Prisons Rehabilitation Programmes in Nigeria: A Study of Inmates Perception in Okaka Prison, Bayelsa State

Ekpenyong Nkereuwem Stephen[a],*; Undutimi Johnny Dudafa[b]

[a]Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.
[b]Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.
*Corresponding author.

Abstract
The international approach that the Nigerian government subscribes to, perceive rehabilitation as ensuring that imprisoned offender's is treated with care and dignity such that their re-entry to society should not be a challenge (Cilliers & Smit, 2007; Singh, 2008). But in Nigeria, there is still no difference between rehabilitation and incarceration due to the correctional environment. The rate of incarceration has increased dramatically where prisons are filled to capacity with an alarming overcrowding that leads to bad environments for the offenders. Crime continues inside the prison walls and gangs are rife behind bars (Singh, 2008). The available data on recidivism in Nigeria is an indication that the ex-offenders that are released by the correctional centers are not rehabilitated (Freeman, 2003). Hence this paper seeks to ascertain the effectiveness of Okaka Prison service in Nigeria on inmate's rehabilitation.

Key words: *Rehabilitation;* Recidivism; *Correctional* centre; Incarceration; *Prisoners*

INTRODUCTION

There has been growing interest in rehabilitating offenders in correctional systems around the world. There is also more optimism about the effectiveness of correctional programmes and the likelihood of them preventing reoffending. The majority of prisoners were those who had violated pass laws. Incarceration means to be confined in prison (confinement) or jailed. Confinement, whether before or after criminal conviction is called incarceration. A jail is a facility built to incarcerate offenders before or after the trial. Prison is a place where offenders are incapacitated to be reformed and reintegrated into the community.

It is assumed effective rehabilitation and reformation that are coupled with proper community reintegration could prove pivotal in reducing the ever increasing rate of recidivism. Unfortunately, research has consistently shown that time spent in prison does not successfully rehabilitate most inmates, and the majority of criminals return to a life of crime almost immediately. Many argue that most prisoners will actually learn new and better ways to commit crimes while they are locked up with their fellow convicts. They can also make connections and become more deeply involved in the criminal world. Effective rehabilitation and reformation of prisoners depend largely on prison officers (Omboto, 2013). Prison officers play important roles in the proper functioning of correctional institutions and directly impact on the behaviors of inmates through their daily contacts with them (Moon & Maxwell, 2004).

However, previous studies conducted in various African prisons have reported myriad challenges confronting prison officers (Appiah-Hene, 1998; Hesselink-Louw, 2004; Hesselink & Herbig, 2010; Onyango, 2013). Prisons in Africa are overcrowded; compelling prison authorities to intermingle offenders with different crime history in the same cell (Amnesty International, 2012). This act could lead to prison contamination, where inmates would learn from themselves the tricks in committing other crimes and practice after discharge. Additionally, prison officers are stressed up (Konda, Reichard, & Tiesman,

2012), have limited resources to work with (McAree, 2011), face high employee mobility (Swenson, Waseleski, & Hartl, 2008), and in most cases lacks rehabilitation facilities (Hesselink & Herbig, 2010). These affect the effectiveness of rehabilitation and reformation and sometimes leave prisoners unchanged and worse off whilst in prison and after discharge.

As a result, offenders are not well rehabilitated and reformed before they are discharged (Gaum, Hoffman, & Venter, 2006). Poor prison conditions affect the wellbeing of prison staff which in turn affects effective rehabilitation. A result of a study conducted in the Netherlands by Molleman and van der Broek (2014) revealed that a satisfied working environment for prison officers is reflecting on the outcome of inmate's rehabilitation. This implies that, better working conditions and job satisfaction among prison officers are strong antecedent to effective offender rehabilitation and vice-versa.

According to Singh (2008), crime continues inside the prison walls and gangs are rife behind bars. The available data on recidivism is an indication that the ex-offenders that are released by the Prison service are not rehabilitated (Freeman, 2003). Most of these ex-offenders they reoffend within a period of three years after they had been released up until they are in mid-forties where the rate of re-arrest falls noticeably (Freeman, 2003).

Due to the high rate of crime and incarceration together with the alarming data on recidivism; Freeman (2003), states that, almost any programme that reduces recidivism would pass social cost-benefit tests. One of the purposes for incarcerating offenders is incapacitation (Greenwood & Abrahamse, 1982). The idea is to prevent offenders from committing additional crime. However, whilst in prison, inmates tend to continue their criminal activities. A research report by Booyens and Bezuidenhout (2014) established that, rape (one-on-one and group rape) is getting rampant in African prisons. This implies that, the conditions in prisons are not preventing crime or reforming criminals, rather prisons seem to be equipping criminals with efficient crime practicing skills. This is supported by a research report by Chen and Shapiro (2007) who established that poor and harsher prison conditions do not reform inmates, rather they promote increase in post release crime and recidivism.

Recidivism is derived from Latin word "recidere", translated as "fall back" eaning relapsing into crime (Maltz, 2001). The aim of imprisonment according to section 2(4) of the Nigerian Prison Act (1972) is to endeavour to identify the reason for anti- social behaviour of the offenders; to train, rehabilitate and reform them to be good and useful citizens. Rehabilitation of prisoners is an extremely difficult process. Inmates are segregated from the general public and forced to live in a society with people for whom crime is a way of life. For many, time spent behind bars will push them farther into a life of crime, but for others, the horrors of prison life and the lessons they learn there are enough to deter them from committing crimes again in the future.

