

Exploring the Dichotomy Between Training Versus Inner Training in Ogun State Correctional Facilities Among the Recidivists in Nigeria

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Article Info:

Article History:

Received: 2025-02-09

Revised: 2025-03-19

Accepted: 2025-04-09

Keyword:

Correctional-Facility,
Dichotomy, Inner-
Training, Training,
Recidivists

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Paper Type:

Research Paper



Abstract:

Purpose:

The importance of quality training in any organization cannot be underrated in the procedure of reintegration of ex-offenders back into the larger society for the maintenance of social orderliness in Nigeria. Failure to capture the problem of inner training from role models with recidivists had degenerated into an ever-increasing nature of ex-offenders released from prison returning to the prisons for either the same problem or an advanced problem.

Methodology:

Social learning theory by Bandura was adopted. A qualitative method was adopted with a non-experimental research design with a purposive sampling technique. Fifteen recidivists were selected from four (4) correctional facilities in Ogun State, Nigeria Semi-structured questionnaire was designed and used as a guide to conduct in-depth interviews among the selected recidivists. However, after screening, coding and editing, thirteen (13) recidivists' interviews were found useful for the content systematic method of data analysis and interpretation.

Findings:

The study concluded that inner training shared among recidivists contributes largely to the rate at which ex-offenders return to prisons for several reasons.

Implication:

Therefore, the following recommendations were stated: the creation of a post-released services scheme, the Creation of quality aftercare monitoring, and the Development of an alternative to imprisonment between new inmates and ex-offenders in the prisons.

INTRODUCTION

Research of the past and present explains that learning is a continuous process that starts at the age of birth and starts at the stage of death. (Haralambus & Holborn, 2016) The scholar also advances the study, stating that learning can be classified as formal, semi-formal or informal learning processes. The purpose of learning is to reshape, restructure and orientate people so as to conform to the stipulated laws of any country in order to promote social orderliness. Within correctional facilities all over the world, learning is subjected to the rehabilitation of offenders whose primary motive is to reshape the mindset of offenders. For example, Ogunmefun, Aborisade, and Atere (2024a) assert that rehabilitation in prisons plays a pivotal role in prisoner reform, enhancing public safety and reducing recidivism.

According to Adepoju (2023), the consistency and quality of the learning process experienced by the inmates in correctional facilities globally mostly endeavor to prevent recidivism by reforming prisoners and imparting skills necessary for successful post-release adjustment. Likewise, Ogunmefun, Olawunmi, and Aiwuyuse (202) also submit that correctional education and vocational training cannot be underrated because training in that capacity remains the primary methods used to rehabilitate inmates in Ogun State due to their ease of implementation and

similarity to the program outside correctional facilities. In addition to its transformative potential, Adeyemi and Mosaku (2019) assert that correctional education is especially valued because having a formal education certificate is generally more widely accepted for post-release employment globally compared to informal or vocational training.

In Nigeria, recidivism rates have risen steadily. A 2019 study reported a 37.3% prevalence in 2015, while a 2020 study indicated a 52.4% estimate. Additionally, reports suggest high re-arrest rates for male (81%) and female (45%) ex-offenders within 36 months of release. These trends underscore the Nigerian Correctional Service's ongoing challenges in prisoner rehabilitation. Despite the intended deterrent effect of correctional facilities, recidivism rates continue to rise. For instance, Langan & Levin's (2002) research indicates that approximately 67% of former inmates in the United States were rearrested for serious new crimes within three years post-release. Similarly, studies like the Prison Reform Trust in the UK suggest that seven out of ten young offenders leaving correctional centers are likely to be reconvicted within two years. In Australia, Callan & Gardner (2005) estimated recidivism rates at 58%, contrasting with Norway's notably lower rate of 20%.

