

**APPRAISING THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF VOCATIONAL SKILLS
ACQUISITION PROGRAMME ON PRISON INMATES IN KADUNA STATE,
NIGERIA.**

ABBA, Mannir (Ph.D)

Department of Adult Education and Extension Service, Usmanu Danfodio University Sokoto,
Nigeria.

Phone: +2348036920907 Email: mannirabba@yahoo.com

and

***AIDI, Hakeem O.**

Department of Economics, University of Nigeria Nsukka, Nigeria.

Phone: +2348034577684 Email: olatunji.aidi.pg.67243@unn.edu.ng

Abstract

This study seeks to evaluate the economic benefits of Vocational Skills Acquisition (VSA) programme on prison inmates in Kaduna State using descriptive survey research design (tables and percentages). The population of the study comprised 571 prison inmates in the Kaduna Central Prison out of which 420 respondents were randomly selected. Data collection was via self-constructed questionnaire with reliability index of 0.81. The results show that the prison inmates in Kaduna Central Prison have benefited from the VSA programme. Many of them have acquired skills to make them useful to themselves and society at large. Sequel to the findings, it was recommended among other things that the Nigerian government should introduce and extend more similar programmes to other prison facilities. Also the government and other stakeholders should provide the much needed support for discharged inmates so as to hasten their integration into the society.

Keywords: Prison, Inmates, Vocational Skill Acquisition and Economic Impact.

1. Introduction

The Nigerian Prisons Service (NPS) is indisputably a federal phenomenon. This implies that this body is by law an exclusive federal government creation. As such, no state in the country has the approval for ownership, operation or maintenance of prison. As it stands today, the NPS is assigned the responsibility of ensuring the safe custody of offenders as well as their reformation and rehabilitation. According to Dambazzau (2007), the rationale for imprisonment is evident in decree No. 9 of 1972 which assigned the NPS with the responsibility among other functions, to teach and train the prisoners to become useful and law abiding citizens on discharge. Igbo (2007) noted that these responsibilities are discharged through carefully designed and well-articulated administrative, reformatory and rehabilitative programmes aimed at inculcating discipline, respect for law and order and dignity on prison inmates.

According to NPS Reports (2014), the United Nations (UN) declaration of human rights in 1948 states that everyone has a right to education and Rule 71 (3) of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states “sufficient work of a useful nature shall be provided to keep prisoners actively employed for a normal working day”. Despite the endorsement of this UN declaration in 1976 by the Nigerian government, the country still ranks (in the world) among countries with high level of illiteracy, unemployment and poverty especially among ex-prisoners (Tenibaije, 2010).

Discharged prisoners find it difficult to live a normal life in Nigeria (especially in Kaduna State) perhaps because the society views them as misfits or outcasts who are not amenable to corrections. Although, the statutory functions of NPS (according to NPS Reports, 2014) include ensuring the safe custody of awaiting trial and convicted prisoners as well as reformation and rehabilitation of all inmates; not much success seems to have been achieved in this regard as rate of crimes and unemployment continue to soar among prison inmates (before and after they are discharged). The rejection cum stigmatisation of discharged prison inmates may push or reintroduce them to crimes.

As a way out, studies such as that of Evawoma-Enuku (2006) and Onweonye, Obinne & Odu (2013) suggested training of prison inmates in vocational skills (through VSA programmes) claiming this will go a long way to empower and make them productive and self-reliant particularly upon their discharge. The availability of VSA programmes in Nigerian prisons today is seen as vital tool for the achievement of reformation, rehabilitation and integration of discharged prison inmates (Onweonye et al., 2013). This study seeks to examine the economic benefits of VSA programme on prison inmates in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Although there are fourteen (14) prison/correctional facilities in Kaduna State according to NPS Reports (2014), this study is limited to only Kaduna Central Prison. The justification for this selection lies on the premise that that is the only facility in Kaduna State where vocational skills acquisition (VSA) programme is available. Under the VSA programme inmates are being taught hair-dressing, carpentry and joinery, metal-work, knitting, dress-making, soap-making, laundry/dry cleaning among others. The facility is currently housing not less 571 prison inmates (Adeola, 2015)

2. Literature Review

This section has two main subheadings namely: theoretical and empirical literature. The theoretical literature presents the summary of all related theories to the study while empirical literature provides an insight to both local and international existing studies.

2.1 Theoretical Literature

It is important to note that although there are numerous related theories to this study, due to limited space only the two most relevant theories (i.e. theory of skill acquisition and theory of rehabilitation) were reviewed. Thus, this study will be guided by both theories.

