

**A STUDY OF SKILLS ACQUISITION PROGRAMMES IN
GOMBE MEDIUM SECURITY CUSTODIAL CENTRE,
GOMBE STATE-NIGERIA**

Nasiru Anas^{1*}, Ibrahim Abdullahi², Hassan Yerima³ & Precious Agbo⁴

^{1,4}Department of Sociology, Gombe State University, Gombe, Nigeria

²Department of Political Science, Gombe State University, Gombe, Nigeria

³Department of Democracy and Governance, National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies, National Assembly, Abuja, Nigeria

*nasiruanas27@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: Nigerian Correctional Centre were established as institutions that rehabilitate inmates through various correctional services. One of these correctional services is the skills acquisition programme. The programmes aimed at rehabilitating the prisoners in order to equip them with new skills thereby making them useful to themselves through different activities they engaged in after leaving prisons. This paper therefore examines the availability and functionality of the skills acquisition programmes in Gombe Medium Security Custodial Centre. The methodology employed for this study is the descriptive research method and data was collected from a sample of 294 inmates from the population of 1088 using the Taro Yamani formula for calculating sample size for research activity. The findings of the study indicated that the skills acquisition programmes registered by the inmates include tailoring and cap making, weaving, welding and carpentry, shoe and cream making, bead and soap making, earrings makings and laundry. The study also revealed that majority of the respondents received daily training. Furthermore, the study discovered that the skills acquisition facilities were outdated as shown by the majority views. The study also found that the programmes have relative impact on the inmates. The challenges facing the smooth functioning of the programmes include among others: insufficient training materials, lack of professional skills acquisition tutors and unstable power supply. Finally, the study recommends among others; the need to provide sufficient and updated training facilities, professional skills acquisition tutors and constant power supply by sticking to alternative solar power supply.

Keywords: Correctional Centre, Rehabilitation, Skills Acquisition Programmes, Prison Inmates

INTRODUCTION

Generally, prison is said to be a place where offenders are kept and punished for crimes they committed. It can also mean a place delimited and declared as such by the laws of the state and created to ensure restraint and custody of individuals accused or convicted of violating the criminal law of the state. Prison is being used as a reformation centre for offenders because what constitutes sufficient punishment is confinement, which entails deprivation of many things such as privacy, interrupted control of personal belongings and a host of other life pleasures (Diana, 2021). Prison service in Nigeria derives its powers from Cap. 366 Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1990) to perform certain functions including taking into

custody all those legally detained and setting in motion for their training and reformation in preparation to return them back to the society as normal law-abiding citizens. The implication of these training and reformation is that inmates appeared to be no longer security threats to national peace which is vital for the socio-economic development in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the reformation programmes, known as skills acquisition programmes encompasses all forms of training such as carpentry, welding, tailoring, cratering, dressing/barbing, plumbing and painting among others. These skills acquisition programmes are aimed at reformation, rehabilitation and reduction of criminal activities, especially among convicts who are mostly youths (Sani & Nasiru, 2018). Similarly, Nigeria Correctional Centres are now operating with a view to reformation and social rehabilitation of inmates through various skills acquisition programmes. Consequently, correctional commands in the country have works and welfare units that coordinate the programmes. All these programmes are provided to ensure and enhance the complete reformation and rehabilitation of inmates for successful reintegration into society (Mbatha, *et al* 2019).

But, despite the huge funds spent on skills acquisition programmes, both human and material resources that are put in place by government and non-governmental organisations, there seems to be a high unemployment rate among youth in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to investigate the declining prison facilities in Gombe Medium Security Custodial Centre, Gombe. Specifically, the study seeks to examine:

1. The availability of the skills acquisition programme in Gombe Medium Security Custodial Centre in Gombe State-Nigeria.
2. The functionality of the skills acquisition programme in Gombe Medium Security Custodial Centre, Gombe State-Nigeria.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

This study focused on skills acquisition programmes in the Gombe Medium Security Custodial Centre. The custodial centre, one of the prisons in Nigeria is established for reformation and rehabilitation of inmates through different means. One of these is the skills acquisition programmes. The programmes aim to make the inmates, upon release from incarceration, start a business that could make them employable or become independent entrepreneurs and even employers of labour. This could also lead them to be economically and socially independent, and by extension, bring about a reduction in criminal activities. In this regard, many studies have been conducted in Nigeria on the impact of skills acquisition programmes on inmates. The findings of this study, therefore, have supported the earlier findings of the previous research. In this regard, prison inmates are provided with skills acquisition training that can enable them to reintegrate into society upon release from prison, especially the skills acquisition training with minimal start-up capital like event decoration and baking skills, this will help reduce the incidence of re-offending.

