

Perception of Prison Management Personnel of Inmates' Accessibility and Utilisation of Library Resources in Writing Senior School Certificate Examination in Nigeria

Isaac Oluwadare Busayo¹

Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the perception of prison management personnel of inmates' accessibility and utilisation of library resources in writing Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) in Nigeria.

Design/methodology approach: The study is based on a questionnaire survey of the management staff (personnel) that constitutes the human resource persons of three randomly selected major penitentiaries in Nigeria, that plan and enlist detainees for senior school certificate examination, to be specific: Abakaliki jails in the South-East, Ikoyi detainment facilities in South-West and Kuje jails in North-Central Nigeria. A total of thirty-five (35) questionnaires were administered on the management staff (personnel) from the three prisons, out of which twenty-eight (28) responses, representing 80% were received and used for this study.

Key findings(s): The study revealed that inmates had free access to library resources and with ample time to utilise the resources unhindered. However, fund was seen as a barrier to registering willing inmates for SSCE. Likewise, getting qualified instructors (tutors) to prepare the inmates was tasking; the library was not well stocked, not managed by a qualified librarian and no budgetary provision for the library on annual basis.

Research limitation(s): The study is limited to three topographical zones in Nigeria, in particular the South-East, South-West and North-Central.

Practical implication(s): This study revealed that education behind bars need attention by the stakeholders to ensure that it thrives.

Contribution to Knowledge: The study shows that the education of prison inmates is not a waste, but a reformatory measure, as it would make inmates to be gainfully employed and more productive to the society at the end of their prison terms.

Paper type: Research.

Keyword(s): Prison management personnel; Prison inmates' education; Use of library; Nigeria.

¹ Federal University Oye Ekiti, Nigeria. Email: isaac.busayo@fuoye.edu.ng

Introduction

Prisoners, otherwise known as prison inmates, are individuals who are detained in penitentiaries and precluded opportunity from claiming development because of the wrongdoings they have submitted. In many nations around the globe, the dominant parts of people who make up the jail and prison populace have constrained training and life skills, furthermore, they don't originate from a foundation where perusing is carried out (IFLA, 2005). Jails initially, were set up to bind and keep guardianship of guilty parties and in addition rebuff them for the violations they have submitted. Reading by the prisoners then was confined to the Bible, what's more; comparable religious materials went for instilling profound quality (Shirley, 2006). The principle target of detainment was to rebuff the guilty party in constraint. This purpose has changed over-time from not only punishment of the offender, but also rehabilitation and re-socialization of the prisoners through attainment of higher educational qualifications and acquisitions of professional skills to facilitate their re-integration once more into the general public in the wake of serving their different correctional facility terms.

Education behind bars is a worthwhile reformatory measure. Cuizon (2009) observed that training in jail offered to detainees beneath 25 years of age with under 5 years imprison sentence ends up being helpful to detainees as well as to the general public also. He focused on that instructive open doors that are offered to detainees change from state to state and that in many states, half of the detainees are benefited of some type of training while the other half are in the holding up rundown.

Instruction without a functional library service remains incomplete. Thus, the need for a prison library and for it to be well stocked with relevant current general reading materials and prescribed (recommended) media resources cannot be overemphasized. This is because, inmates are not at liberty to either move around to purchase books of their choice from the bookshops or have access to school/public libraries outside the prison. Obviously, prison inmates are not free, they neither have permanent class teachers nor attend regular classes like the freed, however they take a similar open (outside competitors) examinations as the liberated, they have and utilize same educational modules and prospectus and are exposed to a similar examination conditions including a similar checking plans in the senior optional school testament examinations led by the West African Examination Council on yearly premise.

Prisons in Nigeria

Nigeria, before the advent of the British colonial masters, had several ways of handling law offenders and criminals. These ranged from selling out such offenders into slavery to a faraway place, ostracism, burning of the hand of a thief, flogging of a minor offender, solitary confinement, lynching and death by hanging in most severe cases. When the British came, they introduced formal imprisonment and even execution by firing squad. Over the years however, reformatory and rehabilitative imprisonment came to be accepted as an alternative form of imprisonment in Britain-the original advocates of imprisonment as remarked by Ore (2006).

The first prison in Nigeria was established in 1872. It was located at Broad Street, Lagos and designed to accommodate 300 prisoners. It was not, however, until 1876 when the Supreme Court Ordinance was passed, that the Prisons Ordinance making provisions for the establishment of prisons came into force. Prisons began all over the world, not as ultimate institutions for punishment and correction, but initially meant for the custody of persons caught up in the criminal justice systems awaiting trials or the execution of their punishment, such as whipping, banishment and death (Rothman cited in Alemika, 1987).

