

CHALLENGES OF OFFENDER REINTEGRATION THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION.

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Abstract

The modern correctional system is aimed at providing law violators with useful skills to enable them attain self-satisfaction and self-sufficiency after their release. It is generally perceived that individuals who violate societal rules and regulation are mostly the unemployed segment of society. In this direction, correctional institution is expected to provide vocational skills through entrepreneurship education to inmates as a strategy for the rehabilitation and reintegration of released inmates to the communities as more responsible members. The concern of this paper is to observe whether inmates who are released from incarceration have acquired some skills and the problem they are facing in trying to rejoin their families, friends, religious institutions and the community at large. The Nigerian correctional institution seems to perform below expectation considering the high rate of recidivism which shows that ex-convicts are finding it very difficult to be reintegrated. The paper is optimistic that inmates should be expose to entrepreneurship education programme to enable them effectively reintegrated to the society. This paper attempts to explain the challenges of offender reintegration after released from correctional institution. The process of reintegration has not being a smooth one, because released offenders are confronted with many challenges that makes it very difficult for reintegration and may result in re-offending. Some of these challenges are; stigmatization, family, peer influence, lack of after-care services, etc. The paper recommends that qualitative rehabilitation programme through entrepreneurship education strategy can lead to effective reintegration of ex-convicts.

Keywords: Offender, Reintegration, employment, entrepreneurship, education.

Introduction

Crime as a social problem has been in existence since creation despite different types of crime control integrations usually deployed by the society to curb its spread and protect members from its harmful effects. The concern of contemporary reformers is basically on how to integrate ex-convicts back to their communities as changed, law-abiding and responsible individuals. The inability of correctional experts to remove these barriers, inhibitions and challenges to effective reintegration lead to are lapse into crime and criminal lifestyle.

There is a public concern on how released inmates who are expected to have acquired skills that can enable them live a crime free life, are re-arrested, reconvicted in line with this, Abriforetal,

(2012) admitted that the rate of reoffending by ex-convicts has generated a lot of concern from professionals on the functionality of the correctional institution regarding its constitutional responsibility of reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-convicts back to their communities.

Chukwudi, (2012) stressed that correctional institutions have become a mere training ground for criminals instead of rehabilitation home. The Nigerian correctional institution is accused of not doing its best in terms of rehabilitation and reintegration.

There is a gross neglect of this laudable objective. The correctional institution in Nigeria has failed to meet up the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules (UNSMR) which categorically stated that convicts must be provided with an environment for effective learning. The increasing rate of re-offending among ex-convicts can be associated with major challenges which include: overcrowding, inadequate funding, unqualified institutions etc.

Reintegration of discharged inmates back to their families and communities have been confronted by many challenges as a result their criminal records. Ex-convicts are released without any skills for self-employment coupled with discriminatory sentiments from employers due to their criminal records. (Shinkfield and Graffam 2009, Maruna et al., 2004) cited in Musa (2013) admitted that many of the offenders find it very difficult to secure employment due to their inability to acquire quality skills for employment.

Successful reintegration of released inmates is a major objective of correctional institution worldwide. The expectation of any correctional institution is that there released convicts should function suitably in the society after discharged. According to Tracy (2019) there is no better way to help inmates avoid relapsing to crime and reunited to their families and communities than assisting them with entrepreneurial training for self-employment.

Entrepreneurship education will help ex-convicts break the barrier of discrimination attributes of employers against ex-convicts by providing released inmates with self-employment innovation and critical thinking, for instance, identifying market gaps, analyze consumer needs and develop unique business idea.

A good and effective entrepreneur education would invariably help in there integration process of ex-convicts as well as helping the family, friends, religious bodies and the community to accept and support the ex-convicts as a responsible and self-sufficient individual.

The paper focus on some major challenges or factors affecting reintegration of ex-convicts, considering the concepts of reintegration and entrepreneurship education in the first section, the section would discuss the social bond and good life model, the third part of the paper would focus on entrepreneurship education as a driving force for effective offender reintegration, the fourth section offers recommendations while the fifth concludes the chapter, the concept of reintegration and entrepreneurship education.

