frequency		Percentage	
	Participate	Not participate	Participate	Not participate
Less than six months	0	18	0%	27.69%
Short	25	4	38.46%	6.15%
Long	16	2	24.62%	3.08%
Total	41	24	63.08%	36.92%

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The table shows that inmates who participate in vocational training are serving short and long sentence terms with the highest number of participants serving short terms, while those serving less than six months do not participate.

Research Question Five: What is the socio-economic background of inmates who participate in vocational training in Jos central prison?

TABLE 5: THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN INMATES SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND THEIR DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING.

Socio- economic Background	Frequency		Percentage	
	Participate	Not participate	Participate	Not participate
Low	22	13	33.85%	20%
Middle	18	9	27.69%	13.85%
High	1	2	1.54%	3.07%
Total	41	24	63.08%	36.92%

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The table shows that socio- economic background of inmates who participate in vocational training range from low to high with the highest number of participants from low income background.

Hypothesis Testing

The researcher used the results obtained from the sample to test her null hypotheses in order to either retain or reject them.

Ho1: There is no significant association between inmates' prior education and their decision to participate in vocational training.

Level of significance $\alpha = .05$

CONTINGENCY TABLE ONE

Educational Status	Frequency		TOTAL
	Participate	Not participate	
Primary	6	4	10
Secondary	24	14	38
Diploma	8	4	12
Degree	3	2	5
M.Ed	0	0	0
Ph.D	0	0	0
Total	41	24	65

Chi-Square (X^2) value = 1.1266

Degree of freedom = 5

Critical value at .05 = 11.070

The data in above table shows that the calculated X^2 (1.1266) is less than the critical X^2 (11.070) for $df= 5$ at $\alpha = .05$ level. The H_0 is therefore accepted and it is concluded that there is no significance association between inmate's prior education and their decision to participate in vocational training.

Ho2: There is no significant association between inmates' participation in vocational training and perception of expected benefits.

Level of significance $\alpha = .05$

CONTINGENCY TABLE TWO

Participation in vocational Training	Frequency		TOTAL
	Perception Negative	of Expected Benefit Positive	
Participate	0	41	41
Not participate	21	3	24
Total	41	44	65

Chi-square (X^2) value = 53.05

Degree of freedom = 1

Critical value at .05=3.841

The data in above table shows that the calculated X^2 (55.05) is greater than the critical value (3.841) for $df= 1$ at $\alpha = .05$ level. The H_0 is therefore rejected and it is concluded that, there is a significant association between inmates' participation in vocational training and perception of expected benefits.

Ho3: There is no significant association between age and inmates' participation in vocational training in Jos Prison

Level of significance $\alpha = 0.5$

CONTINGENCY TABLE THREE

Age	Frequency		Total
	Participate	Not participate	
18-25	9	8	17
26-35	13	11	24
26-45	10	4	14
46-55	8	1	9
56- above	1	0	1
Total	41	24	65

Chi-square (X^2) value = 5.16

Degree of freedom = 4

Critical value at .05=9.488

The above data shows that the calculated X^2 (5.16) is less than the critical value (9.488) for $df = 4$ at $\alpha = .05$ level. The H_0 is therefore upheld and it is concluded that, there is no significant association between age and inmates' participation in vocational training in Jos prison.

Ho4: There is no significant association between length of sentence and inmates' decision to participate in vocational training.

Level of significance $\alpha = .05$

CONTINGENCY TABLE FOUR

Length of sentences	Frequency		Total
	Participate	Not participate	
Less than six months	0	18	18
Short	25	4	29
Long	16	2	18
Total	41	24	65

Chi- square (X^2) value = 46.78

Degree of freedom =2

Critical value at .05 = 5.991

The above data shows that the calculated X^2 (46.78) is greater than the critical value (5.991) for $df=2$ $\alpha = .05$ level. The H_0 is therefore rejected and it is concluded that there is a significant association between inmates' length of sentence and inmate decision to participate in vocational training.

Ho5: There is no significant association between inmate's socio- economic background and their decision to participate in vocational training.