In the Nigerian detainment facilities, prisoners are comprised of indicted people who are condemned to serve different terms for violations submitted, and frequently a bigger number of Awaiting Trial Persons (ATP), who may spend numerous years in this condition (Amnesty International, 2008). There is sufficient writing supporting the view that the penitentiaries in Nigeria house wrongdoers who have submitted different offenses going from taking, equipped theft, pick stashing, fire related crime, murder, injustice, rebellion, kidnapping, affray, movement offenses, assault offenses, activity offenses, scorn of court, unlawful ownership, carrying and endeavoring to escape from care among different misdeeds (Chiemezie, 2005; Dike, 2002; Fayeye, 2000).

However, in Nigeria, most prison inmates now show interest in being educated. Many of them have realised the importance of education and they now enroll for the Senior School Certificate Examination and other related examinations to better their lots ahead of their release. For instance, Adeoye (2010) reported of some prisoners in Nigeria who wrote varsity entrance examination. According to him, thirty-six (36) inmates from Lagos prisons sat for the 2010 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME). These inmates cut across the five prisons in Lagos State namely: Ikoyi, Badagry, Kirikiri Medium, Maximum, and Female prisons, which all converged at Ikoyi Prisons, the examination centre.

Likewise, eighty-five (85) inmates from Kaduna prisons wrote this same examination.

Adeoye (2010) observed further, that the prison inmates were also supported annually by non-governmental organizations, churches and mosques, which assist in funding the costs of registration for their examinations. In like manner, Badmus and Samuel (2010) in a meeting similarly announced that the majority of the detainment facilities in Nigeria are currently West African Examinations Council (WAEC) focuses, with the Maximum Security Prisons at Kirikiri now a National Open University Center, which was launched in 2009. All these efforts are geared to encourage education behind bars. Musafi (2011) reported that, inmates of the Kuje Medium prison now have their capacity for formal education boosted with the donation of some library facilities to the prison. Different kinds of books such as textbooks, religious books and fictions were made available at the library, for the use of both inmates and warders free of charge by a donor.

Ibrahim (2013) saw amid the ninth Matriculation of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), which occurred at the parade ground of the prisons headquarters, Abuja that at the very least 84 detainees in the Nigerian prisons service are running different scholastic degree courses even in their imprisonment. He opined that the more than 84 prisoner understudies run different courses in a correctional facility extending from law to political science and others, in the four of the five NOUN, special study centers of the Nigerian prisons service. The focuses are, Maximum Security Prison Lagos, Enugu Prison, Port Harcourt Prison, and Awka Prisons, the fifth being the Abuja Center which is the just a single without a prisoner understudy.

Literature Review

According to Asbjornsen, Jones, and Reag (2010), training is viewed as critical for restoration among jail detainees, and perusing aptitudes are relied upon to be essential for the achievement rate in instruction. In this way, the place of media asset focus (library) in scholastics, to encourage instructing and learning can't be over-looked. In like manner, the helpfulness of library media assets in the instruction of jail prisoners can't be overemphasized. Jail prisoners require library assets, both print and non-print media, in particular: course books, diaries, lists, modified works, daily papers and magazines, web/email, tapes/tapes, diskettes, attractive circle, PCs and microforms among others., particularly, the prescribed (recommended) texts by the examination body and the general reading materials, should be stocked, made available and

accessible to the prison inmates to guarantee utilisation for examination, for better academic performance in Senior School Certificate Examination.

Peschers (2011) opined that books and varying media assets give detainees a general open door regardless to coordinate their musings from the jail condition, the fundamental estimation of the jail library is in giving its clients the choice of further instruction and self-reflection, acquiring fundamental abilities and enhancing their perusing aptitudes. In this way, a particular motivation behind the jail library is to urge detainees to utilize the library material innovatively to peruse and to end up long lasting students. A large number of the detainees begin perusing in jail. Additionally, it is trusted that a man who comes to acknowledge books amid his or her time in jail has better odds of effective mix into the life after discharge from guardianship.

Ntweo (2012) explored reasons for the education programme of inmates at Enugu prison where he was the controller of prisons service. He observed that it is appropriate to fuse training in the renewal program of detainees as a result of the issue of dealing with the secondary school leavers and students who wound up in penitentiaries by conditions. He focused on that the tertiary instruction program being hailed off was a part of the more extensive range of the renewal routine operational in the prisons which included professional preparing in numerous aspects of human undertakings, including, yet not restricted to, carpentry, fitting and welding. He proceeded to reel out past accomplishments of the prison in the wilderness of instruction which incorporated the triumphs recorded by 12 previous detainees in the 2004 SSCE and 2 here and now detainees who scored over 200 in University Matriculation Examination (UME). Jail training as per Demaeyer (2004) is an endeavor to make and revamp, to change, which is to correct the prisoners.

