

Correctional Institution (Prison) and the Control of Recidivism among Ex-Convicts in Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract

Recidivism has emerged as one of the foremost social challenges of the 21st century. It remains a considerable social threat facing every society and government today. For that reason, it has garnered considerable attention from scholars interested in developing and testing theories of crime and social change, understanding the process and experience of re-entry, and identifying and evaluating ways to improve successful inmate transitions back into society. Recidivism level has continued to increase despite various intervention strategies. It is on this note that this study is designed to determine the level of recidivism among inmates, assess the functions of correctional institutions, level of job opportunities, and family/social acceptance among ex-convicts in Southwest Nigeria. It is also to establish the relationship that exists between correctional institution, family/social acceptance, and job opportunities in the control of recidivism among ex-convicts in Southwest Nigeria. The study is quantitative, therefore questionnaires were used as study instrument at the Medium Correctional Centre in Ado Ekiti, Southwest Nigeria, where data were collected randomly using 5-scale Likert structured questionnaires among 200 recidivists and semi-structured questionnaires among 200 correctional officials. The reliability and validity test results for both recidivist's and

correctional officials' instruments ranged from 0.706 to 0.860. The results show 75% of the respondents get re-arrested, re-tried, and re-convicted for another crime after being released from the previous jail period between 2-3 years. The study also reveals a high level of social and family stigmatisation of ex-convicts, coupled with a high level of unemployment among them. Therefore, the study recommends that government, correctional institutions, and other policy-decision makers enact and enforce policies through awareness campaigns and sensitisation programmes that will help reduce and discourage the inmates from relapsing into crime in future.

Keywords: Correctional centre, punishment, ex-convicts, crime relapsing, reformation.

Introduction

The correctional institution is the third and final leg of the Criminal Justice System (CJS). It is a place where offenders are legally kept, putting them out of society in order to put a stop to the societal ills and vices being perpetrated by these criminals and for the restoration of order and stability in society (Cullen et al., 2011; Gómez, 2018). A correctional centre is also a facility where inmates are mandatorily and compulsorily detained and denied some degree of freedom under the authority of the state (Wooldredge, 2020). In addition, those who are awaiting trial, also known as Awaiting Trial Inmates (ATI), are kept in the correctional centre pending the conclusion of their trial and conviction (if it is established to be guilty) by a qualified court of law (Coyle & Fair, 2018).

Predominantly, correctional institutions globally perform four significant roles. First, correctional institution keeps society safe by removing offenders from the public and making them incapacitated. Correctional centres are designed to keep criminals out of circulation and to contain those who are deemed unfit to live in the community because he/she has proved to be a threat to the continuous existence and survival of such community and to keep him/her away from circulation and so securely confined that his/her criminal act does not obstruct the peace of ordinary citizen of the community. Secondly, a correctional centre is a place where inmates are punished and made to suffer the consequences of their deviance (Kann et al., 2016). Punishment for an offence may serve as a deterrent against future offences or as a way of putting off others who are planning to commit another offence. Punishment is the primary purpose of correctional institutions but may be required to perform

other fundamental roles of crime prevention and reduction in society together with its primary role. Thirdly, the correctional institution serves the purpose of correction where those who break the legalised norms of society are being kept changing their values, motivations, attitudes, and perceptions and to restore and re-socialise them to society.

Furthermore, the prison serves as the correctional agency for the offenders. Correctional centres have become viewed as more than an alternative to corporal punishments; they are seen as redemptive and capable of changing individuals to become better people. Reformation is one of the critical purposes of correctional institutions. In pursuance of the rehabilitation ideas, convicts are kept in correctional centres until the authority says that they have been reformed. This reformatory process of the correctional centre is where the offenders acquire the personal and social skills necessary to function as law-abiding citizens while the values, attitudes, and behaviours that they have adopted to support a criminal lifestyle are modified to become more consistent with acceptable social functioning (Osgood, 2017).

However, recidivism, on the other hand, is returning to crime after a convict has been punished for the first time. The term is often used interchangeably with repeat offending, re-offending, or re-conviction. Thus, recidivists are described as serial or multiple offenders since they continue to fall into criminal behaviour despite being punished (Payne, 2007; Maltz, 2001). Recidivism is seen as one of the social problems facing the world today, especially the correctional institutions, and Nigeria Correctional Institution is not immune from this challenge. Research shows that recidivism plays an important role in today's society when referring to ex-convicts returning in and out of prison at a rapid pace because of the lack of opportunity that hinders them because of their criminal record.

Literature Review

Recidivism

The word recidivism is said to have been derived from the Latin word "*recidivus*", meaning "to go back". In the context of criminology and the study of crime worldwide, the term recidivism can mean re-arrest, re-offend, offending repeatedly, resistance to rehabilitation and repetition of criminal behaviour (Jonathan & Chad, 2023). The term recidivism is further defined by the Bureau of Justice Statistics as criminal acts that result in a return to prison

with or without a new sentence three years after release (Rocha, 2014).