Reintegration as a concept has been understood differently by scholars depending on their view points. The term can be used to mean a state of reunion of an ex-convict and his family or

communities after a successful completion of prison terms. According to Laub, (2001) reintegration is the process of transitioning from incarceration to the community, adjusting to life outside of prison jail and attempting to maintain a crime free lifestyle. It is a decision taken by a released inmate to return to his people and ready to abide by the rules and regulations of the community. It is a state of repentance from previous misbehavior and decided to return to his community, family and peers as a reformed individual. According to Lebel (2004), reintegration or re-entre as a systematic and evidence-based process by which actions are taken to work with the offenders in custody and on release.

Thus, entrepreneurship education is the instrument that made the process of transitioning from custody to the community possible. Isaac et.al (2007) defined entrepreneurship education as a genuine intervention by administration and educators in the life of participant to overcome challenges in the corporate global business environment. The process involves the engagement of a participant (offender) by experts in a deliberate and intentionally planned activity with a view of equipping the participant (offender) with a skill, knowledge and motivation for self-reliance. This is in collaboration with Chiaka and Ikeme (2013), that skill acquisition must be nurtured through proper education so that I can be directed to responsible and enriching small business endeavours that will benefit the individuals and communities in which the entrepreneur lives.

Factor affecting reintegration

There are many factors that inhibit that successful reintegration or refurbished of released inmates to his community to continue to live with his family, peer friends, religious, groups as a normal and responsible member.

The preparation for a successful reintegration of ex-convict starts within the correctional house. For instance, different rehabilitation programmed such as: tailoring, carpentry, adult education etc. All these programs are expected to be available and well-articulated for an effective reintegration of ex-convicts.

Contrary to the above, the correctional system in Nigeria is confronted with many limitations, e.g. inadequate training facilities, unqualified instructors, filthy environment, lack of separation, congestion etc. People from different ethnic cultural background, lifestyle and personality traits are contained. In their views, Giddens, (2006) Obioha (1996), Chukwudi (2012), cited in Sorochi, (2015) argued that a correctional institution is a school of crime and breeding ground for criminal socialization. Inmates are not adequately prepared to return to the families, communities, peers as a crime free individual Sorochi (2012), these maintains that correctional system determines whether an inmate will return to crime and criminal activities after release. Correctional officers present released individuals to the community with a certificate indicating that the individual is found worthy in both character and learning.

The Nigerian Correctional reformer seems they are not confident in the ability of the released inmates to lie a self-dependent and crime free life after release. If an inmate cannot be gainfully

employed as a result of inadequate and quality skills, the implication is that rehabilitation has not been successful. Lack of vocational tools, filthy environment affect rehabilitation and reintegration. Family member is also a strong factor affecting reintegration. This is because family support in the area of housing, finances and emotional support not only to conforming members but also to the ex-convicts' members. Reintegration becomes difficult where this families care and support are replaced for stigmatization and discrimination. Leschied et.al (2008) posited that having problems with family and romantic partners is a weak but relatively robust risk factors for criminal behavior. Substance abuse is considered as one of the factors that hinders effective reintegration, Mekena and Ransford (2004) observed that substance abuse has a negative consequence on the behavior of offenders resulting in the ability for an effective reintegration. Petersilia (2005) cited in Musa, (2013) reported that 73% who constitutes the majority of inmates in United States Prisons used drugs regularly prior to their reincarceration. This is usually at a time an inmate committed their latest offenses. 50% were found to be under influence of alcohol or other related drugs.

Similarly, peer pressure is also understood to be another significant implement to offenders reintegrate peer group influence as a factor affecting reintegration is more pronounced among youths in group settings than other peers. In agreement to this view, Murray and Farrington (2010) suggested that spending much time with group who are frequently engaged in criminal behavior is a strong determinant for reattending.

Employment Opportunities: This factor plays a significant role in reintegration.

An individual who are gainfully employed are more likely to maintain a stable relationship with law-abiding peers and reintegration than those who are not. This is further stressed by Ugagen, (2000) in Musa (2013) that individual offenders who are not employed suffered a great deal of isolation and are not opportune to enjoy any support from employers, family, community etc. While gainful employment offers individual offenders joy and happiness with family, unemployed individual offenders lack the social integration gained from their employment opportunities.