Ikegwu, et al (2014) studied human empowerment through skills acquisition: Issues, impacts and consequences using non-parametric statistics. The study revealed that the best option for the empowerment of prison inmates is a skills acquisition programme, as it will ensure financial

independence and a better standard of living upon release from prison. For Ikegwu et al, skills acquisition will bring about societal empowerment by providing jobs and developing entrepreneurial ability which in turn will ensure financial independence and assure better standard of living for the ex-inmates in the society. Also, research conducted by Ekpenyong and Undutimi (2016) examined prison rehabilitation programmes in Nigeria: A study of inmate's perception in Okaka Prison, Bayelsa State. The study discovered building trades, motor mechanics, fitting and turning, carpentry and upholstery, manufacturing of furniture and clothing to computer training as major available skills acquisition programmes in Okaka prison. The study discovered that rehabilitation programmes did not successfully impact the lives of the inmates due to lack of funds, physical infrastructure, poor management and breakdown of equipment. A study also conducted by Diana (2021) on the perceived impact of vocational skills acquisition on reformation and reduction of recidivism by ex-convicts of Gombe Central Correctional Centre, examined hairdressing, carpentry, welding, tailoring and catering as available vocational skills acquisition programmes. The study also examined the perceived impact of vocational skills on reformation and reduction of recidivism among the ex-convicts including their perception of becoming self-reliant, contributing to development, increased income, improved livelihood and better behaviour.

In the same vein, skills acquisition programmes in prison are considered essential for the achievement of the purpose of reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration of the discharged prisoners. Skills acquisition programmes are current issues that are central to modern penal thinking and practices and have been adopted and implemented in many Nigerian prisons using vocational training (Onweonye, Obinne & Olu, 2013). This is because, upon release from incarceration, the inmates could be self-reliant or become independent and even employers of labour with the different skills they have acquired. Similarly, Abba (2016), carried out a study on the rehabilitation of prison inmates through vocational skills acquisition programmes in North-West, Nigeria. The findings of the study were that: prison inmates participated in vocational skills acquisition programmes and the programmes have enhanced the socio-economic well-being of the inmates to a high extent in the study area. Also, a study by Kulu and Mannir (2018) assessed the extent of participation of prison inmates in vocational skills acquisition programmes in Sokoto State. A survey research design was adopted for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed that vocational skills acquisition programmes for prison inmates were only found available in Sokoto Central Prison and there were prison inmates trainees in the prison. The findings also revealed that trainees participated in the available vocational skills acquisition programmes to a high extent in the study area.

Ime and Anietie (2019) carried out research on entrepreneurship education of prison inmates in Nigeria: effects on skills acquisition for self-reliance. The research design for the study is an Ex post facto design. The population of the study was 5629. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 303 respondents. From the findings of the study, it was revealed that skills acquisition programmes in Nigerian Prisons Service in Akwa Ibom State include welding and fabrication, entrepreneurship, pipe-fitting, carpentry and plumbing, electrical installation and ICT. The findings of the study further show that the relationship between entrepreneurship education and skills acquisition for self-reliance among prison inmates in Akwa Ibom State has a proportional effect on skills acquisition. These will become a source of their livelihood after completing their jail terms, foster quick integration into the labour market and society and reduce stigmatization of getting a job or enrolling in apprenticeship schemes.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Adeshina and Zainab (2020) on the effectiveness of the Nigerian correctional service in the rehabilitation of convicts into new life through recreational education in Niger State revealed that education is a necessity for the survival of man and is generally viewed the most important instrument of change, progress and development by all societies the world over. From the population of 635 inmates, a sample of 62 was used for the study representing 10%. The study adopted an exploratory research design. Interview and Focus Group Discussions drawn from the five research questions were used as instruments. Findings showed that much has not been provided in terms of skills acquisition facilities for the rehabilitation of the convicts into a new life after serving their terms is not promoted. The findings also show that many pieces of equipment in the correctional homes are outdated and do not go along with the demands of the 21st century.