In a study by Yuxhnenko et al., (2020), they evaluated the rate of recidivism in prisoners in 50 countries of the world and followed PRISMA guidelines and using three bibliographic indexed. The study carried out non-country specific and targeted prison populations. The study results indicated a re-arrest of 26 to 60 percent, a re-conviction rate of between 20 and 63 percent and a re-imprisonment rate of 14 to 45 percent for the first two years of follow-up.

Also, a recent survey conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) of State Prisoners draws on criminal history records to assess the number and types of crimes committed by state prisoners following their release from facilities in 30 states over nine years. Findings indicated that an estimated 68 percent of released prisoners were re-arrested within three years, 79 percent within six years, and 83 percent within 9 years. These findings suggest that the specific deterrent effect of imprisonment could be more substantial. However, they provide little information on incarceration's impact on other punishments (Copp, 2020).

Globally, recidivism pervades the world and remains a considerable social problem facing every society and government. Despite various intervention strategies, the level has increased (Simasiku, 2018). Recidivism has emerged as one of the foremost social problems of the twenty-first century. For that reason, it has garnered considerable attention from scholars interested in developing and testing theories of crime and social change, understanding the process and experience of re-entry, and identifying and evaluating ways to improve successful inmate transitions back into society. The report has it that re-offending among the ex-convicts in thirty states in the United States of America is on the high side. In a study conducted by Durose et al. (2014) in the United States of America, it was revealed that over 67.8 percent of the 404,638 prisoners who completed their jail term in 2005 were re-arrested within three years while 76.6 percent were re-arrested within 5 years. In Norway, it was revealed that the re-offending rate ranged from 14 to 42 percent (Andersen & Skardhamar, 2017).

In the African continent, recidivism among ex-convicts has been on the increase in most African states. It has also become a major social threat affecting every society, government, multinational, and humanitarian organisation worldwide (Osayi, 2013). Crime re-offending and crime relapsing have become very high and a common phenomenon among Nigerian societies, both the male and female prisoners in the Nigerian Correctional

Centres (Abrifor et al., 2012). In Nigeria, yearly, records of crime are on the increase in geometric proportion, and a large number of criminals are being imprisoned. Eventually, a large proportion of those who are released re-commit more crimes and find their way back to prison two years after their release (Ugwuoke & Otodo, 2015).

Soyombo (2009) in his study found that the level of criminal relapsing in Nigeria in 2005 was 37.3%. This record is high compared to other African countries with a prevalence of 10 percent. In 2010, Abrifor et al. (2012) found out that Nigeria's estimated level of re-offending was 52.4%. It has also been reported that 81% of male ex-convicts and 45% of female ex-convicts were re-arrested within thirty-six months of completion of their jail period. In the same vein, records from Nigerian Correctional Centres (prisons) showed that over 60% of inmates are recidivists, and this is an indication that prison as a reformatory and rehabilitation home has failed in correcting the antisocial behaviour of the inmates (Chukwumerije, 2012; Otu, 2015). The available results show that between 30 & 50% of the ex-convicts re-offend on the completion of their jail term.

Nigerian scholars, especially on the administration of the criminal justice system, such as Soyombo (2009), Ugwuoke (2010) and Osayi (2013), have supported that there is an increase in the rate of recidivism and that male offenders have more tendency to re-commit crime on completion of prison term than their female counterparts. Studies done by researchers have offered explanations for factors that could be responsible for the increase in the rate of recidivism among ex-convicts, such as inhumane prison conditions, social stigmatisation, and social rejection by the family and public towards the ex-convicts (Ugwuoke, 2010). Others include labelling of the prisoners, a defective prison system which promotes the dissemination and exchange of criminal influences and ideas, excessive alcohol intake and drug abuse, poor educational attainment, and peer group influence (Ugwuoke, 2010). Other predisposing factors which increase re-offending among male recidivists in Nigeria include marital status, number of siblings/children, socio-economic status, ethnicity, family background, imprisonment terms and types of crime (Abrifor et al., 2012).

The level of recidivism among ex-convicts of a particular society can be used as a yardstick to measure the effectiveness of the correction and rehabilitation approaches of correctional institutions of such society. Hence, a high level of recidivism among ex-convicts means poor implementation of

reformation, rehabilitation, and re-integration approaches by the correctional institutions. In a nutshell, it is said that a correctional institution is a place where antisocial and other criminal behaviours are learnt; though training facilities may be available to train the prisoners in vocational skills, in most cases, prisoners become more specialised in their criminal behaviours.

The use of prisons to control the level of recidivism and other antisocial activities among ex-convicts has been on an increase in proportion in the last decade. The principle rationale for the mandatory minimum is the belief that the period of incarceration serves as a deterrent to future crime relapsing among ex-convicts. However, can it be said that prisons serve to deter future crime relapsing? The barren, inhuman and psychologically destructive nature of correctional institutions makes the offenders more likely to engage in crime upon release from prison (Gendreau et al., 1999). This school of thought further believed that offenders are jailed because of their antisocial behaviours and attitudes, which are little changed during incarceration (Gendreau et al., 1999; Otu, 2015).