Given the emphasis on rehabilitation in the literature, it is necessary to explore the phenomenon as a response aimed at reducing the level of crime in society. This article examines the effectiveness of Okaka prison in Bayelsa State, Nigeria on the rehabilitation of inmates.

Objectives of the research:

(a) To examine the nature of rehabilitation training given to the inmates of the Okaka prison, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

(b) To assess the strengths and weaknesses of such training offered by the Okaka prison inmates.

(c) To identify and describe teaching and learning problems confronting the instructors and inmates on the Training programme.

(d) To offer recommendations on strategies that can be used to improve rehabilitation programme in Okaka prison, Bayelsa State, to meet its vocational training target for its prisoners.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW DEFINING REHABILITATION

The words "rehabilitation", "treatment" and "intervention" are used very loosely in the field. Therefore, it is important to separate *criminal justice sanctions* (e.g. intensive supervision, home confinement, shock probation) from *correctional (rehabilitation) programmes* that deliver a direct service to the offender such as therapy, education and social skills training. The definition of rehabilitation proposed by Cullen and Gendreau (2000, p.112) seems particularly appropriate since it is based on a very extensive review and identifies three common characteristics of correctional rehabilitation based on the operational level:

- The intervention is planned or specifically undertaken and is not a per se or unplanned occurrence.
- The intervention targets for change some aspect(s) of the offender regarded as the cause of the offender's criminal behaviour, such as an attitude, cognitive processes, personality, mental health, social relationships, education, vocational skills, or employment.
- The intervention is aimed at reducing the offender's likelihood of breaking the law in future, i.e. it reduces recidivism.

2. CAUSES OF CRIME

There is considerable evidence indicating that factors such as low education level, poor career training, unemployment, dysfunctional family and social life,

mental health, substance abuse and inadequate housing or informal settlements tend to make people more prone to commit crime. These negative social conditions can lead to deficient socialisation, inadequate personality development, poor interpersonal relationships and inadequate internalisation of social norms and values which, in turn, contribute to criminal behaviour.

2.1 Social Disorganization

According to Petersilia (2001, p.36), the social characteristics of neighborhoods, particularly poverty and residential instability, influence the level of crime. She indicates that there is a stage when communities can no longer favourably influence residents' behaviour. The consequence is that norms start to change, disorder and incivility increase, out-migration follows and crime and violence increase. Furthermore, as family caretakers and role models disappear or decline in influence, and as unemployment and poverty become more persistent, the community, particularly its children, become vulnerable to a variety of social ills, including crime, substance abuse, family disorganisation, generalised demoralisation and unemployment.

2.2 Crime Is a Choice

Most research findings show that the majority of poor people do not commit crime. Skogan (1990, p.75) indicates that it is the higher socio-economic groups that commit crimes such as corruption, fraud and job related crimes. Poor people tend to commit violent offences such as murder, rape and robbery. According to the US Bureau of Justice Statistics (1995, p.3), it seems that poor black Americans are the victims of violent crimes. A study by Louw and Shaw (1997, p.13) indicates the same tendency, namely that poor black South Africans are the victims of assaults, rape and murder. Alcohol abuse plays a vital role in this regard and many a time the offender and victim are known to each other.

Farabee (2005, p.54) maintains that offending, at base, is an individual choice and not an unavoidable response to a hopeless environment. He argues that most offenders could have completed school, but did not; most had held jobs in the past, but chose easier, faster money over legal employment and "… moreover, the pervasive belief that these criminals essentially had no choice but to resort to crime and drugs conveys a profoundly destructive expectation to them and future criminals that undermines their perceived ability to control their own destinies".

Most offenders give little or no consideration to the risk of getting caught for crimes they are about to commit. This is not because they do not consider the imposition of a prison sentence to be a negative experience; rather, it is because they know that the risk of getting caught is extremely low (Farabee, 2005, p.54).

The choice of committing a crime can be made easier by addressing the individual needs of offenders. This is

not about alleviating an abstract such as "poverty", but about helping someone who does not understand or care about the consequences of their actions. Truly effective rehabilitative intervention must thus be taken at the individual level (Murray, 2002, p.2).

2.3 Factors Causing Crime

As indicated above, there is considerable evidence that psychological and socio-economic factors can influence a person to commit crime or reoffend. Researchers have identified nine key factors (see Table 1) that contribute to criminal activity (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002).

Table 1
Key Factors Contributing to Crime

Psychological factors	Socio-economic factors
• Drug and alcohol abuse • Mental and physical health • Attitudes and self-control • Institutionalisation and life skills	•Education •Employment •Housing •Financial support and debt • Family relationships

Research has indicated that these factors can have a huge impact on the likelihood of an offender reoffending. For example, being in employment reduces the risk of offending by between 25% and 50%, whilst having stable accommodation reduces the risk by 20% (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). The challenge of turning a convicted offender away from crime is often considerable. Many inmates have poor skills and little experience of employment, few positive networks and severe housing problems, and all of this is often severely complicated by drug, alcohol and mental health problems. Many offenders have experienced a lifetime of social exclusion such as being in care as achild, unemployed or a regular truant. These offenders are also likely to have had a family member convicted of a criminal offence, a child at a very young age, or are likely to be HIV positive. There is also a considerable risk that a prison sentence might actually make the factors associated with reoffending worse. For example, many lose their house, job and/or partner while in prison.