METHODS

Participants

The research study engaged a total of 294 from the population of 1,083 participants consisting of the prison inmates in Gombe Medium Security Custodial Centre. The selection of the participants was conducted using convenience sampling technique. This method was chosen because it allowed for the inclusion of readily available and accessible inmates willing to participate in the study. The participants were selected using Taro Yamane's formula for sample size estimation.

Instrument

Furthermore, the researchers developed a study questionnaire and collected data on the sampled population of the study using convenience sampling technique. The questionnaire includes open and close-ended questions related to the objectives of the study.

Procedure

The researchers initiated the study by obtaining permission from the relevant institutions specifically the management of Gombe Medium Security Custodial Centre. This involves presenting a letter of introduction and permission from the management of the institution which enabled the researchers to engage inmates for the study. The researcher also selected individuals to assist in the administration and collection of questionnaires. The completed questionnaires were returned as valid and completed.

Ethical Consideration

This study adhered to ethical guidelines in research conduct by ensuring the rights and well-being of the participants were upheld. Throughout the study period, the researchers maintained transparency and honesty with the inmates and management of the prison centre who were approached for participation. A commitment to maintaining confidentiality was established between the researchers and the participants. The researchers pledged to uphold the privacy of the information provided by the respondents and it was explicitly agreed upon that no information or data would be disclosed or shared. Also, the anonymity of the respondents was preserved to safeguard their identities throughout the study period.

Design and Statistics

The data generated were further analysed using descriptive statistics which involves the use of tables, frequencies and percentages to analyse the quantitative data collected. The data presentation was done with the aid of the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS, version 16).

RESULTS

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-25 years	57	19.4
26-30 years	102	34.7
31-35 years	93	31.6
36-40 years	15	5.1
41 years and above	27	9.2
Total	294	100.0
Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	267	90.8
Female	27	9.2
Total	294	100.0
Educational qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Non-formal education	52	17.7
Primary education	107	36.4
Secondary education	117	39.8
Diploma/NCE	18	6.1
B.sc & above	0	0
Total	294	100.0
Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	135	45.9
Married	78	26.5
Divorced	36	12.2
Separated	27	9.2
Widowed/widower	18	6.2
Total	294	100.0

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the inmates covering age, sex, educational qualification and marital status. The data shows that 19.4% of the respondents fall between 18-25 years, 34.7% fall between 26-30 years, 31.6% fall between 31-35 years and 5.1% fall between 36-40 years. Also, the remaining 9.2% of the respondents were between 41 years and above. Also, 90.8% of the respondents were male and 9.2% were female. Similarly, 17.7% of the respondents had informal education, 36.4% had primary education, 39.8% had secondary education and 6.1% had Diploma/NCE. Furthermore, 45.9% of the respondents were single, 26.5% were married, 12.2% were divorced, 9.2% were separated and 6.2% were either widowed/widower.

Table 2: Availability of skill acquisition facilities in Gombe Medium Security Custodial Centre

Skills acquisition programmes registered by inmates	Frequency	Percentage
Tailoring & cap-making	63	21.5
Weaving	21	7.1
Welding and carpentry	75	25.5
Shoe and cream making	33	11.2
Bead and soap-making	39	13.3
Earrings Making	30	10.2
Laundry	21	7.1
None	12	4.1
Total	294	100.0
Training received by inmates: daily/weekly/monthly	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	199	67.7
Weekly	45	15.3
Monthly	38	12.9
Not receiving any training	12	4.1
Total	294	100.0

Table 2 indicates the available skills registered by the inmates, where 21.5 registered for tailoring and cap making, 7.1% registered for weaving, 25.5% registered for welding and carpentry and 11.2% registered for shoe and cream making. Also, 13.3% of the respondents were enrolled for bead and soap making, 10.2% enrolled for earrings making, and 7.1% enrolled for laundry. Furthermore, 67.7% of the respondents received daily training, 15.3% received weekly training and 12.9% received monthly training. The analysis, shows that majority of the respondents were enrolled/registered in welding and carpentry and also received daily training.