Predictors of recidivism among ex-convicts

(1) Stigmatisation

Stigmatising and labelling an individual as criminal triggers further crime (Jo et al., 2020). Offenders who have consistent contact and connection with their families in the course of their jail period have a lower prevalence

rate of crime relapse than those who do not (Moore et., 2018). More than half of adults who are in prisons are parents, which means they may be absent during the critical and formative stages of their children. Unfortunately, ex-convicts face many huddles in maintaining consistent contact with their families after their jail period (Simasiku, 2018). Scholars have maintained that persistent and consistent family visitation reduce crime relapsing (Simasiku, 2018). The loss of contact with society, especially the members of the family, community members and people with whom a great bond and relationships have been established, is a burdensome experience for the majority of prisoners, that may have consequences for successful re-entry. Family visitation of the inmates while in prison has been identified as a way to reduce crime relapsing after the jail period.

(2) Unemployment

Unemployment increases the tendencies and positive impact on criminal activities (Kassem et al., 2019, Julia et al., 2022). Studies have shown that there is a low level of recidivism among ex-convicts who can secure employment after completing their jail. Many employers of labour are unwilling to employ individuals with a criminal history, citing a lack of skills and work history, untrustworthiness, and the fear of liability for negligent hiring. In Holzer et al. study (2003), almost two-thirds of employers surveyed revealed that they are unwilling to employ an ex-convict. Holzer et al. observed that the nature of crime determines and influences employers' desire to employ an ex-convict. During the research, the employers were asked if they would consider employing an individual with a criminal history, and most of them expressed reservations about employing an individual with a criminal history. Industries most willing to engage the services of ex-convicts are the ones that only require a few customers and transportation. However, the industries that require the services of more customers are not willing to engage the ex-convicts. Even in situations where expertise is required, nearly all employers expect employees to have basic job readiness skills, including showing up every day on time, working hard, and being trustworthy (Simasiku, 2018).

(3) Ineffective correctional roles

Most correctional centres worldwide still need to improve their reformatory objectives. They (correctional centres) needed to be reformed as an institution. The correctional centre system is inefficient in providing and establishing programmes that will help the inmates and ex-convicts in their reformation, such as vocational skills and qualitative formal education. Several scholars have observed that inmates get hardened and, on release, continue with criminal tendencies. This has led to the argument that prisons are training grounds for criminals where inmates only engage in more serious crimes than the ones they were convicted of. Correctional centres have also been termed criminogenic; they encourage criminal tendencies rather than reform and rehabilitate offenders. Also, prisons might be to blame for recidivism because they instil acquiescence and complaint behaviour, which causes institutional dependence.

(4) Drug abuse

The risk of recidivism increases with the use of particular drugs (i.e., alcohol, cannabis, amphetamines, and opioids) and risky patterns of use (e.g., injecting drugs) (Makkai & Payne, 2017; Brown, 2017). Consumption of illicit and narcotic drugs either as an inmate or ex-convict can facilitate crime relapsing. Studies have shown a clear relationship between drug abuse and violent behaviour, especially among the youth. In a study carried out in the state of Indiana, United States of America, it was revealed that prisoners who have access to recovery and rehabilitation from being drug addicts can greatly reduce recidivism (Cheah et al., 2020). Substance abuse is a substantial risk determinant of re-offending and, therefore, constitutes a powerful and challenging task for correctional institutions (Mannerfelt & Håkansson, 2018). Drug abuse has always made it difficult for re-entry of ex-convicts into the society. Drug abuse is an essential factor responsible for recidivism.

Theoretical framework

Labelling Theory

This theory stipulates a distinctively sociological approach that centres on the role of social labelling in studying and developing crime and deviance in society. The theory assumes that although deviant behaviour can initially stem from various causes and conditions, individuals have been labelled, defined, and categorised as deviant (Inzlicht et al., 2012). Labelling theory is of particular importance in the study of recidivism and crime relapsing because it has the potential to explain why some offenders fail to reintegrate or recidivate upon their release from prison. In many cases, there is an increase in the probability of an individual involvement in deviant behaviour if labelled and stigmatised as a criminal (Bernburg et al., 2006).

Social/ family stigmatisation has been described as a negative social label on social attributes that degrades an individual from full social acceptability (Goffman, 2003). The negative labelling, categorisation, and identification of ex-convicts by the public have a significant effect on and a great influence on their behaviour, which may ultimately result in crime relapsing (Inzlicht et al., 2012). An offender tends to commit a crime when he has been labelled as a criminal by the public; the public judgement of an individual goes a long way to determining his culpability in criminal behaviour (Hadjimatheou, 2016). Akers and Sellers (2009) state that an individual will face embarrassment and disgrace once labelled. These feelings will motivate

labelled individuals to engage in further acts of deviant behaviour. Therefore, once labelled, recipients of the label adopt the entailed characteristics as part of their central identity and act in ways that confirm the stereotypes attached to the label, thus confirming its authenticity in the individual.