The Nigerian jail additionally leaves on down to earth instructive methodology to help the restoration of jail detainees. Ogunidipe (2008) opined that Educational Development Strategy is one of the real parts of the Nigerian Prison Service and that the task has two primary measurements. There is the Vocational Skills Development Program (VSDP) which basically goes for enabling the detainees with the required abilities for self-sustenance and actualisation. The other board of the instructive advancement of the detainees is the Adult/Remedial Education Program (AREP) intended to help detainees who, before they went to the jail, were seeking after one scholarly program or the other. The general pattern is to reconnect their disturbed training interests and help refocus their lives. It is likewise intended for the individuals who might not have

had the chance of formal instruction, but rather picked the alternative of formal training instead of taking part in the professional ability securing programs.

The Nigerian Prisons Service, according to (Ogundipe, 2008), presents between 500 and 1000 candidates for West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and General Certificate of Education (GCE) examinations annually. In 2006, 1,306 hopefuls sat for the WAEC and GCE Examinations and in addition National Examinations Council (NECO) while 1,198 competitors took similar examinations in 2007. Ogundipe opined that the number may not be so large, but that the structure has been put in place so that when all constraints are addressed, it may move from a trickle to a torrent. However; only 25 candidates took the Joint Matriculation Examinations in 2006 while 18 took it in 2007. Out of this number only six succeeded in 2006, 11 in 2007 but none could go to the post-UME because the prospect of being sponsored by anyone was very bleak.

It is deserving of note to make reference to that, the WAEC was built up in 1952 while the NECO was set up in year 2000. These are two recognised examination bodies accredited to conduct the senior secondary school certificate examinations and with complementary roles, because both examinations can be combined by candidates to make-up with the requisite papers for admission or employment purposes. WAEC organises two Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations; the first which is held in May/June (SSCE) is targeted at those still in secondary schools (SS3), also enrolled for by some external candidates and the second, which is NECO, is held in June/July. This is both for SS3 and private/external candidates as well.

Candidates are allowed to select and sit for a maximum of nine (9) subjects, English Language and Mathematics inclusive, out of fifty-eight (58) examinable subjects. NECO is equally held twice in the year in June/July and December/January. Candidates are expected to pass five (5) subjects at credit level with English Language and Mathematics at a sitting, which is the requirement of most courses to gain admission. The two examining bodies have their curricula (syllabi) with the recommended text and other media to be used for these examinations by all candidates. This informed the need for a prison library for the inmates, and for such library to be well stocked, and with unhindered access and utilisation of the resources for success in Senior School Certificate Examination.

Methodology

Three of the foremost prisons in Nigeria that prepare and register inmates for Senior School Certificate Examination namely: Abakaliki prisons in the South-East, Ikoyi prisons in South-West and Kuje prisons in North-Central Nigeria were randomly selected for the study. A total of thirty-five (35) questionnaires were administered on the management staff from the three prisons, out of which twenty-eight (28) responses, representing 80% were received and used for this study. Thus, for Education behind bars as a reformatory measure, to be a success, there must be a functional library media resource centre, which must be on open access and adequately utilised by inmates, coupled with the availability of effective and efficient tutors.

Freeman (1992), considering the age range of prisoners in a study in North America, opined that criminal acts and incarceration in many parts of the world are more among the youths from ages 15-35. Likewise, we have more males than female inmates in Nigeria prisons, just as there are more youths and middle-aged prison inmates with few elderly. This finding was buttressed by Omagbemi and Odunewu (2008) and Amnesty International report on Nigerian prisons (2008). These youths should not be left to rot away behind bars without being rehabilitated because they are the future leaders of the country (Nigeria). In this way, they ought to be prepped to carry on with an important life after their discharge from jail. All the more so that, the penitentiaries currently lay more accentuation on recovery programs for detainees, for forward re-coordination with the general public toward the finish of their correctional facility terms, instead of, exclusively exposing prisoners to reformatory measures because of the wrongdoings submitted.

Results

Table 1 below shows the break-down of the results (findings) of the study. The results were tabulated and highlighted in percentages, mean and standard deviation for ease of understanding. The mean, being the esteem found by including every one of the numbers in the gathering and isolating the aggregate by the quantity of numbers, while the standard deviation is the sum by which the estimations differ from the normal.