2.2.1 Theory of Skill Acquisition

This theory was propounded by Hubert and Dreyfus in 1980. According to these researchers, skills acquisition is a gradual process that involves being embodied in different ways and developing skills that would make it possible for employees to deal with the world of work. By explaining the five stages (i.e. novice, advanced beginner, competence, proficiency, and expertise) that an individual goes through in order to become an expert, Hubert and Dreyfus justify their point of view on the topic of learning process and skill development. The main idea behind Hubert and Dreyfus skill development theories is the distinction they make between “knowing that” (that is, the ability to recall the understanding of selected course of action) and “knowing how” which is the understanding that occurs upon seeing similarities with previous experiences. In vocational education, the knowing-how and knowing-that is considered one concept which is acquired through a formal system of skill acquisition. This theory of skill acquisition is relevant to the present study in that inadequacy of the skills of the prison inmates may influence their social behaviour and force them to return to crime.

2.1.2 Theory of Rehabilitation

This theory was propounded by Jean Hampton in 1970 as a reaction to the earlier schools of penology who mostly see rehabilitation through isolation and punishment as ideal. Reformers during the Jacksonian era hoped that keeping felons in solitude will enable them reflect on their sins thus aiding their cleansing and transformation. Jean Hampton, being the major adherent of this theory however sees punishment from different dimension. The scholar argued that the focal point of penal system should be treatment and correction. This theory further explains that offender should be treated as an individual whose special needs and problems must be known in order to enable prison authority deal effectively with him. The theorist believed that one cannot inflict a severe punishment or inhuman treatment on prison inmates in the prison and expect them to be reformed and reintegrate themselves into the society upon release. Although it is important to inflict punishment on those persons who breach the law so as to maintain social order, the researcher concluded that the importance of rehabilitation should be prioritised as it is the only assured way of ensuring that offenders do not return to crime particularly since they have acquired skills that will help them engage in productive activities upon release. This is therefore another major and clear point of its relevance to this study.

2.2 Empirical Literature

Both local and international studies reviewed include Omoni & Ijeh (2009), Onweonye et al. (2013), Hassan & Oloyede (2013), Tanimu (2010), Asokhia and Osumah (2013) among others.

The study of Omoni and Ijeh (2009) empirically investigated the perception of prison and college of education academic staff in Delta State on the effect of qualitative education on prisoners using data obtained from primary source. Descriptive statistics was used for analysis. The findings revealed that there is no significant difference in opinion between both staff (prison and college of education academic staff) on the adequacy of prisoners' vocational and formal education programmes (i.e. they strongly welcome the idea of formal/vocational education for prisoners). In a similar research by Onweonye et al. (2013) on the needs for vocational training of prison inmates in Delta State, the researchers employed descriptive statistics for analysis using data generated or obtained from primary source. The study found among other things that prison inmates in Delta State were being trained regularly in both formal and vocational education. The researchers called for more moral and financial support from the government and non-governmental organisations to enhance self-reliance among prison inmates especially after their discharge.

Hassan and Oloyede (2013) examined the impact of adult education programmes on prison inmates in Oyo State using data obtained from primary source (design survey). The main adult education programmes provided for the prison inmates include vocation/technical education, basic literacy programme, religious education, computer education among others. The researchers however found high level of inadequacy in both personnel and material resources required for the continuous education of prison inmates in the state.

Tanimu (2010) investigated the value of basic education and training on prison inmates. The study relied on qualitative inquiry using in-depth interview for data generation. The researchers observed that there were more male (about 63%) in prisons than female (less than 38%) and also that close to 70 percent of these inmates were in their productive age and were actually jobless before their imprisonment.

In another study, Asokhia and Osumah (2013) embarked on a research to determine the status of rehabilitation services for prison inmates in Edo State. Relying on primary data, the researchers obtained data which was analysed using percentages. The researchers found that rehabilitation programmes (specifically adult and vocational education) were available in Prisons in Edo State. This is in line with the United Nation resolution in 1990 mandating governments to respect the right of prison inmates to education.

Steutrer and Smith (2003) carried out a comparative survey of correctional facilities in three American states (Maryland, Minnesota and Ohio). The researchers compared correctional education participants and assessed the impact of correctional education and recidivism and post-release employment using quasi-experiment research design. The findings showed among other things that correctional education participants had statistically lower rates of re-conviction and re-incarceration than non-participants.

Similarly, the work of Zawada and Quan-Baffour (2012) titled "education programmes for prison inmates: reward for offences or hope for a better life?" focused on the value of basic education

and training for prison inmates in South Africa. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study while two correctional centres were chosen as case study. The findings revealed among others that majority of the inmates were neither educated nor had any technical/vocational skill before their conviction and that they have acquired different vocational skills while serving their sentences in the sampled correctional centres. The researchers concluded that educational programmes for prison inmates will go a long way to aid reduction of crimes in South Africa if it is sustain.