Methodology

This study examines the relationship between the correctional institution functions, social acceptance, family acceptance and job opportunities with recidivism among ex-convicts in Southwest Nigeria. This is a quantitative study; therefore, questionnaires were used as instrument for primary data collection. The study was conducted at the Medium Correctional Centre (MCC), Ado Ekiti, Southwest Nigeria, which was selected through simple random sampling among the correctional centres in Southwest Nigeria. The targeted population for the study consisted of recidivists (inmates who have been tried and convicted more than once) at the correctional centre and the correctional officials.

Simple random sampling was adopted for the selection of 200 recidivists and 200 correctional officials for the study. Questionnaires for the recidivists contained 5-scale Linkert questions, while the questionnaires for correctional officials contained 5-scale Linkert and open-ended questions. The questionnaires were adapted and modified to be in consistent with the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was divided into six (6) sections based on research objectives as follows:

- 1) Section A: Socio-demographic adapted from General Statistical Information on Recidivism-Revised (GSIR-R)
- 2) Section B: Level of recidivism adapted from General Statistical Information on Recidivism-Revised (GSIR-R)
- 3) Section C: Level of functions of correctional institutions adapted from Attitude Towards Prisoners Scale.
- 4) Section D: Level of family acceptance adapted from the Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ)
- 5) Section E: Level of social acceptance adapted from Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ)
- 6) Section F: Level of job opportunities adapted from Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)

Results

Socio-demography of the respondents

Findings in Figure 1 show that 95 percent of the respondents are males, while only 5 percent are females. This implies that the male gender has a higher propensity to engage in recidivism than the female counterpart. This shows that males are more prone to recidivation than females because they have more socio-economic responsibilities compared to females. Furthermore, male agility and physical strength make them more daring and explorative. This result is consistent with the findings of Daniel et al. (2012) on gender differences in the effects of prison on recidivism. The result posited that females comprised a much smaller percentage of the correctional system population than males.

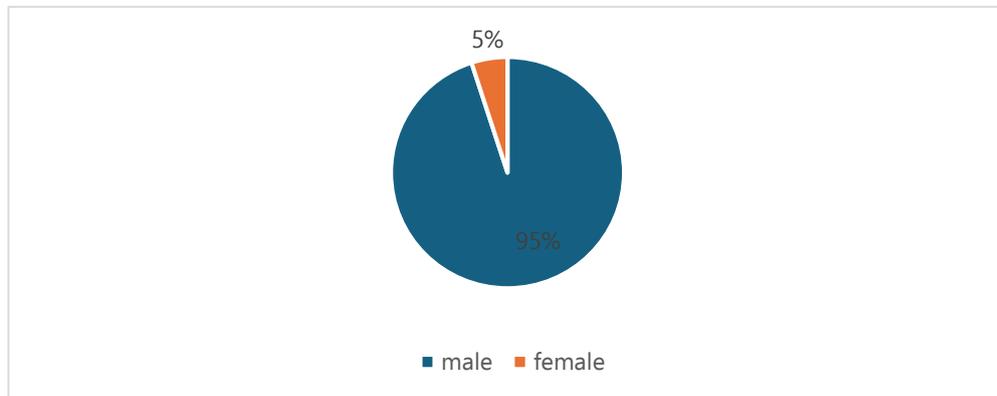


Figure 1 Gender of the Respondents

Figure 2 shows that 60 percent of the respondents are married, 20 percent are single, 15 percent are divorced, and 5 percent are separated. The high recidivism among the married may result from the quest for socio-economic responsibilities and to satisfy their family's needs. The push to satisfy the family's socio-economic responsibilities has pushed the married to engage in criminal activities.

Meanwhile, Figure 3 shows that 70 percent of respondents did not have formal education, while 30 percent had either primary school education, secondary school education or post-secondary school education. This shows that recidivism is more pronounced among those without formal educational backgrounds. The involvement of these respondents in recidivism may be because their counterparts with higher educational backgrounds are more likely to be employed and engaged after the first conviction and release.

Education is crucial to knowledge and survival skills, especially those requiring specialised understanding. Low literacy levels account for cognitive and behavioural limitations in decision-making regarding whether one should commit an offence. It also accounts for low interpretation of the law and committing offences repeatedly. Their situation is compounded in Nigeria because the number of graduates from universities and other higher institutions is on the rise, thereby giving this set of respondents little or no opportunity to secure employment after their conviction and the possibility of going back to crime.