Nelson, Deess and Allen (1999, in Seiter & Kadela, 2003, p.366) report that issues such as finding housing, creating ties with family and friends, finding a job, alcohol and drug abuse, continued involvement in crime and the effect of parole supervision are all factors contributing to success or failure in the transition from prison to the community. The study found that 76% who were interviewed for release re-entered the community alone, with no one to meet them after release. Most offenders end up living with family or friends until they find a job, can accumulate some money and then find their own residence. Finding a job is often the most serious concern among ex-inmates, who have few job skills and little work history. Their age at release,

their lack of employment at the time of arrest and their history of substance abuse problems make it difficult to find a job. Release is a stressful event and all the factors mentioned make it difficult for ex-inmates to avoid a relapse to substance abuse and a return to crime. It is thus critical that correctional services provide programmes to prepare inmates for re-entry into the community.

Another factor affecting social cohesion and community stability is the attitudes and behaviours of offenders returning to the community after imprisonment. If poverty and unemployment persist, the results are family disorganisation, demoralisation, substance abuse and criminal activities (Anderson, in Seiter & Kadela, 2003, p.367).

2.4 Childhood Predictors of Crime

Farrington (1992, p.527) reports that the best childhood predictors of an early onset (10-13 years of age) as opposed to a later onset (14-16 years of age) of offending behaviour children who rarely spent leisure time with the father, high "troublesomeness", authoritarian parents and high psychomotor impulsivity. Research has also shown that those boys who started earliest (aged 10-13 years) were the most persistent offenders with a criminal career of 10 to 12 years. The strongest predictors in the latter group were "rarely spending leisure time with a father at age 12, [doing] heavy drinking at age 16, [showing] low intelligence at age eight (8) to 10, and [with] frequent unemployment at age 16" (Farrington, 1992, p.529).

Studies have also shown that children of incarcerated and released parents often suffer confusion, sadness and social stigma, and that these feelings often result in school related difficulties, low self-esteem, aggressive behaviour and general emotional dysfunction. If the parents are negative role models, children fail to develop positive attitudes about work and responsibility. Children of incarcerated parents are five times more likely to serve time in prison than children whose parents have not been incarcerated (Petersilia, 2001, p.38). Aiken (in Needham, 1992) argues that no fancy formula is needed to project a prison population. He contends that a count of today's eight-year-olds who are living in poverty, or have been involved in abuse, or are from a broken or dysfunctional family will give a good indication of the prison population in 10 years' time. Research findings on the causes of crime therefore assist correctional practitioners in three challenges, namely:

- In understanding early criminal behavior.
- In understanding that the majority of offenders have a history of risk behaviour, limited opportunities, poor parenting, exclusion from certain resources and a lack of abilities and skills to mediate these weaknesses.
- In assessing appropriate correctional programmes and the appropriate timing of interventions.

3. THE IMPACT OF REHABILITATION ON RECIDIVISM: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The most common point of departure for reviews of rehabilitation is the 1974 publication of Martinson. Martinson's review (1974, p.25) of 231 controlled outcome studies conducted between 1945 and 1967 concluded that "with few and isolated exceptions, the rehabilitative efforts that have been reported so far have had no appreciable effect on recidivism". His work was pessimistic and it was widely interpreted as showing that 'nothing works' in rehabilitation. A follow-up review of the literature conducted by the National Research Council in 1976 confirmed Martinson's conclusions. Critics such as Gendreau (1981), Gendreau and Ross (1979, 1981, 1987), Gottfredson (1979), Greenwood and Zimring (1985), Palmer (1975, 1983), Thornton (1987), Van Voorhis (1987) argued against Martinson's conclusion, saying that psychological treatment either had a positive effect on reoffending, or that no conclusions could be drawn from the research because the:

- Research methodology was so inadequate that few studies warranted any unequivocal interpretations about what works.
- Programmes studied were so poorly implemented and presented in such a weakened form that they would not reasonably be expected to have an impact.

The predominantly negative reviews of rehabilitation that dominated the 1970s were challenged by researchers such as Palmer (1975, 1983) who argued that the broad generalisations of the conclusions overlooked many positive instances of success and the researchers gave little attention to such important issues as the fit between the type of offender and the type of treatment provided. However, despite the critiques of the work and its questionable validity, the phase "nothing works" became an instant cliché and exerted an enormous influence on both popular and professional thinking (Cullen & Gendreau, 1989; Stojkovic, 1994; Tonry, 1996; Walker, 1985). The perception of the conclusion became widespread and it gave rise to a strong movement to change both the philosophy and control of imprisonment policy. This had a major impact on how courts and corrections managed offenders beyond the mid-1970s. Although there is still some debate about the effectiveness of rehabilitation, various literature reviews and meta-analyses demonstrate that correctional programmes can effectively change offenders (Andrews & Bonta, 1994; Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990; Andrews et al., 1990; Grendreau & Ross, 1979, 1987; Palmer, 1975). In general, reviews of the literature show positive evidence of treatment effectiveness.

3.1 Setting Characteristics

Successful rehabilitation depends not only on the type of correctional programme offered, but also the conditions under which it is delivered. Issues of organisational resistance and staff motivation may need to be addressed before implementing correctional programmes in the correctional services environment. At the same time, prisons are more likely to contain those offenders with a medium to high risk of recidivism and therefore have a potential for more effective rehabilitation outcomes.