Table 1. Perception of Prison Management Personnel (n = 28)

Sr	Statement	D	SD	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Inmates have free access to the library resources in preparing for their SSCE	0	0	6	22	3.79	0.42
2	Education behind bars is quite reformatory	1	0	5	22	3.71	0.66
3	The prison management allow inmates to use the library facilities for their SSCE	0	2	4	22	3.71	0.60
4	Inmates are given ample time to utilize library resources for their SSCE	3	0	7	18	3.43	0.96
5	The performance of inmates in SSCE in the last five (5) years (2013-2017) is quite encouraging	1	0	20	7	3.21	0.50
6	Qualified prison officials (staff) also serve as instructors and prepare inmates for SSCE	3	2	11	12	3.14	0.97
7	Fund is a barrier in registering willing inmates for SSCE	7	3	9	9	2.71	1.18
8	Instructors are sourced from outside the prison to prepare inmates for SSCE	8	3	7	10	2.68	1.25
9	It is tasking getting qualified instructors to prepare inmates for SSCE	9	3	8	8	2.54	1.23
10	It is tasking paying the instructors that teach the inmates	9	6	6	7	2.39	1.20
11	The prison library is well stocked with relevant books	11	5	9	3	2.14	1.08
12	The prison library is budgeted for annually	12	8	5	3	1.96	1.04
13	The library is managed by a qualified librarian	14	9	1	4	1.82	1.06

D=Disagree; SD=Strongly disagree; A=Agree; SA=Strongly agree

Results in Table 1 have revealed the areas of strengths and weaknesses in the study. It is evident from the findings that:

- All the 28 respondents (100%) agreed that the inmates had free access to library resources in preparing for their Senior School Certificate Examination.
- 27 respondents (96.4%) also agreed that education behind bars was reformatory.
- In like manner, 26 respondents (92.8%) agreed that the prison management allow inmates to use the library facilities for their Senior School Certificate Examination.
- 25 respondents (89.3%) agreed that inmates were given ample time to utilise library resources for their Senior School Certificate Examination.
- Also, 27 respondents (96.4%) insisted that the execution of prisoners in Senior School Certificate Examination in the last five (5) years (2013-2017) had been empowering.
- 23 respondents (82.1%) agreed that qualified prison officials (staff) serve as instructors and prepare inmates for Senior School Certificate Examination.
- Likewise, 17 respondents (60.7%) agreed that instructors were sourced from outside the prison to prepare inmates for Senior School Certificate Examination.
- However, on the monthly payment of instructors that teach the inmates, 15 respondents (53.5%) disagreed that it was tasking, paying the instructors.
- However, 18 respondents (64.3%) opined that fund was a barrier to registering willing inmates for Senior School Certificate Examination.
- While, 16 respondents (57.1%) agreed that it was tasking, getting qualified instructors to prepare inmates for Senior School Certificate Examination.
- Also, 16 respondents (57.1%) disagreed that the prison library was well stocked with relevant books.
- 20 respondents (71.4%) disagreed that the prison library was budgeted for, annually.
- 23 respondents (82.1%) disagreed that the library was managed by a qualified librarian.

Conclusion

Education behind bars remains a formidable reformatory measure for prison inmates, who are mainly in their youthful ages, which government must maintain and sustain. However, the role of the library cannot be waived in this task and in any academic set up. The library

remains the nucleus of any institutional establishment. Therefore, the prison library must be well stocked with relevant and current books, manned by a qualified librarian, who would ensure unhindered access and utilisation of the resources by the inmates to guarantee their success in the Senior School Certificate Examination. There is no doubt that education behind bars makes the re-integration of the inmates with the community at the end of their jail terms easy.

Recommendations

The study has clearly shown the areas of strengths and weaknesses. Thus, the areas of strengths should be sustained while the areas of weaknesses should be improved upon. For instance:

- 18 respondents (64.3%) opined that fund was a barrier in registering willing inmates for Senior School Certificate Examination. Government and non-governmental organizations should endeavour to make fund available to ensure that willing inmates are registered for Senior School Certificate Examination annually.
- 16 respondents (57.1%) agreed that, it was tasking getting qualified instructors to prepare the inmates for Senior School Certificate Examination. The prison management should place advertisement accordingly to recruit qualified instructors in the various subjects to teach the inmates.
- 16 respondents (57.1%) disagreed that the prison library was well stocked with relevant books. The prison library should be well stocked with current and relevant books that cover the curriculum, to guarantee success in Senior School Certificate Examination.
- 20 respondents (71.4%) disagreed that the prison library was budgeted for, annually. The prison library should be budgeted for annually to ease the acquisition of books and other relevant library resources.
- Likewise, 23 respondents (82.1%) disagreed that the library was managed by a qualified librarian. A professional librarian should be employed to manage the prison library, to be able to provide the necessary leadership quality, coupled with efficient and effective service delivery.

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