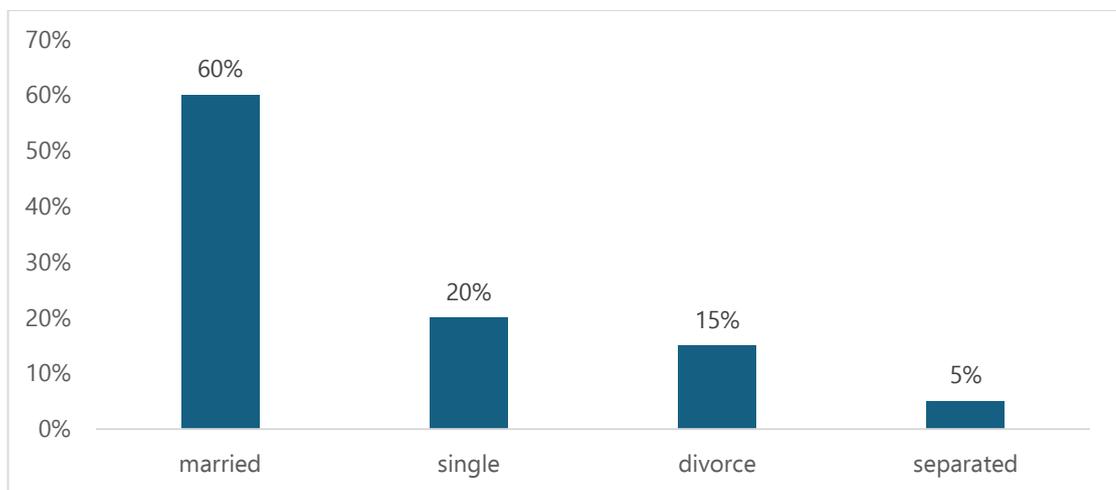


Figure 2 Marital Status of the Respondents

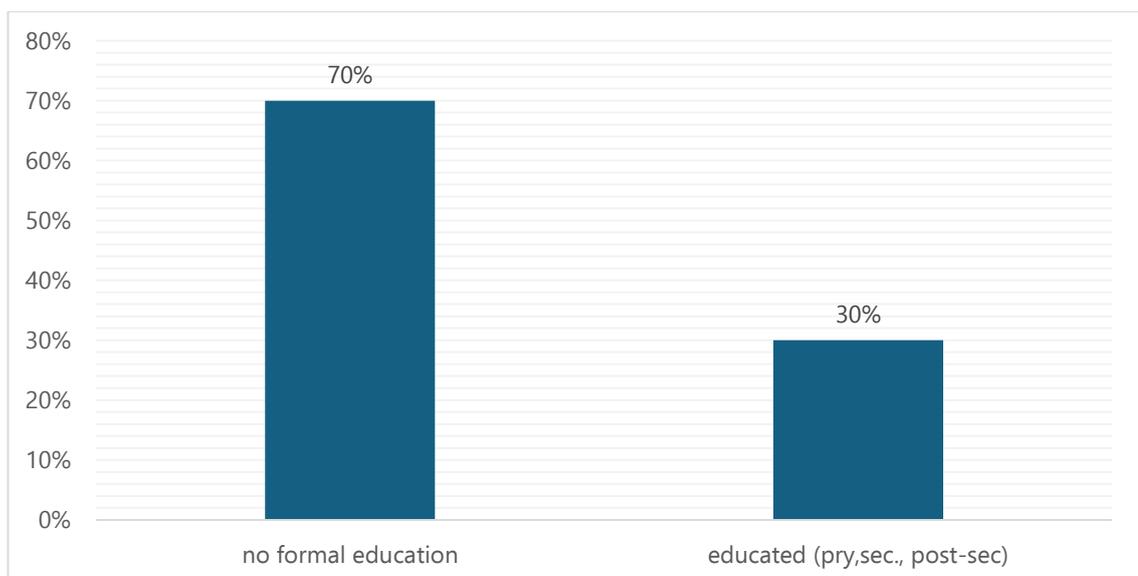


Figure 3 Education Level of the Respondents

Figure 4 shows the nature of the offence committed by the respondents. Findings show that 40 percent of the respondents were tried and convicted for stealing and theft. This implies that the high percentage of the respondents involved in stealing and theft might be due to the current economic difficulties in the country, which may make citizens go to any length (stealing/theft notwithstanding) to survive. The standard of living in the country is reducing daily, and this has increased the propensity to steal in order to survive.