In comparison, the US reports minimum recidivism rates of 47%, and Italy's rates are notably high, with 80% of ex-inmates reoffending post-release. Life skills training, however, equips individuals with practical skills for daily life. These programs can teach budgeting, managing finances, healthy living habits, and even job interview skills – all essential tools for navigating life productively after release.

Odebode & Ikute (2023) asserted that rehabilitation program helps in the development of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), which may help individuals to identify and change negative thinking patterns that contribute to criminal behavior due to therapy equips used in addressing issues like anger management and impulsivity. Rebuilding a life after incarceration requires more than just addressing the reasons for the crime. This is why the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) (2022) emphasizes that social support services are crucial for the learning and transformation of the human mindset. They emphasized that most learning or vocational training available in the corrections for the inmates is designed towards connecting recidivists with mentors, faith-based organizations, or other support systems for providing housing assistance and other forms of aid towards successful reintegration.

The now-repealed Prisons Act (2022) indicated that the ill-training and prison congestion issue around correctional centers in Ogun State degenerated into a poor rehabilitative role of the Ogun State Prisons Service. This omission may stem from the Act's origins during the military era when confinement and punishment were the primary focus. Despite this, the Ogun State Prisons Service took the initiative beyond the Act's provisions by implementing a rehabilitative training program and establishing vocational training workshops in some correctional centers. However, due to the lack of explicit statutory support and adequate policy planning, correctional education was not mandatory and did not receive sufficient funding.

Literature and Theoretical Framework. Albert Bandura's social learning theory, introduced in 1977, significantly advanced the understanding of how behavior is acquired through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. Bandura argued that individuals learn not only from direct experiences but also by observing the actions of others, particularly those they consider role models or authority figures. This process of observational learning involves cognitive assessment, where individuals analyze the consequences of observed behaviors before deciding whether to imitate them. Bandura also emphasized the role of vicarious reinforcement, suggesting that people are more likely to mimic behaviors that they see, resulting in positive outcomes for others. This theory challenged earlier perspectives that focused solely on innate drives or environmental influences, highlighting the critical role of social context in shaping behavior. Bandura's social learning theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how behaviors are learned and modified, influencing practices in areas such as behavioral therapy and educational strategies. By emphasizing the importance of observation and cognitive processes in learning, Bandura's theory highlights the role of social interactions and environmental factors in shaping human behavior. This approach not only deepened our understanding of learning mechanisms but also



informed the development of behavioral interventions, stressing the need to model positive behaviors and create supportive social environments that facilitate learning and personal growth.

The above theoretical discussion was supported by Adeyemi and Mosaku's (2019) research, where the scholar argued that the main purpose of the training approach is to equip inmates with skills that promote law-abiding behavior upon reintegrating into society. Others focus on jobs and skills by offering educational and vocational training programs ranging from basic literacy and numeracy education to vocational training in specific trades or even college-level courses (Ajala, 2021).

In the context of Nigeria's correctional system, social learning theory offers crucial insights into the persistent challenge of recidivism. The Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS) continues to struggle with high recidivism rates, which strain resources and hinder investments in effective crime prevention. According to Bandura's theory, individuals, including repeat offenders, learn behaviors by observing and imitating other inmates considered role models in correctional facilities. It means that the behaviors and attitudes inmates are exposed to during their time in correctional facilities and upon release can significantly influence their likelihood of reoffending. The lack of comprehensive rehabilitation programs tailored to individual needs, as highlighted in research like Lipsey (2018), is a critical issue. Bandura's focus on modeling and observational learning underscores the importance of creating environments within prisons and communities that encourage positive behaviors and skills development, ultimately helping to reduce the risk of recidivism.