Limited research is available that compares recidivism rates of offenders released through traditional incarceration to offenders released through alternative sanctions. Such comparison is extremely difficult because comparing prison and alternative sanctions involves using two types of punishments that involve different offender types and offender experiences, making comparison of effectiveness difficult. For example, most offenders who complete alternative sanctions are low-risk with non-violent criminal histories, whereas many released inmates, with the exception of drug offenders, are most likely medium- to high-risk offenders who have either committed violent crimes or have extensive criminal histories. The available evidence suggests that, on average, correctional programmes delivered in community settings produce better outcomes than those delivered in prisons (Izzo & Ross, 1990; Lösel, 1996; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998; Palmer, 1974; Whitehead & Lab, 1989). In fact, some research has suggested that correctional programmes delivered in the communityproduce two to three times more reduction in recidivism than correctional programmesdelivered in prison (Andrews et al., 1990). Gendreau et al. (2000) examined over 103comparisons of offenders who were either sent to prison for brief periods or received acommunity-based sanction. Basically, they found no deterrent effect from prison, but actually an increase in recidivism. Motiuk and Porporino's research (1989) identified four primary need factors that significantly differentiate between failure and success on conditional release, namely living arrangements, companions, substance use and attitude. There is also evidence supporting the premise that the gradual and structured release of offenders is the safest and most effective strategy for the protection of society against the new offences. Post-release recidivism studies (Waller, 1974; Harman & Hann, 1986) have found that the percentage of safe returns to the community is higher for supervised offenders than those released with no supervision. Therefore, offender reintegration is seen as working to better prepare offenders for release and providing them with greater support once they are in the community. It is necessary to provide follow-up services to ensure continuity of care and to assist offenders to transfer and generalise their newly acquired skills to real-life situations.

3.2 Programme Characteristics

A major review of accumulated findings (Andrews et al., 1990) provides clear evidence of the weakness of criminal sanctions when unaccompanied by appropriate correctional programmes. Researchers such as Andrews, Gendreau and Bonta have suggested that the most effective correctional programmes target factors which are both amenable to change and directly related to the offending itself. Interventions should also target the known predictors of crime and recidivism such as antisocial attitudes, pro-criminal associates and antisocial personality factors (Cullen & Gendreau, 2000). Likewise, there has been an increase in the number of correctional programmes for specific offending problems, such as sexual, violent and narcotic crimes. Although there is no substantial evidence that correctional programmes work (Andrews & Bonta, 1998; Andrews et al., 1990; Gendreau, Little, & Goggin, 1995; Lipsey; 1992), several researchers have concluded that the most successful correctional programmes are those that address an offender's psychological functioning (Gendreau & Ross, 1979; Ross & Fabiano, 1985; Izzo & Ross, 1990; Andrews et al., 1990; Palmer, 1992; Lösel, 1995, 1996; Redondo et al., 1997). Palmer (1995, p.101), for example, examined 23 qualitative reviews and nine meta-analyses, all carried out before 1989, and concluded that the most effective programmes in the treatment of offenders were "behavioural, cognitive-behavioural or cognitive, life skills, multi-modal and family programmes". Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) comes from two distinct fields: cognitive theory andbehavioural theory. Behaviourism focuses on external behaviours and disregards internal mental processes. The cognitive approach, by contrast, emphasises the importance of internal thought processes. These programmes (Cullen & Gendreau, 2000; MacKenzie, 2000; Milkman & Wanberg, 2007):

- Address the fundamental problems of attitudes, thinking and behaviour that may lead an offender back into crime after release from prison or probation.
- Focus on changing participants' thoughts and attitudes, either through moral development (moral resonation) or problem solving (reasoning and rehabilitation).
- Are very structured and emphasise the importance of the cognitive-behavioural and social learning techniques such as modelling, role playing, reinforcement and cognitive restructuring that assist offenders in developing good problem-solving and self-control mechanisms.
- Should be used primarily with higher risk offenders, targeting their criminogenic needs.

A study by Robinson (1996, in Seiter & Kadela, 2003, p.377) indicates that the completion of CBT reduced

offenders' recidivism rate by 11%, compared to offenders who did not complete the therapy. This study also notes that therapy is most effective for offenders with moderate level of risk of recidivism, compared to a high level. A meta-analysis of 69 studies covering behavioural and cognitive-behavioural programmes determined that the cognitive-behavioural programmes were more effective in reducing recidivism than the behavioural programmes. The mean reduction in recidivism was about 30% for treated offenders (Pearson, Lipton, Cleland, & Yee, 2002). A general consensus is emerging in the literature that cognitive and behavioural methods are more successful than other types of programmes such as those based on confrontation or direct deterrence, evaluations of social casework, physical challenge, restitution group counselling, family intervention or vocational training (McGuire, 1995). Cognitive behavioural programmes are structured, goal-oriented and focus on the links between beliefs, attitudes and behaviour, and they have been developed for different types of offending.

Inappropriate or ineffective programmes tend to be those that are psychodynamic, nondirective, a medical model, use vague group milieu/vocational/educational strategies or sanctions, or any treatment that does not target criminogenic needs (Andrews & Bonta, 1994; Gendreau & Goggin, 1996). Unstructured casework, counselling, and insight-oriented approaches also tend to have less impact. Some of these less appropriate programmes have even been found to have negative effects (Lösel, 1995). Gendreau and Goggin (1996) claim that the principles of effective intervention apply to both juvenile and adult samples and limited evidence suggests that they apply to female and minority groups as well. Meta-analyses of adult and juvenile correctional interventions reveal that juvenile interventions are more effective than those designed for adults (Gaes, Flanigan, Motiuk, & Stewart, 1999).

It is important that all correctional programmes be sufficiently intense to make an impact upon offending rates. For example, a six-week course on anger management is unlikely to have a significant impact on offenders with 20-year histories of anger related offences. Shrum (2004, p.233) recommends that interventions be intensive, lasting from three to nine months and occupying 40%-70% of the offender's time when on the programme. Canadian researchers are of the opinion that programmes should last at least 100 hours and take place over a minimum of three to four months.