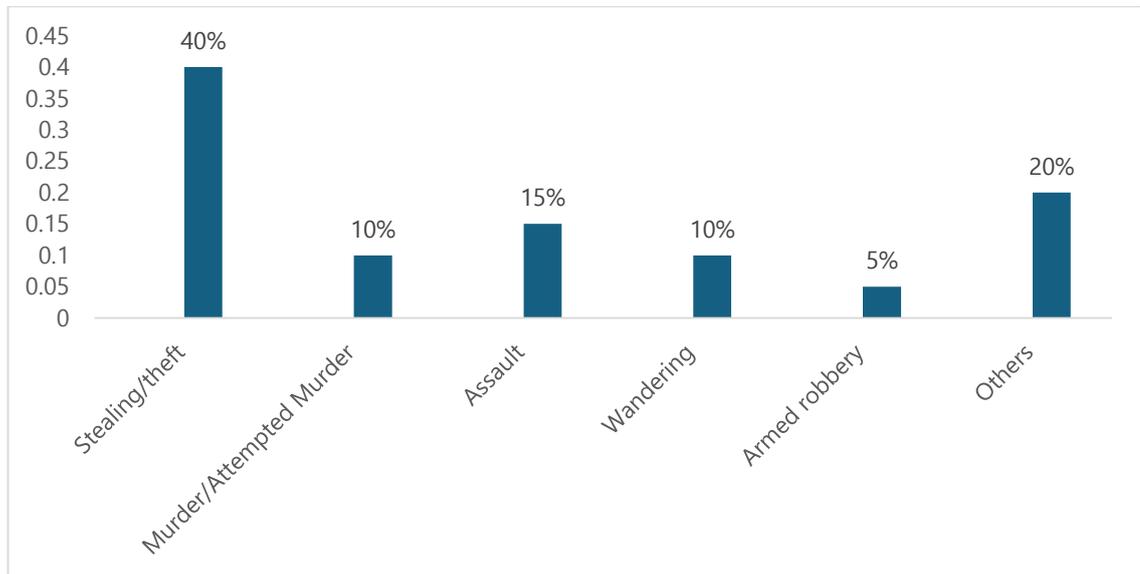


Figure 4 Offence of the Inmates

Table 1 shows the number of times the respondents have been re-arrested, re-tried, and re-convicted. The results show that the majority of the respondents (60%) have been re-tried and re-convicted between 2 and 3 times, while 40 percent have been re-tried and re-convicted between 4 and above times. This implies that there is a high level of recidivism among the inmates.

Table 1 Number of Times of Recidivism

Number of times re-arrested, re-tried and re-convicted	Frequency	%
2-3	120	60
4 and above	80	40
Total	200	100

Table 2 shows the years the respondents took between the previous jail period and the current conviction. The result shows that the majority (75%) of the respondents were re-arrested, re-tried and re-convicted between 2-3 years of release from the previous jail period. Meanwhile, it took 25 percent to four and above years to be re-arrested, re-tried and re-convicted after the release from previous jail period. This shows that 75 percent of the respondents get re-arrested and re-convicted for another crime after the release from the previous jail period between 2-3 years.

Table 2 Number of Years Between Previous Jail Period and the Current Conviction

Number of years between previous jail period and the current conviction	Frequency	%
2-3 years	150	75
4 and above years	50	25
Total	200	100

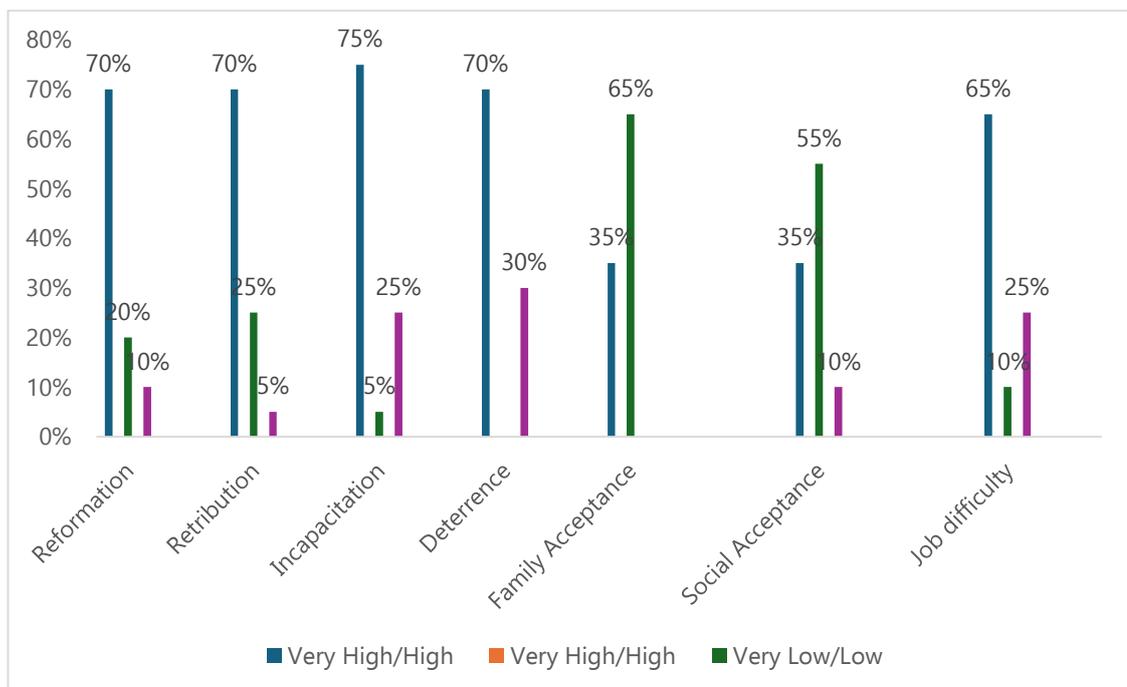


Figure 5 Level of Functions of Correctional Institution, Social/Family Acceptance and Job Opportunities Among Ex-convicts