Willen (2013) examined the contributions of vocational skill acquisition (VSA) training on prisoners' re-integration in Alaska (USA) using descriptive statistics. A total of one thousand and forty four were randomly selected from twenty-five prison facilities in the State for participation, the researcher found that the prison inmates were exposed to VSA programmes. The researcher concluded that the exposure of the prison inmates to VSA will brighten their chances of participation in productive activities upon discharge.

From the literature reviewed, it is clear that most of the existing studies did pay attention to social benefits (as against economic benefits which is the focus of this study) of the differently mentioned programmes on prisoners. Also, most of the locally available studies focussed on States other than Kaduna State. This essence of this study is to fill the identified gaps in literature.

3. Methodology and Data

3.1 Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study; the population consisted of all the five hundred and seventy-one (571) prison inmates in Kaduna Central Prison (Kaduna State), out of which 46 (about 8 percent) are female while 525 (about 92percent) are male. Four hundred and twenty (420) prison inmates consisting of 34 (about 8 percent) female and 386 (about 92 percent) male were randomly selected as sample.

3.2 Data

The data for the study was collected using a self-constructed questionnaire. The questionnaire was subjected to both face and content validation from experts (from university of Nigeria Nsukka and Usmanu Danfodio University Sokoto). The reliability index of the questionnaire was 0.81 and also the questionnaire followed the "Likert" 2- point scale of Agree (A) and Disagree (D). The questionnaires were administered by the researchers through the help of two prison officials and were collected back a week after. After the screening of the questionnaires upon return, the researchers realised that forty-one of them (about 9.8%) were either missing or mutilated and thus discarded whereas the good ones totalling 379 (about 90.2%) were coded into frequency table and analysed using simple percentage.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Results

The result of the findings is presented in what follows (Table 1 to Table 8):

Table 1: Responses on the availability of VSA programmes in Kaduna Central Prison

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	379	100
Disagree	-	-
Total	379	100

Table 2: Responses on whether all the prison inmates are participants in the VSA programmes

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	120	31.7
Disagree	259	68.3
Total	379	100

Table 3: Responses on whether the prison inmates have acquired/are learning vocational skills through the VSA programmes

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	301	79.4
Disagree	78	20.6
Total	379	100

Table 4: Responses on whether the prison inmates engaged in productive activities within the prison

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	224	59.1
Disagree	155	40.9
Total	379	100

Table 5: Responses on whether the prison inmates generate revenue through the skills acquired via VSA programmes

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	365	96.3
Disagree	14	3.7
Total	379	100

Table 6: Responses on whether the prison inmates can be self-employed/self-reliant upon the completion of the VSA programmes

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	362	95.5
Disagree	17	4.5
Total	379	100

Table 7: Responses on whether the prison inmates can raise enough for the required tools for independent practise should they be discharged

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	80	21.1
Disagree	299	78.9
Total	379	100

Table 8: Responses on whether they will be given certificate to practise their crafts outside the prison

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	80	21.1
Disagree	299	78.9
Total	379	100

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that VSA programmes (designed to economically better the lives of prison inmates) are available in Kaduna Central Prison. The summary of the responses on Table 1 showed that all the prison inmates sampled responded positively to the question on the availability or otherwise of VSA programmes in the Kaduna Central Prison.

Table 2 contains the summary of responses on whether all prison inmates (housed in the Kaduna Central Prison) are cleared to participate in the VSA programmes. The result shows that not less than 68 percent (259 respondents) disagree with the question relating to who and who constitute the participants of the VSA programmes. Further enquiry revealed that only convicted prison inmates are allowed to partake in the programmes while awaiting trials are disallowed due to the temporary nature of their residence. The findings of this study also revealed that participating inmates in the VSA programme have acquired or learning vocational skills in the Kaduna Central Prison. To support this, table 3 shows that respondents totalling 301 (about 79percent) responded positively to the question on whether or not the inmates are benefiting from the programme.

The findings (see Table 4) further revealed that the trained prison inmates are allowed to put into practical use the vocational skills they have acquired through the VSA programme. Thus, the prison inmates produce different kinds of products including soap, iron-door, dress, furniture

among others. The researchers observed that these prison inmates raise or generate revenue for themselves through the sales of the produced items. Table 5 shows that 365 respondents (constituting about 96percent) confirm that the inmates make money using the acquired skills. As such, the raised revenues are either saved (in the prison savings scheme) or used for taking care of their families' needs.