There is also agreement that treatment integrity plays an important role in determining the effectiveness of rehabilitation, meaning that programmes have to be consistently delivered by staff according to the programme design. Many researchers have called for the use of standardised treatment manuals as a way of improving treatment integrity.

Finally, researchers have strongly recommended that the staff responsible for programme delivery receive adequate training and supervision (Andrews et al., 1990; McGuire, 1998; NIJ, 1997). Therapists' skills must also be matched with the type of programme. Gendreau (1996) has suggested that therapists should have at least an undergraduate degree or equivalent, and receive three to six months' formal on-the-job training in the application of interventions.

Milkman and Wanberg (2007, pp.12-13) summarise the findings of various researchers with regard to the characteristics of the counsellor. It is maintained that the most successful counsellors are sensitive, honest and gentle. The communication of genuine warmth and empathy by a therapist alone is regarded as sufficient to produce constructive changes in clients. In correctional settings, these professionals assume the role of "correctional practitioners" and must therefore integrate their therapeutic and correctional roles in delivering effective services.

3.3 Offender-Guided Programmes

Traditionally, within the offender rehabilitation framework, the offenders themselves are seen as passive recipients of "treatment" and are required to adopt the role of patient, client, or student, with the change process resting upon professional staff (Cressy, 1965; Kerish, 1975). Yet, offenders themselves represent the largest group of untapped resources in most rehabilitation frameworks, capable of having a powerful and positive influence on fellow offenders (McHugh, 1998). Furthermore, and in line with cognitive dissonance theory and research (Festinger, 1957), when offenders act as agents of change, they increase the likelihood of changing their own opinions and beliefs regarding offending behaviour, to be consistent with their new role as model. Thus, such an approach could be seen as the offenders even contributing to their own rehabilitation.

Although there is a lack of evidence-based literature highlighting the effectiveness of fellow offender-led programmes, research suggests that such programmes are well tolerated, effective and possibly more cost-effective than professionally led programmes. Not only have these programmes had a positive impact on those utilising this service, but the peer educators themselves have gained some heightened insight into their lives, empowering them to move beyond their criminal lifestyles (Keller, 1993; Maheady, 1998; Maruna, 2001; Milburn, 1995). The risk of using offenders as educators or peer counsellors must not be ignored. For example, offenders themselves may have several unresolved problems; the majority are not qualified and their use as educators or counsellors might raise ethical concerns such as accountability and confidentiality.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WORK RELATED PROGRAMMES

4.1 Vocational Programmes

Vocational programmes in prisons take numerous forms, from building trades, motor mechanics, fitting and turning, carpentry and upholstery, manufacturing of furniture and clothing to computer training. The premise of vocational programmes is that inmates who actively participate in these programmes have a significantly lower likelihood of being reincarcerated and the acquisition of vocational skills increases offenders' legitimate employment opportunities after release. Generally, the available research on vocational education indicates that these programmes are effective in reducing recidivism.

Gerber and Fritsch examined 13 studies and found in nine of the studies that vocational education programmes are effective and reduce the recidivism of offenders. As an example, Saylor and Gaes (1992, in Gerber & Fritsch, 1994, p.8) investigated vocational-technical training in the Federal Bureau of Prisons and found that inmates who received vocational training while in prison:

Adjusted better (fewer disciplinary violations) than those who did not receive such training.

- Were more likely to complete stays in a halfway house.
- Were less likely to have their release on parole revoked.
- Were more likely to be employed after release.

MacKenzie's research (2000) has shown that programmes that begin job search assistance and preparation for employment prior to leaving prison and that continue assistance after release hold promise for reducing recidivism. Harer (1994), Sampson and Laub (1997) and Uggen (1999) indicate that offenders released from prison who have a legitimate job (with higher wages or higher quality jobs) are less likely to recidivate.

Seiter and Kadela (2003, pp.373-374) evaluated two studies done by Saylor and Gaes (1992, 1997) and one study by Turner and Petersilia (1996) and concluded from the results of the studies that vocational training and/or work release programmes are effective in reducing recidivism as well as improving job readiness skills. The study by Turner and Petersilia (1996) indicates that the work release programme achieved its primary goal of preparing inmates for final release and facilitating their adjustment to the community. Although there are indications that those who participated in work release programmes were somewhat less likely to be rearrested, the results were not statistically significant. Saylor and Gaes (1992, 1997), who compared offenders participating in training and work programmes with similar offenders who did not take part, demonstrated significant training effects on both in-prison (misconduct reports) and post-prison (employment and arrest rates) outcome measures. While the period of imprisonment could be viewed as an opportunity to build skills and prepare inmates for job placement, the literature provides mixed to negative support for the effectiveness of in-prison job training programmes (Bushway & Reuter, 1997; Gaes et al., 1999; Wilson et al., 1999a, 1999b). In addition, long periods of imprisonment may weaken social contacts that lead to slighter employment opportunities upon release (Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999; Western, Kling, & Welman, 2001). There is also evidence that suggests that being labelled as a criminal (e.g. being arrested or imprisoned) may adversely affect subsequent employment stability (Bushway, 1998). Gardner (2002, p.8) indicates that certificates issued by a correctional institution bear little weight on the outside, and that they are often considered detrimental to an offender's ability to obtain a job. It has been shown to be more beneficial when certificates are endorsed or provided by organisations or trade associations that are directly related to the vocational skill required.