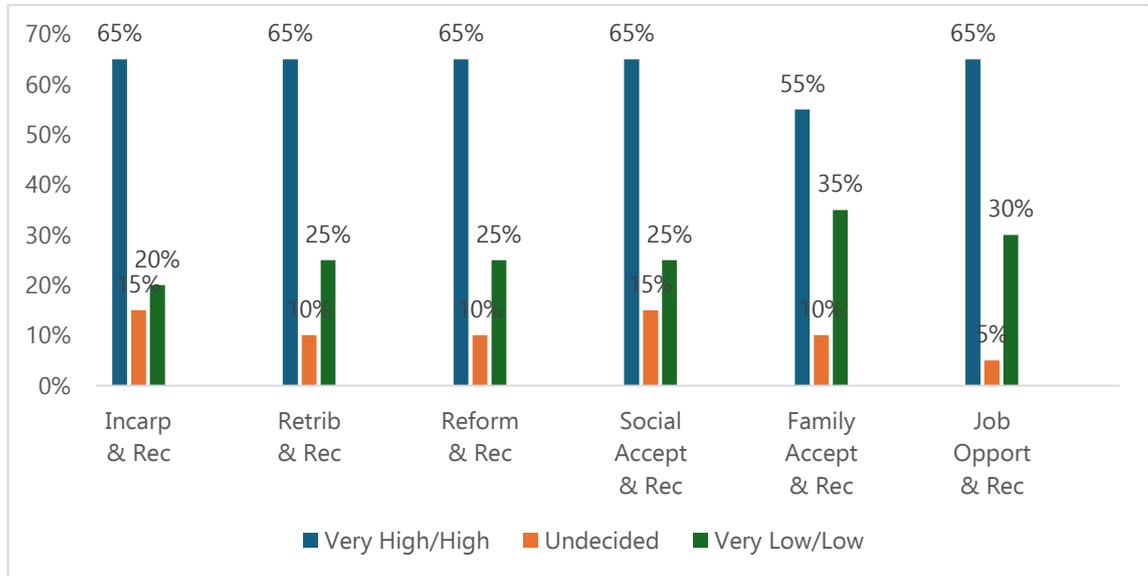


Figure 6 Relationship Between Functions of Correctional Institution, Social/Family Acceptance and Job Opportunities Among Ex-Convicts and Recidivism

The above results were corroborated by officials at the correctional centre.

“There are a lot of relapsing in this correctional centre and majority of the offenders are males. Again, majority of the offence they commit include stealing, rubbery case, fighting and attempted kidnapping among others”.

(43-year-old/male/correctional official)

“This correctional centre has a large number of re-offenders mostly males. Their crime ranges from stealing, theft, robbery, burglary to murder”

(29-year-old/female/correctional official)

“This correctional has put in place measures to train the inmates in skills and other vocations. Those who are interested in going to further their schooling are being encouraged to do so, this is to ensure that the inmates are well reformed and did not return to crime after their release here.”.

(34-year-old/female/correctional official)

“Corporal punishment is one of what the centre use to reducing rate of crime offenses among the convicts. Another way the centre had adopted to reducing the crime rate was by showing the offenders on the television. This among others have helped to reducing reoccurring crime among the criminals”.

(41-year-old/male/correctional official)

“The ex-convicts are facing serious job discrimination from the employers of labour in the country. The employers of labour are not ready to employ them probably because of their past criminal records.”.

(29-year-old/male/correctional official)

“The ex-convicts are facing serious job discrimination from the employers of labour in the country. The employers of labour are not ready to employ them probably because of their past criminal records.”.

(29-year-old/male/correctional official)

“Family acceptance can go a long way to prevent the inmates from going back to crime. If the inmates are well integrated in the family after serving their punishment here, they will not be tempted to offend again”.

(60-year-old/female/correctional official)

“I believe the inmates will not re-offend again if government can give them job after their prison”.

(60-year-old/female/correctional official)

“If the employers are ready to employ the inmates after their release, it will reduce future crime”

(54-year-old/male/correctional official)

Discussion

An average of 31.3 percent of the released offenders from the Nigerian Prisons between 2007 and 2014 go back to crime and prison again a few years after their previous release (Idowu & Odivwri, 2019). Reports show that about 53,000 inmates are in correctional facilities across Nigeria, and one out of every five released prisoners has the tendency to re-offend and be re-convicted (Shajiobi-Ibikunle, 2014; Ekwunife, 2016). One of the most common ways that

states measure recidivism is to assess whether a person returns to prison within three years of release. Also, Fazel and Wolf's (2015) study of the rate of recidivism among prisoners in fifty countries showed a re-arrest of between 26 to 60 percent, a re-conviction rate of between 20 and 63 percent and a re-imprisonment rate of 14 to 45 percent for the first two years of follow-up.