Theoretical Explanations: There are many theories that can be used to explain this article. However, the following theoretical framework are considered very relevant in understanding offenders' reintegration through entrepreneurship education.

The Good Lives Model: According to the good lives model propounded by Ward and colleagues (2011) individual can desist from further offending. If offenders are empowered or provided with opportunities and resource to live a good pro-social life (reintegration). The Good lives model as recognized the fact that offending behavior emanated as a result of the inability to provide individuals numbers with an enabling environment to achieve human need and desires through a legitimate means. The theory position that the primary concern of any responsible government, family, community and non-governmental organization should be on how to assist each individual to obtain the necessary skills and tools to successfully have a good life and free crime-free life. The main concern of the theory is focus on sustained reintegration which according to the

perspective can be achieved through understanding each offenders' criminogenic needs. The model stated that both wellbeing enhancement and risk reduction should guide intervention.

Social Bond Theory: The social bonding theory was propounded by Travis Hirsch 1969. It is also referred to as social control. The theory has drawn interest and acceptance from scholars in criminology. The theory is based on the promise that people conform acceptable behaviors as a result of social control and whatever these controls breakdown or are weakened, it results in recidivism.

The perspective asserts that per human beings are naturally selfish and aggressive, so individual behaviors are tailored towards criminal behavior. Akers and sellers (2004) stressed that individuals who are strongly bonded to social groups such as the family, church, school, mosque and peers are less likely to commit delinquent act. Hirsch (1969) identified four elements that is associated with bonding to the society. I.e attachment, commitment, involvement and belief.

Attachment: He referred to attachment as the effective attachment to conventional others. It relates to the love an individual has for his family and serves as a control to criminal behavior. It includes the ties of affection and respect children have for parents, teachers and friends. Individuals that are strongly bonded to significant others will take this into consideration whenever he/she is tempted to commit a delinquent act.

Commitment: This is concerned with the level of commitment on individual, is committed to conventional goals such as education, business or occupation. Individuals who have huge investment or setup high goals for the future will desist from committing a crime. Or they will not want to reoffend because they have as take or businesses that they will want to protect.

Hirsh (1969) pointed out that if offenders are provided with employment/self-employed and committed to acceptable values and activities, they develop as take in conformity and will choose to live a crime free life.

Involvement: This refers to social bonding, because it states that an individual who is engaged in socially acceptable activities/rolese.gstudying, spending time with his family or colleagues in workplace will have less or no time to re-offend.

Belief: This element of social bonding relate to individuals adherence to the values associated with behaviors that conform to the expected ways of behavior. This implies that the individual is socially bonded through conformity to the socially acceptance values, such as respect for the law and for the social norms of the society. The level of closeness on individual maintains with his parents determines the extent of adherence to the belief.

Offender Reintegration through Entrepreneurship Education.

The increasing rate of re-offending among released inmates from Nigerian Correctional Institution has been come worrisome to the extent that many questions are being put forward regarding to its functionality. This is why Tanimu (2010) described the Nigerian Prison as a place of torture and punishment rather than reformation and rehabilitation. According to him, many of the inmates are not learning any trade because, the equipment and tools are in the state of despair. The popular

rehabilitation method in Nigerian Correctional institution, today is concern with vocational rehabilitation of inmates which appears narrow. Obioha (2028) noted that the inability of prisons to provide the basic for effective rehabilitation as been conceived as there as on for the lack of interest of inmate participations in rehabilitation programs. There is a gross lack of qualified instructors, inadequate funding, poor leaving conditions have hampered the goal of rehabilitation of inmate and in turn leading to high rate of recidivism as inmate are released without skills for self-employment Chukwumerije (2014) reviled that statistics from 19 selected correction institution in Nigerian indicated that more than 60% of inmate are recidivist.

The increasing rate of their offending of Nigeria correctional how that the released inmate is not employed to enable them to reintegrate to the community. NBS (2016) also stated that an average of 31.7% of released offenders between 2002 and 2015 go back to crime, rearrested and reconvicted after the previous release. Therefore, in Nigerian correctional institution have not adequately provided inmate with skills. The existing locational skills acquisition programs have also failed to provide inmate with employment for self-release as a result of absence of well-designed curriculum and training contents.