In Nigeria, the dichotomy between correctional training and inner training available in the correctional shows that lack of adequate training staff, materials and machines mostly affects the correctional training available in the corrections given rooms for the growth and development of inner training from role models. Thus, the inner role models are structured through learning by observation and experimentation of learned behavior after being released from prison, which increases the level of their returns to the correctional facilities sooner or later. Once the training that the government of any state designs to foster rehabilitation of the mindset of offenders so as for them to be integrated back into the larger society fails to achieve its primary purpose, it will degenerate into a high level of recidivism among the released inmates in Nigeria. The study concluded that once recidivists experienced adequate training from the corrections after \post-release unemployment for ex-offenders. Ex-offenders who secure employment promptly after release are less likely to commit further offenses (Oruta., 2021). Additionally, Adepoju. (2023) similarly carried out their research and discovered that men are more prone to re-offend compared to women. Prisons should also have facilities for education, religion, healthcare, and work. Ogunmefun, Aborisade, and Atere (2024b), in their research work, mentioned that Nigerian prisons need reforms to address overcrowding, low staff morale, and lack of funding and to ensure prisoners' rights to good food, a clean environment, and human dignity. There should also be alternatives to prison, like suspended sentences, parole, and probation. Olawunmi, Ogunmefun, and Aiwuyuse (2012) explain that the main goal of imprisonment is to protect society from crime. The length of imprisonment should aim to ensure that when offenders return to society, they are not only willing but also able to live without breaking the law and support themselves

METHODS

The study adopted qualitative methods for the collection of raw data from 15 respondents at four (4) correctional facilities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study was conducted in four (4) correctional facilities in Ogun State, namely Obah, Ibara, Ijebu-Ode and Yewa correctional facilities in Nigeria. The non-experimental research design was adopted to carry out the In-depth interviews through the use of a semi-structured questionnaire. Fifteen (15) inmates were found in the four correctional facilities in Ogun State useful for the study because they are ex-offenders in the Nigerian correctional service in Nigeria, but thirteen (13) gave their consent for the interviews to be conducted. A purposive sampling technique was adopted (nonprobability) for the study with emphasis on the respect for ethical considerations such as informed consent, anonymity, and use of gifts to facilitate rapport, among others. Face-to-face methods of administration of the research instrument were adopted. In contrast, a content

systematic approach of qualitative methods was used to interpret all the in-depth interviews collected through tape recorders and field notes from the inmates in the four (4) selected correctional facilities in Ogun State, Nigeria.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The table below shows the details of both male and female respondents in the correctional services in Ogun State as of 2023 in Nigeria. Thus, the table presents the total number of inmates (male and female) awaiting trial and convicted.

Table 1. Present an Overview of the Gender and Classification Distribution among inmates

Details	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Awaiting Trial	50,207	1,177	51,384	68%
Convicts	23,979	409	24,388	32%
Grand Total	74, 186	1,586	75,772	100%

Source: Ogun State Prison Population (NPS, 2023)

The result of this study was derived from the use of qualitative multiple case studies to inquire into correctional training and inner training in Ogun State correctional services. Four (4) correctional facilities were selected as the study locations, respectively. Fifteen (15) inmates were selected from the four (4) correctional institutions. However, after seeking consent from the inmates, 87 percent of the inmates gave their consent to allow the in-depth interview to be conducted, while 13 failed to give their consent.

Table 2. Distribution by Consent rate

Number of Interviews conducted	The number of Consents received	Response Rate (%)
15	13	87

Source: Author's Field Survey 2024

The table above was centered on the approval of the consent from selected participants. However, out of the fifteen (15) selected participants, thirteen (13) were found useful for the analysis due to the approval of the consent letter. Also, an additional source of data was sought on scholarly publications on correctional training, such as vocational training and formal training available in the corrections against the backdrop of training not exposed to correctional officers who are within the custody.