4.2 Prison Labour and Inmate Behavior

Like the findings of research on corrections-based education programmes, research on prison labour is also encouraging. It appears that prison work experience operates through several mechanisms to produce better behaved inmates, lower recidivism rates and higher rates of involvement in constructive employment after release. Just as offenders present deficient educational records upon entry to prison, their work histories also reflect vague or non-existent employment records, few marketable skills and an inadequate work ethic. Thus, the purpose of prison labour has always been multifaceted, and includes instilling positive work attitudes and the development of self-discipline and marketable skills. In addition to these offender-focused goals, work programmes have sought to be economically self-sufficient (if not profitable), and to keep inmates occupied in productive activities that reduce the risks associated with inmate idleness. The administration of prison labour programmes and the question of whether such programmes assist in reducing recidivism are complicated by the multiple goals and objectives that are sought through prison labour (Flanagan, 1989). As a research issue, prison labour also suffers from definitional ambiguity; the definition of "prison work assignment" may range from innocuous and trivial institutional maintenance assignments to 40 hours per week in workshops that approximate real-world work practices. Moreover, as prison populations have grown rapidly during the past two decades, correctional agencies have not kept pace in providing industry related jobs for inmates. All these factors have a direct influence on the outcomes of research. The lack of empirical evaluation of the effect of prison work is indicated by the fact that Lipton, Martinson and Wilks (1975) did not consider the

area of institutional employment at all in their study. The approach followed in later studies has been to compare recidivism rates of inmates released after having worked in prison workshops with rates for a comparison group of non-employed inmates. In all but one comparison (State of Utah, 1984) there were no significant differences between employed and non-employed inmates (Johnson, 1984; Basinger, 1985; Flanagan et al., 1988). The State of Utah (1984) found that the one-year-return-to-prison rate for all inmates released in 1983 was 29%, compared to 13% for correctional industry participants released during the same period. Interms of in-prison behaviour, however, participation in prison industry was consistently associated with lower rates of disciplinary problems. Saylor and Gaes (1997) point out that male offenders who participate in institutional employment are 24% less likely to recidivate and those who participate in either apprenticeship or vocational training are 33% less likely to recidivate during the follow-up period of eight to twelve years post-release.

5. EMPLOYMENT AND RECIDIVISM

The National Literacy Trust (NLT, 2006) reveals that 67% of all inmates in the UK were unemployed at the time of imprisonment. Similarly, Motiuk (1996) indicates that two-thirds of Canadian male federal offenders were unemployed at the time of their arrest. This correlates with Gillis's finding (2000) that 75% of offenders (men and women) were identified as having employment needs upon admission to the federal correctional system. Given the high correlation between early school leaving and unemployment, it is not surprising that many offenders report inconsistent employment histories. This is problematic given that various reviews have identified employment as an important risk factor within the offender population (Andrews & Bonta, 2003; Gendreau, Goggin, & Gray, 1998; Gillis, Motiuk, & Belcourt, 1998). A meta-analytic review of employment factors and recidivism among adult offender populations have, for example, confirmed that employment history and employment needs for release are predictive of recidivism (Gendreau, Little, & Goggin, 1996). Motiuk (1996) found that offenders with a history of unstable employment are at a much greater risk of reoffending than offenders with a history of constant employment.

Similarly, May (1999) studied the records of over 7,000 offenders in England and Wales starting community sentences in 1993. The results revealed that unemployed offenders are significantly more likely to be reconvicted within two years than offenders who were employed. Brown and Motiuk (2005) reveal that unemployment related indicators (e.g. "unemployed 50% or more", "unstable job history") along with "lacks a skill, area, trade or profession" are strongly associated with the

readmission of released offenders. The study indicates that an unstable job history is a strong predictor of readmission whilst the indicator "lacks a skill, area, trade, or profession" is moderately predictive of readmission. The majority of inmates also leave prison without savings, immediate entitlement to unemployment benefits and with poor prospects for employment. Survey data indicates that one year after being released, as many as 60% of former inmates are not employed in the regular labour market (Watts & Nightingale, 1996).

Although some employment programmes are effective in reducing recidivism, studies show that released offenders have a lowered prospect to secure employment and decent wages (Beirnstein & Houston, 2000). This can be attributed to:

- Limited opportunities given to offenders to participate in meaningful work or vocational education while in prison.
- Terms of imprisonment which disrupt chances for developing work skills and experience.
- Prolonged imprisonment—as time spent in prison increases, the likelihood of participating in the legal economy decreases.

To be successful, Gardner (2002, p.6) postulates that placement programmes need to containseveral elements, namely:

- Offenders who are willing and ready to obtain and keep a legitimate job after release.
- Employers who are prepared to give an offender a second chance.
- Someone to aid the offender with related services (e.g. housing).

Several factors about the prison experience contribute to reducing the employ ability of former offenders. One reason cited for why job training has not been more effective in reducing recidivism is the general lack of job placement assistance and other follow-up after release from prison or community-based sentence. Zajac (2002, p.2) indicates that research strongly suggests that assistance with re-entry and aftercare should begin immediately upon release from prison. This is found to be especially important with regard to employment assistance. Difficulty with finding and keeping a job immediately after release is strongly correlated with imprisonment. Offenders who cannot maintain stable employment are at very high risk of failure. Re-entry programmes that provide immediate job readiness training and job search and placement assistance hold great promise for reducing recidivism rates (Byrne, Taxman, & Young, 2002; Nelson & Trone, 2000; Zajac, 2002).