Furthermore, on the functions of the correctional institution and confirming the level of reformation at the Nigerian Correctional Institution, the Desk Officer of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) confirmed that at least Eight Hundred Ninety-Five (895) inmates of Enugu Correctional Centre in Southeast Nigeria have registered for the National Examination Council of Nigeria (NECO) external examinations in the last ten (10) years and eleven (11) inmates also got first degree certificates (Vanguard, July 2022). According to him:

"At the beginning of 2011, we went from cell to cell to appeal to inmates to regard education as a reformatory option and something beneficial to them in and out of the correctional centre. He said the correctional centre has committed resources to ensure that inmates develop themselves academically while in custody to ensure self-reliance after leaving the custodian centre"
(Nigerian Vanguard, 2022).

Results of the study validates the study of Oluwakuyide (2001) that imprisonment is a form of punishment to make the offender atone for his sins. Oluwakuyide (2001) affirmed that the threat of putting an offender behind bars could deter potential criminals and a convicted criminal who have lost their freedom to steer clear of antisocial behaviour that may send them back to jail. It is believed that correctional is a vital punishment process and the artificial, hostile solidarity it produces. This is so because it quickly discharges hostility towards the offenders and generates illusions of control and order in an otherwise uncertain and fragmented social environment (Chamberlin & Carvalho, 2019). Davis (2017) and Lekalakala (2016)) believed that the accumulation of punishment, such as arrest and imprisonment, gradually wears down the criminal drive because punishment produces four types of reactions in the offenders: (1) increased estimate of the probability of punishment for a new crime; (2) increased difficulty in coping with and accepting imprisonment, especially as offenders become older; (3) increased awareness of the weight of previous convictions on the severity of subsequent sentences; and (4) increased fear of punishment.

The result is consistent with Otu (2015) that the attitude of the people in

the community and their mindsets towards the prisoners and ex-convicts is discriminatory. In this case, such an ex-convict will be rejected and consequently labelled and stigmatised by members of the community, including his family members, and this will automatically make re-entry of such an ex-convict into society very difficult and, at times, impossible.

However, the finding contradicts Wiafe's (2021) that most of the prisons in the world failed in their reformatory objectives, and they (prisons) needed to be reformed as institutions. He affirmed that the prison system is inefficient in providing and establishing programmes that will help the inmates and ex-convicts in their reformation, such as vocational skills and qualitative formal education.

Overall, this finding supports social control theory, which believes that time spent engaging in conventional activities like jobs, sports, etc., will reduce the chances of an individual engaging in criminal activity. Specifically, Hirschi tapped into the old philosophy that "idle hands are the devil's workshop" if people engage in prosocial activity. They are not, by definition, spending their time engaged in antisocial activity.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This is a quantitative study which intends to identify the level of recidivism among ex-convicts, identify the level of functions of correctional institution functions, social acceptance, family acceptance and job opportunities among ex-convicts and examine the relationship between the correctional institution functions, social acceptance, family acceptance and job opportunities with recidivism among the ex-convicts in Southwest Nigeria. Results of the study show there is a high level of recidivism among the respondents; 75 percent of the inmates get re-arrested, re-tried, and re-convicted of another offence between 2-3 years of their release from the prison.

The study is an addition to the study of recidivism in Nigeria. However, unlike previous studies, the level of efficiency in the functions of the correctional centre is high, and this may be due to various reform programmes the correctional institution in Nigeria has undergone in the past few years, including a change of name from Nigerian Prisons Service to Nigerian Correctional Service and the review of laws establishing the institution. There is equally a low level of social acceptance of the ex-convicts, a low level of family acceptance of the ex-convicts and a low level of job opportunities for

the ex-convicts. There is a high relationship that exists between the functions of the correctional institution and the level of recidivism among the inmates. Also, there is a high level of relationship that exists between social acceptance and the control of recidivism among the inmates. There is a high level of relationship that exists between family acceptance and the control of recidivism among the inmates, as well as the provision of job opportunities for ex-convicts and the control of recidivism.

There should be continuous and sustainable public awareness campaigns to sensitise the public to discourage discrimination against ex-convicts and the need to see the ex-convicts as one of them and to show them love. This will allow seamless re-entry of the ex-convicts and reduce the tendency to re-offend in the future. The correctional authority should implement coordinated community programmes that could enable inmates and ex-offenders to benefit from employment and treatment for their trauma histories and help prepare them for a productive life when they return to their families and communities. There should be models for coordinated multi-disciplinary, multi-systemic efforts to provide ex-offenders with opportunities to support their families financially and emotionally.

Consequently, soft loans should be provided for the ex-convicts to ease their after-release suffering. Provide structured transitional employment opportunities so ex-offenders can build positive work experience and references upon release from prison. Increase and strengthen soft and hard skills training and create more partnerships with employers to match technical training with their industry needs. In other words, inmates must be provided with adequate skills to help them assume constructive and productive roles in the social environment- create a marketing campaign to educate employers about how and where to hire qualified ex-offenders, available government incentives, and successes experienced by employers that have hired ex-offenders. The government should enact laws on discrimination against the ex-convicts either by employers of labour or members of the communities, as this will serve as a buffer to the stigmatisation of the ex-convicts. The government should increase and ensure the timely release of funds to the correctional centre to complement its reformatory and rehabilitation roles.

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