Table 3: Functionality of skill acquisition programmes in the Gombe Medium Security Custodial Centre

Conditions of the skills acquisition facilities	Frequency	Percentage
Outdated	230	78.2
Updated	64	21.8
Total	294	100.0
Performance of the programmes	Frequency	Percentage
Low	156	53.1
Moderate	117	39.8
High	21	7.1
Total	294	100.0
Impact of the skills acquisition programmes on the inmates	Frequency	Percentage
No impact	96	32.7
Relative impact	123	41.8
Positive impact	75	25.5
Total	294	100.0

challenges associated with skills acquisition programmes	Frequency	Percentage
Insufficient training materials	81	27.6
Lack of professional skills acquisition tutors	75	25.5
Unstable power supply	98	33.3
Poor learning environment	40	13.6
Total	294	100.0

Table 3 captured the views of respondents on the functionality of the skills acquisition programmes in Gombe Medium Security Custodial Centre. The table viewed respondents' opinions regarding the conditions of the skills acquisition facilities, where 78.2% opined that, the facilities are outdated and 21.8% viewed that, the facilities are updated. Also, 53.1% of the respondents have viewed low performance of the programmes and 39.8% indicated moderate performance of the programmes. The remaining 7.1% of the respondents have indicated a positive impact of the programmes on them. The majority of the responses have shown that, performance of skills acquisition programmes among inmates is low. Similarly, 32.7% of the respondents viewed no any impact of the skills acquisition programmes and while 41.8% viewed relative impact of the programmes on them. Also, 25.5% have opined that the programmes have positive impact on them.

Furthermore, the respondents have identified some challenges affecting the functionality of the skills acquisition programmes. 27.6% viewed insufficient training materials, 25.5% have identified lack of professional skills acquisition tutors and 33.3% identified unstable power supply. The unstable power supply affects the performance of the skills acquisition programmes largely because most facilities used or are operated with electricity. Finally, poor learning environment also affect the performance of the skills acquisition programmes as indicated by 13.6% of the respondents.

DISCUSSIONS

Furthermore, from the data collected, the findings of the study have shown majority of respondents were aged between 26-30 years. This shows that majority of inmates were of this age bracket in the prison and committed different criminal offences. Also, 90.8% of the respondents were male and majority had secondary education and were single as well. The findings of the study also indicated majority of respondents registered for tailoring and carpentry. The study also examined other programmes registered by inmates to include weaving, shoe and cream making, bead and soap making, earrings making and laundry. These findings corroborate with research outcomes by Ekpenyong and Undutimi (2016) on the prison rehabilitation programmes in Nigeria: A study of inmates' perception in Okaka Prison, Bayelsa State. The study examined building trades, motor mechanics, fitting and turning, carpentry and upholstery, manufacturing of furniture and clothing to computer training as major available skills acquisition programmes in Okaka prison. Though, they seem to be variations in the skills acquisition programmes, but they all meant to improve the standard of living of the inmates in the correctional centres. Similarly, research by Diana (2021) on the perceived impact of vocational skills acquisition on reformation and reduction of recidivism by ex-convicts of Gombe Central Correctional Centre. The study examined hairdressing, carpentry, welding, tailoring and catering as available vocational skills acquisition programmes. Also, Kulu and Mannir (2018) have also revealed that vocational skills acquisition programmes for prison

inmates were found available in Sokoto Central Prison and there were prison inmates' trainees in the prison.