Level of significance $\alpha = .05$

CONTINGENCY TABLE FIVE

Socio- economic background	Frequency		Total
	Participate	Not participate	
Low	22	13	35
Middle	18	9	27
High	1	2	3
Total	41	24	65

Chi-square (X^2) value = 1.283

Degree of freedom = 2

Critical value at .05 = 5.991

The above data shows that the calculated X^2 (1.283) is less than the critical X^2 (5.991) for $df=2$ $\alpha=.05$ level. The H_0 is therefore upheld and it is concluded that, there is no significant association between inmate's socio- economic background and their decision to participate in vocational training.

8. Major Findings

Based on analysis and discussion of the results of the study, the following emerge as the significant findings:

- There is no significant association between inmates' prior education and their decision to participate in vocational training.
- There is a significant association between inmates' participation in vocational training and their perception of expected benefits.
- There is no significant association between age and inmates' participation in vocational training in Jos prison.
- There is a significant association between inmates' length of sentence and inmates' decision to participate effectively in vocational training.
- There is no significant association between inmates' socio-economic backgrounds and their decision to participate in vocational training.

9. Discussion of Results

Results for testing hypothesis one shows that there is no significant association between inmates' prior education and their participation in vocational training. The study shows that the qualification of inmates who participate in vocational training in Jos prison range from primary education through degree, but those with secondary school certificates were the highest participants. Again, results for testing hypothesis two show that, there a significant association between inmate's participation in vocational training and perception of expected benefits. With regards to the value inmates place on outcomes of vocational training, inmates who participates in vocational training in Jos central prison perceived the expected benefits of

learning vocational skills positively, why those who do not have a negative perception of the expected benefits. This suggests that inmate's propensity to participate in vocational training is their intention to have a smooth re-entry upon release and also to start a new job. In addition, the results for testing hypothesis three shows that there is no significant association between age and inmates' participation in vocational training in Jos central prison. However, the results show that there is no age restriction to inmates' participation in vocational training in Jos central prison, but inmates within younger age groups participated more than inmates in older age groups. Furthermore, results for testing hypothesis four shows that there is a significant association between inmate's length of sentence and their decision to participate effectively in vocational training. The study shows that inmates with short and long sentence length participate in vocational training, while those serving less than six months do not participate. Sentence length may be important not only to the vocational choices prisoners may make during their incarceration but also to their employability after release. Lastly, results for testing hypothesis five shows that there is no significant association between inmates' socio-economic background and their decision to participate in vocational training. This study discovered that the majority of the inmates were involved in low income employment prior to their incarceration, while majority of them reported to have low levels of educational attainment all of which impact on their ability to obtain and maintain employment upon release. Unemployment can be compounded by prisoners having a criminal record and/or having a stigma attached to having been in prison because employment has a significant impact on the inmates' ability to connect with the society.

10. Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that:

- Participation in vocational training by prison inmates is not determined by their level of prior education.
- Prison inmates who participate in vocational training perceived the training as beneficial.
- Age is not an eligibility criterion for participating in vocational training in Jos central prison.
- Inmates' sentence term has effect on their participation in vocational training, inmate's with short prison term participate more than those with long term, while those serving less than six months in their sentence term do not participate.
- Inmates socio-economic background influences their decision to participate in vocational training. Inmates from low socio-economic background participate more than those from middle socio-economic and high socio-economic background.

11. Recommendations

For the inmates to have a smooth re-entry to the society and securing employment upon release, the prison authorities should provide vocational skills that are in trend and marketable such as laptops, mobile phone, apple and iPods' repairs, beads making, soap and cream making, tie and dye, fashionable slippers and the likes depending on societal demands.

Correctional authorities should provide vocational training that will lead to certification so that inmates upon release can apply at industries that required certain qualification for employment.

Participation in vocational training should be mandatory in that the inmates are required to participate so that the set out objectives of vocational training can be attained.

Prison based-educational programmes should provide incentive for inmate's participation in vocational training, such as to earn work release credits equal to one day off from their sentence for each day in the programme (commonly referred to as day for day). While these credits

provide some incentives to participate in vocational training, other incentive could include greater sentence reduction.

Inmates that are serving less than six months in their sentence length should be provided with vocational skills that can be acquired within a short period of time such as beads making, soap making and mobile phone repairs.

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