Table 3. The table below shows the demographic positions of the participants

Participant Code	Facility Code	Recidivism Experience (years)	Gender of recidivists	Number of Consent Rate (Yes or No)
P1	F1	2	Male	Yes
P2	F2	1	Male	Yes
P3	F3	4	Male	Yes
P4	F3	3	Male	Yes
P5	F4	2	Female	Yes



P6	F4	4	Male	Yes
P7	F4	2	Male	Yes
P8	F2	3	Male	Yes
P10	F3	1	Female	Yes
P11	F1	2	Female	Yes
P12	F3	1	Male	Yes
P13	F4	2	Male	Yes
P14	F3	2	Female	No
P15	F2	1	Female	No

Source: Author's Field Survey 2024

The thirteen (13) participants interviewed were selected from the four selected correctional facilities in Ogun State, Nigeria. Thus, each of the institutions was assigned facility codes for identification. For example,

- i. Ibara correctional facility is assigned with ---- -F1
- ii. Obah Correctional facility with ----- -F2
- iii. Ijebu-Ode Correctional facility with ----- F3 and
- iv. Yewa Correctional facility with ----- F4

Thirteen participants selected are recidivists who have been remanded more than one time in the correctional facilities in Ogun State, Nigeria. Questions on the impact of training in corrections were asked, which included the real correctional training versus inner training received from the experienced recidivists in the prisons. The data gathered from the selected recidivists interviewed revealed that inadequate monitoring of the training and congestion of the corrections gives room for inadequate learning for the transformation process expected from the correctional institutions.

P1, P2, P3 and P4 acknowledge the effect of prison congestion on the learning process or learning outcomes of the recidivists in the correctional facility. The findings derived from the primary data indicated that there are several issues within the corrections in Ogun State, Nigeria, that increase the rate at which released offenders return to the prisons. P1 stated that he could not compete with what is obtainable in the larger society after being released from corrections, and societal wrong perceptions of prisoners contributed to his return. P2 stated that she cannot cope with what is happening in the larger society because nobody shows signs of helping me. Even the government, after training, did not help us to develop our business or skills before throwing us or making us face the business world in the larger society. P19 explained that the inner training he got from his colleagues while in custody made him return because he feels he is more appreciated within the custody than his family, friends and community members. P5 asserted that there are people who show the love that the family cannot show to offenders who returned to prison. P10 feels that the care and love among prisoners, which is not found in the larger society after being released from custody

The statement below is some of the responses derived from the primary interviews conducted strictly among the recidivists interviewed in Ogun State Correctional Services, Nigeria, with the aim of exploring the dichotomy between correctional training versus inner training among recidivists in Ogun State, Nigeria.

The first recorded interviews from the selected participants state that.

"I have tried to be honest and be good to people that I lived with after release, but the way they act or react to little things I do shows that I am not totally accepted or wanted in their mist. Then I better remain or return to prison, where I am absolutely accepted as one family. In fact, I see love and enjoy great discussion with my friends in the corrections". Recidivists/F2/Male/29years/2024

On the other round, another inmate interviewed explained that.

"I return to prison because I derived joy among my mate in the prison. A large number of people I left behind are nice and encourage me to realize myself. It is what I cannot see from my friends, family and community members. However, something I enjoy life and enjoy myself because I learn new things from the prison without payment of any form of money. If I am outside, I do not know what to do." Recidivists/F1/Female/24years/2024.

Another inmate interviewed in the correction gave a contrary view about the causes of his return back to prison;

"I do not like as I return here, I find it difficult to return. I am not happy at all. I was trained in corrections, but I did not have the money to establish myself or my business fully. I faced much discrimination in society, especially among my family, friends and people around me. I can cope, and a small fight that led to injury brought me back to prison. I am here, and nothing can be done". Recidivists/F1/Female/28years/2024

Another inmate interviewed emphasized the issue surrounding the difference between established correctional training versus inner training in the corrections and submitted the below statement:

"I cannot cope do not let me lie. I enjoy the relationship in Ibara prison with my friends in the prison. They understand me and I also understand them. I like the words of encouragement and advice they gave me over a long period. If my family, friends and community people deny me, this set of people cannot do that, and they keep in touch with me, and I think I will do better while in prison. Not as if I do not want to do justice to change, but the inner training that I received from my friends in the corrections is better than the half training received from the corrections, which is overstretched by prison congestion over some time". Recidivists/F3/Male32years/2024

One of the interviewed inmates submits the following concerning the diversity in the correctional training versus inner training availability to inmates in the correctional facilities in Ogun State, Nigeria.