6. OFFENDER EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES

Upon return to the community, former inmates face a number of significant barriers to securing employment,

particularly employment outside the low-wage sector. Some of the major barriers are listed below (Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll, 2002; Sampson & Laub, 1997; Western et al., 2001):

- Many returning offenders' educational levels, work experience and skills are well below the national averages for the general population, which make them less desirable job candidates.
- Employees are more reluctant to hire former prisoners than any other group of disadvantaged workers. An employer's willingness to hire also depends on factors related to the circumstances of the individual's criminal history. Employers will review the applicant's experiences since their release such as the nature of the offence (violent versus property crime), how much time has passed since the release, and whether they have had any work experience in the meantime.
- Job applicants with a criminal record are substantially less likely to be hired due to the stigma attached. Individuals with previous criminal convictions are also statutorily barred from many jobs.
- The availability of criminal records online and changing public policies regarding access to those records make it easier for employers to conduct criminal background checks on potential employees.
- The kinds of jobs for which employers have historically been more willing to hire individuals who were formally incarcerated—ining, construction and manufacturing jobs—are diminishing in the national economy. At the same time, jobs from which former offenders are barred or for which they are less likely to be hired—childcare, elder care, customer contact and service industry jobs—are expanding.

With the literature review on prison rehabilitation, we are now going to see how the Okaka prison service in Bayelsa State has impacted on inmates rehabilitation.

6.1 Materials and Methods

The study adopted the purposive sampling technique. The convicted inmates of the prison under study were purposively sampled for the study because they were the only prison inmates involved in rehabilitation programmes. All the convicted male and female inmates of the prison were used in the study. The Awaiting Trial Mails (ATMs) were however, excluded from the study because they do not have access to rehabilitation programmes in the Nigerian prisons. Data was collected from the respondents using questionnaire, which was other administered using two trained research assistants. The questionnaires were administered during the inmates' "open out" recreation exercise. The first part of the questionnaire contains demographic characteristics of

the respondents, while the second part deals with the specific issues of the study.

6.2 Sample

A sample of one hundred and forty five (150) prison inmates was drawn from Okaka prison. The rationale behind the use of this number is because rehabilitation programmes are meant for the convicted mail only and these happen to be the number undergoing rehabilitation programmes as at the time of the study. The demographic characteristics of the population show that there are 131 males (92%) and 19 females (8%). The mean age of the respondents was 21 years. Most of them were married (51.7%). 7.9% of the respondents do not have any formal education, 4.24% have Koranic education, 30% have primary education, 38.5% have either SSSC or GCE, 17.2% have B.Sc and above, while 5.8% specified that they have NCE/ Diploma and RSA. The respondents are predominantly Christians (84.2%). Less than half were students (36.4%) before conviction, 24.9% were Civil servants, 15% were traders, (10.7%) were unemployed, while 8.6% were farmers.

6.3 Measures

To understand inmates' perception of the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes, the following questions were asked:

a) Does rehabilitation programmes exist in the prison?

b) What type of rehabilitation programmes exists for the inmates?

c) How long does rehabilitation programmes last?

d) How would you assess the rehabilitation programmes in the prison?

e) What hinders rehabilitation programmes?

f) What impact has rehabilitation programmes made in your life?

7. RESULTS

Results from the study show that all the respondents agreed that rehabilitation programmes exist in the prison (100.0%), that rehabilitation programmes cover adult literacy and carpentry (26.9%) respectively, tailoring (18.6%), arts/crafts and welding (15.5%) respectively, and that the programmes last as long as one is in prison (96.3%). However, majority of the respondents (65.0%) and (32.1%) perceived the programmes as fairly successful and not successful respectively. Moreover, the major hindrance to habilitation programmes was lack of fund/inadequate funding (36.4%). However, majority of the respondents (88.4%) were of the view that rehabilitation programmes have made positive impact in their lives.

The first question sought to find out the existence of rehabilitation programmes in the prison. All the

respondents under study maintained that rehabilitation programmes exist in the prison. These include adult literacy, arts/crafts, carpentry, tailoring and welding.

8. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The main purpose of the study was to assess the rehabilitation services available in Nigerian prisons in Bayelsa State. The research sought to ascertain the status of rehabilitation services in Okaka prisons in Bayelsa State and ascertain their effectiveness or otherwise in reducing recidivism. The discussion of the results obtained in this study is organized according to the research questions.

8.1 Rehabilitation Services Available in Okaka Prisons, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

Rehabilitation programmes in Okaka prisons take numerous forms, from education, counseling services, **Religious Service,** Soap making building trades, motor mechanics, fitting and turning, carpentry and upholstery, manufacturing of furniture and clothing to computer training.

8.2 The Next Question Was the Respondent Assessment of Rehabilitation Programmes in the Prison

The patterns of response was as shown below:

Table 2
Respondents' Assessment of Rehabilitation Programmes in Okaka Prison

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Successful	10	6.7
Fairly successful	93	62
Not successful	47	31.3
Total	150	100

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents (62%) perceived the programmes as fairly successful, 31.3% perceived the programmes as not successful, while the remaining 6.7% perceived it as successful. This implies that majority of Okaka prison inmates perceived rehabilitation programmes as fairly successful.

Question number five sought to know the obstacles in implementing rehabilitation programmes. This is presented in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that 35.2% of respondents identified lack of fund/inadequate funding as an obstacle to rehabilitation, 27.6% respondents indicated breakdown of equipment, 18.6% said it was lack of physical infrastructures, 17.9% said it was poor management/administration, while the remaining 0.7% indicated that prison staff do not care to rehabilitate them.