Moreover, the findings of this study revealed that upon the completion of the VSA programme, majority (up to 96 percent as evident in table 6) of the respondents believe they can be self-employed/self-reliant. This implies demonstration of confidence to practise the various crafts learnt through the VSA programme within or outside the four walls of the prison. Another important finding of this study (as summarised on table 7) is that most of the respondents believe they could not raise sufficient fund for the purchase of the necessary tools need for independent practise. It is important to note that some of the machines/equipment (welding machine, sewing machine etc) being used in the prison are expensive and are made available by the government. In addition, the researchers observed that the inmates who have completed the VSA training in Kaduna Central Prison are not given any form of certificate. This may make it difficult for them to practise their numerous crafts outside the prison (should they be discharged).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of this study revealed that convicted prison inmates in Kaduna Central Prison have either acquired or learning vocational skills through the VSA programme. Some of these inmates have perfectly learnt different kinds of vocational skills to make them self reliant or employed should they find themselves outside the prison while others are also making progress in the learning process. From the findings, the researchers are optimistic that many of these prison inmates must have acquired sufficient skills not just for sustenance but also to contribute to the development of Kaduna State (and Nigeria at large) upon discharged. Sequel to these findings, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Efforts should be made to make available more similar programmes (perhaps formal education programme) for inmates in the various correctional facilities in the country.
- ii. The VSA programme should also be extended to all other prisons other than the Central Prisons since these inmates have not lost their right to education by virtue of their imprisonment.
- iii. Efforts should be made by the Nigerian government and other well-wishers to provide the much needed support (in term of start-up capital, procurement of tools etc) for the discharged inmates so as to ease their re-entry into the society.
- iv. The prison management should also provide the prisoners with certificate upon the completion of the training so as to ease their practice outside the four walls of the prison.

6. References

- Adeola, A. (2015). The Nigerian Prison Service Rebrands Changes to “Nigerian Prisons and Correctional Service”/ Replaces “Hard Labour” with “Prison Labour”, Upper Chamber of the Nigeria Legislative Assembly (House of Senate), pp. 1 – 3 Report Retrieved on 8/11/2012 from www.deolascope.belospot.com
- Asokhia, M.O. & Osumah, O. (2013). Assessment of Rehabilitation Services in Nigeria Prisons in Edo State, Nigeria: *American Journal of Contemporary Research*, **3**(1):140-152.
- Dambazau, A.B. (2007). *Criminology and Criminal Justice (2nded.)*. Westerville: Glencoe/McGraw Hill.
- Evawoma-Enuku, U. (2006). Humanizing the Nigerian Prisons through Literacy Education in: Echoes from afar. *Journal of Institute of Correctional Education*. **52** (1): 1-12
- Hassan, M. A, & Oloyede, T., O. (2013). Evaluation of Component of Adult Education on the Inmates welfare in Agodi Prison Yard, Ibadan, Oyo States, Nigeria: *International journal of correctional education*.
- Hubert, A., & Dreyfus, C. (1980). Foundational Evaluation Models for 21th, Century Programme Evaluation: The Evaluation Centre Occasional Paper series. F.E. Peacock.
- Igbo, E.,U. (2007). *Introduction to Criminology*.Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press
- Nigeria Prison Service Report. (2014). *Nigerian Prison Service Training Manual*: Abuja, Nigeria.
- Omoni, G.E. & Ijeh, S., U. (2009). Qualitative Education for Prisoners: A Panacea to Effective rehabilitation and Integration into the society: *Edo Journal of Counselling* **2** (1):28– 37
- Onweonye, C., Obinne, J. I. &Odu, K. O. (2013). Vocational Training Needs of Prison inmates in Delta State for Self-reliance. The African Education and Business Research Institute, Inc.: *The Global Journal of Educational Perspectives*, **1** (1): 46-52.
- Steutrer, J. S. & Smith, G.L., (2003).*Education Reduces Crime: Three States Recidivism study, executive summary, correctional education association at 5*,<http://www.corectional.org/PDFS/Ed Reduces crime.pdf>.
- Tanimu, B. (2010). Nigeria convicts and Prison Rehabilitation Ideals: *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*.**12** (3):1-17.
- Tenibaije, D., J. (2010). Counselling for Productive Employment of Prison Inmate: *European Journal of Educational Studies* **2** (3) 193 – 202.
- United Nations Resolution. (1990). United Nations (UN) Basic Principle for Treatment of Prison inmate (Resolution 45/III). December: 230
- Willen, S. (2013). Contributions of Vocational Skill Acquisition to Prison Inmates’ Reintegration into the Society in United State. *American International Journal of Social Science*, **4**(2) : 87-94.