Entrepreneurship education should be regarded as a critical component of rehabilitation in Nigerian correctional institution due to it obvious potentiality to generate alternative source of employment. Also, correctional should focus more on the provision of suitable entrepreneurships scale and competence for there integration of inmate. Adenike (2016) summited that entrepreneurships education is concerned with the provision of functional education that can offer self-release provision of adequate training for discovering novel business opportunities serves as carte list for economic grow than development. The content of a good entrepreneurial activity should base on empowering inmate with ability for making choices, identifying opportunities for self-employment, job creation. Enterprise establishment, project management, establishment of small business, fund raising and deigning marketable brands. (Aina, 2014)

Entrepreneurship education includes negotiation, leadership, creative thinking, technology, capital, knowledge, production and business planning. Smith (2009) asserted that entrepreneurship education has the potential of improving personal quantities like creativity, spirit of initiative responsibility, capacity of confronting risks, independence. Entrepreneurship education has the capacity of providing inmates with specific and relevant occupation, skills that can offer themself-employment and develop in them right attribute to work, self-esteem and dignity in labor. Rowaiye (2006) maintained that unemployment is the major challenge that force individual to take to abnormal land non-conforming behavior like stealing, kidnapping for ransom, pick-pocketing, breaking and entry into residential and commercial houses. Entrepreneurship education, if properly carried out and supported by responsible government policies and programmed has the capacity to provide inmates with appropriate entrepreneurial skills needed for self-substance and reintegration. Ojeifor, (2013) identified the objectives of entrepreneur education include: provision of functional education for inmates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in

identifying potential business opportunities. To offer inmates with adequate training in risk management. To inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the inmates to enable them persist in any business venture.

Conclusion

Reintegration as one of the major concerns of Nigerian correctional institute is facing many challenges. The paper discourse some of the challenges that effect offender reintegration to their communities. The paper examines the concept of entrepreneurship education and reintegration using the good life model social born theories to explain the phenomenon on entrepreneurship education and reintegration. Also, the paper attains to discourse some factors which are considered to be very important in there integration process of inmate therefore, family, friend and peers, unemployment drug abuse where discourse in relation to the subject matter of this paper. The paper is of review that offender reintegration is significantly influenced by these key factors. So, for any reintegration to be effective correctional official most ensure that entrepreneurship education is accessible to inmate to enable them secure employment, family born peer relationship and resisters from substance abuse and crime.

Recommendations

Based on the above literature, the following recommendations are relevant and necessary for effective reintegration of released inmates.

Correctional officials should as much as possible shoulder the responsibility of released inmates' reintegration process by ensuring community, family, peer group, religious organization of the confidence that the ex-inmate has actually received some level of training in prescribed skills and he has been duly rehabilitated and should be considered as a law-abiding member in the society.

Policy makers should as a matter of urgency provide adequate employment opportunities for released offenders to ensure a successful and effective reintegration. By this, it is expected that employment barriers and inhibitions based on offending criminal history should be discarded.

After-care services should been courage through proper supervision of offenders after their released from incarceration. This is necessary so that offenders should be maintained, encouraged and supported where possible.

Substances like hard drugs and alcohol should be strictly controlled by the government. This measure is necessary in view of the fact that drug consumption and abuse play a greater role in the inability to reintegration.

The increasing rate of re-offending among released inmates have been issue of concern. It is not a healthy situation for any country that desires progress and development to neglect this phenomenon. This paper therefore discusses the concepts of reintegration and entrepreneurship education. It further discus some of the challenges that offenders faced when they are released from the prison and go back to their societies. Thus, the concept of family, social bond, peers, employment opportunities, inadequate and effective rehabilitation.

This paper discusses the theories considered to be relevant to this paper. Also, the paper considered a discussion on entrepreneurship education very important and worthy for discuss. Based on this, it can be concluded that the above stated factors have affected the smooth reintegration of released offenders back to their communities and families.

Therefore, an alternative approach was found visible in entrepreneurship education to be more effective in there integration of released inmates.

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