On the functionality of the skills acquisition programmes among inmates in Gombe Medium Security Custodial Centre, majority of the respondents (78.2%) indicated that the skills acquisition programme facilities were outdated and therefore declared low/poor performance. Similarly, this has a relative impact on the inmates as indicated by the majority opinions (41.8%). Finally, the study examined the challenges associated with skills acquisition programmes including insufficient training materials (27.6%), lack of professional skills acquisition tutors (25.5%), unstable power supply (33.3%) and poor learning environment. From these challenges; unstable power supply was the major challenge affecting the performance of the programmes. This is largely attributed to the fact that most of the practical/workshops used electricity. These findings relate to a study conducted Adeshina and Zainab (2020) on the effectiveness of Nigeria's correctional service in the rehabilitation of convicts in Niger State where they examined that not much has been provided in terms of skills acquisition facilities for the rehabilitation of the convicts into a new life after serving their terms is not promoted. The findings also show that many of the equipment in the correctional homes are outdated in the correctional centre which has affected the functionality of the skills acquisition programme. Furthermore, Adeshina and Zainab examined the major challenges affecting the smooth functioning of the programmes including insufficient and/or outdated training facilities, unstable power supply and poor learning environment.

Conclusion

The study examined the availability as well as the functionality of skills acquisition programmes in the Gombe Medium Security Custodial Centre. The sustainability of the skills acquisition programmes especially among the prison inmates will enhance self-reliance after leaving the prison. From the findings of the study, it was revealed that skills acquisition facilities in Gombe Medium Security Custodial Centre were not adequate and mostly outdated. This has relatively affected the performance of the programme in the Custodial Centre. The study has concluded by recommending the need for the government:

- To provide sufficient and modern training facilities. This will help in the smooth conduct of training in various skills.
- To recruit more qualified and professional skills acquisition tutors in various skills for the training of inmates in the state and the country at large.
- Nigerian Prison Service should introduce more vocational trades that are not available in the prisons. Such as electrical and electronics repairs, graphic arts and automobile mechanics skills acquisition programmes while the prison inmates should be encouraged to patronise the programmes for their self-reliance and sustainable economic growth of the society.
- To resort to alternative constant solar power supply.

REFERENCES

- Abba, M (2016). Rehabilitation of prison inmates through vocational skills acquisition programmes as perceived by prison officials in North-West, States, Nigeria, Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Adeshina, A.O. & Zainab, A.M (2020). Effectiveness of Nigerian correctional service in rehabilitation of convicts into new life through recreational education in Niger State; *International Journal of All Research Writings*, 1(10), Pp 30-42.
- Diana, I (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), Pp 120-126.
- Ekpenyong, N. S. & Undutimi, J.D (2016). Prisons rehabilitation programmes in Nigeria: A study of inmate's perception in Okaka Prison, Bayelsa State; *Studies in Sociology of Science*, 7(6), Pp 1-12.
- Federal Government of Nigeria (1990). Prison acts CGP 366 Laws of Federal Government Printer.
- Ikegwu, E.M., Ajiboye, Y.O., Aromolaran, A.D., Ayodeji, A.A. & Okorafor, U. (2014). Human empowerment through skills acquisition: issues, impacts and consequences-A non-parametric view; *Journal of poverty, investment and development*, 5(1).
- Ime, R.N & Anietitie, I.E (2019). Entrepreneurship educations of prison inmates in Nigeria: Effects on skills acquisition for self-reliance; *International Journal of Organisational Business Excellence*, 2(2), Pp 71-82.
- Kulu, H., A. & Mannir, A. (2018). Participation of prison inmates in vocational skills acquisition programmes for self-reliance and sustainable economic growth in Sokoto State, Nigeria; *Review of European Studies*; 10(2), Pp 37-45.
- Mbatha, C.M., Kerie, B.W., Faraj, A. & Kitainge, K.M. (2019). How effective is vocational education and training for rehabilitation in Kenyan Prisons? A study protocol; *American Journal of Educational Research*, 7(10), Pp 677-693.
- Onweonye, C., Obinne, J., & Odu, K.O (2013). Vocational training needs of prison inmates in Delta State for self-reliance; *Global Journal of Educational Perspectives*, 1 (1).
- Sani, R. & Nasiru, A. (2018). The Nigerian demographic pressure and restructuring: The youth empowerment programmes as the panacea; *Kaduna Journal of Sociology (KJS)*, 6(6), Pp 174-183.