"I returned today not because I like it but because the anger that I cannot control returned me to Ibara prison. I will advise people to learn how to control their anger. The case of anger that I cannot control came from mistrust of my wife, which made me fight the man sleeping with my wife after I was released from prison due to". Recidivists/F4 /Male32years/2024

Another report gathered from the interviewed inmate asserts that;

"I do not think the training in the correctional facility can bring the real learning expected, but the training among the inmates mostly transforms and builds human behavior." Recidivists/F4 /Male32years/2024

The outcome of the study indicated that out of the fifteen inmates selected in the four correctional institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria, thirteen gave consent to participate in the interview as at the time the research was carried out, over 80 percent of the recidivists interviewed in various correctional facilities in Ogun State, Nigeria are returning for the first time in the history of their submission. Also, another result from the study indicated that 60 percent of the recidivists interviewed were male recidivists, and 20 percent were female recidivists. In comparison, 20 percent of the recidivists did not give consent during the period the research was conducted.



The study indicated that 67 percent of the recidivists were male, while 33 percent of the recidivists interviewed were female respondents respectively. The study deciphers that out of the thirteen recidivists interviewed, 54 percent who returned to prison came because of the inner training enjoyed by their role model in the correctional facilities in Ogun State, Nigeria, and 31 percent returned to prison because of poor perception and societal label. In contrast, 15 percent of the recidivists return to corrections due to mistakes in their actions, which they never intended at the time the research was conducted. Eighty-five percent of the recidivists claimed that they had vocational skills while in custody, while 15 percent had educational training before returning to custody as ex-offenders.

According to Albert Bandura, social learning emphasis is labeled towards observational learning, which involves cognitive assessment, where individuals analyze the consequences of observed behaviors before deciding whether to imitate them. Bandura also emphasized the role of vicarious reinforcement, suggesting that people are more likely to mimic behaviors that they see, resulting in positive outcomes for others. Bandura's social learning theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how behaviors are learned and modified, influencing practices in areas such as behavioral therapy and educational strategies. By emphasizing the importance of observation and cognitive processes in learning, Bandura's theory highlights the role of social interactions and environmental factors in shaping human behavior. This approach not only deepened our understanding of learning mechanisms but also informed the development of behavioral interventions, stressing the need to model positive behaviors and create supportive social environments that facilitate learning and personal growth.

CONCLUSION

They concluded that one of the factors that contribute largely to the recidivism in Ogun State, Nigeria, is an anchor on the weakness of correctional training available for the training of the inmates due to overstretching of the little available materials, machines and workforce to maintain the issue degenerating from inadequate training. The study further concluded that the weakness of the constitutional correctional facility gave birth to the ever-increasing nature of inner training within the custody among the inmates gained through role modeling. The fact remains that once a rehabilitation program, such as correctional training, fails, it will give room for the growth and development of subcultural training, which will contribute to a large number of released offenders returning to corrections. The environment within correctional facilities is also identified as a contributing factor to recidivism. Overcrowded prisons can serve as breeding grounds for criminal behavior, where young offenders may be influenced negatively and exposed to radicalization by hardened criminals. This incarceration process introduces inmates to negative values, drug cultures, and prison gangs. Beyond formal rules, inmates often adhere to internal hierarchies based on survival, leading to dehumanization and maladjustment. Ajala (2021), in his research, observes that Ogun State correctional centers are highly regimented, with strict control over inmate activities, resulting in mental and physical degradation, leaving inmates psychologically damaged and ill-prepared for reintegration into society upon release. Such conditions can exacerbate recidivism rates.

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