Table 3
Challenges in Rehabilitating and Reforming Recidivists in the Okaka Prison

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of funds/inadequate funding	53	35.3
Lack of physical Infrastructure	27	18
Poor management/administration	26	17.3
Prison staff	4	2.7
Breakdown of equipments	40	26.7
Total	150	100

Table 3 shows that 35.2% of respondents identified lack of fund/inadequate funding as an obstacle to rehabilitation, 27.6% respondents indicated breakdown of equipment, 18.6% said it was lack of physical infrastructures, 17.9% said it was poor management/administration, while the remaining 0.7% indicated that prison staff do not care to rehabilitate them.

Futhermore, fron the interview we gathered, some of the challenges prison officers encounter in rehabilitating inmates include: Inadequate facilities to rehabilitate inmates with and lack of motivation, overcrowding and intermingling of inmates with different crime history, and absence of a social worker (aftercare agent). Equipment to work with or to rehabilitate recidivists and other inmates in Okaka Security Prison have become very scarce for some time. Also, experts to teach inmates skills and reform inmates are not available in the prison. These were expressed as long-standing problems confronting the Okaka Security Prison. Prison officers lamented on the problems they face in effectively delivering their rehabilitation and reformation duties. Another officer added that even though the prison has rehabilitation centers, craftsmen to tech inmates' trades are insufficient and many centers including the carpentry shop have no craftsman.

CONCLUSION

The use of vocational training and rehabilitation is gaining more impetus in the Nigeria Prison system. By providing offenders with the basic tools of literacy, job seeking skills, and counseling, they can be given the opportunity for an alternative to an offending lifestyle. The theory is to address the reason why a person is in prison and to provide offenders with an opportunity to help themselves participate in in-house prison programs. The primary outcome is to provide skills that will enable the offender to have life style possibilities other than crime. This is not only a benefit for the offender but also to the community. If these programs are provided to the inmates of the county prisons, it will have a great impact on reducing the recidivism rate and decrease prison populations. The focus of these programs must be on those who want help and or those who will benefit from the programs.

However, it was revealed that the rehabilitation programmes in Okaka prison, BayelsaState were not very successful due to lack of fund, inadequacy of rehabilitation equipment, lack of trained personnel, lack of manpower and poor management of rehabilitation programmes among others. The findings show that prisons have not effectively achieved their objective according to the Nigerian Prison Act of (2000) which is to reform and rehabilitate offenders to be good and useful citizens. Consequently, rehabilitation programmes in Okaka prisons are not very successful.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- The prison authorities should provide earning schemes to inmates to enhance their effective reintegration and rehabilitation into the society.
- The prison should be adequately funded to acquire state of the arts equipments to enhance effective rehabilitation of inmates.
- Social workers should create awareness on the need for every convicted mail to be involved in one rehabilitation programme or the other.
- Rehabilitation programmes should not be left in the hands of prison officials alone. Social workers, NGOs and FBOs among others should be fully involved in rehabilitation of inmates.
- Further studies can be carried out on assessment of the non-governmental organisations in rehabilitation of prison inmates.

Staff need to be properly selected, trained, supervised and resourced to deliver the highest-quality rehabilitation services to the most complex and challenging people.

Also, it is important to demonstrate that programmes actually make offenders better, not worse. The types of evaluation that are needed to attribute positive change to programme completion are complex, require large numbers of participants and cross-jurisdictional collaboration. A national approach to programme evaluation is sorely needed.

Furthermore, it is important that low-risk offenders have minimal contact with higher-risk offenders. Extended contact is only likely to increase their risk of recidivism. This has implications for prisoner case management, prison design and for the courts.

Courts have the power to divert low-risk offenders from prison and thus minimise contact with more entrenched offenders. Related to this is the need to develop effective systems of community-based rehabilitation, leaving prisons for the most dangerous and highest-risk offenders.

Inaddition, concerted efforts are required to develop innovative programmes. In order for a treatment program to be effective in altering criminal behaviors, the treatment must address factors that can be changed. The treatment must be directly related to the individual's criminal behavior or their criminogenic factors.

Harley (1996) states that transitional services can benefit inmates by providing them the opportunity to develop skills necessary to function in post-release environments. Research has shown an effective treatment program focuses on those behaviors that can be changed. However, too little attention has been given to the transitional process from institution to live in the community.

Institution programs start a recovery process in an environment in which the structure helps the change process to begin and does not pose a risk to the community. Inmate recovery and self-management skills learned in an institutional program must have reinforcement and some degree of continuation and coordination of care in the community once they are released. Without coordination between programs and the offenders there is a higher likelihood of weakening treatment gains which may trigger a relapse.

It is believed that employment problems are a major cause of crime. Unless offenders can be prepared and provided with jobs, they are likely to fall back into criminal behavior. Also, many employers do not want to risk hiring a person with a criminal record; consequently, unemployment is high among offenders.

The goal of rehabilitation for offenders is to offer them the means, training, and counseling to overcome the current recidivism probabilities. When providing treatment programs, one must target those behaviors that can be changed, such as attitudes, cognition, behaviors regarding employment, education, substance abuse, and interpersonal relationships. These behaviors are directly related to an individual's criminal behavior and need to be addressed in order for rehabilitation programs to be effective.

Harley (1996) believes that rehabilitation should be viewed as a facilitative, not a coercive process. To be successful in rehabilitating inmates, it is necessary to pursue ways to equalize access to services and to gradually integrate criminal offenders into society. Failure to address disabling conditions among inmates will yield high rates of recidivism. It is in the communities' interest that programs should aim to minimize the negative effects of incarceration and maximize the inmate's ability to successfully reintegrate into the community upon release and to provide alternatives to an offending lifestyle. A central goal of imprisonment should be to ensure that inmates leave correctional facilities with more employable skills than when they were sentenced.

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