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An Examination of the Effect of Skills Imparted to Recidivists on Their Re-Integration into the Community

Uswege Asobenie Mwakaheya

Ph.D. Student, Open University of Tanzania, Tanzania

Hawa Uiso

Lecturer, Open University of Tanzania, Tanzania

Adam Ben Mwakalobo

Principal, School of Business, University of Dodoma, Tanzania

Abstract:

Ineffective operation of rehabilitation programmes in prison has made ex-convicts unable to integrate successfully into the community. The process of imparting skills through entrepreneurship programmes is a move intended to achieve successful reintegration of ex-prisoners into the community. Re-integration refers specifically to interventions designed to help offenders who have been incarcerated to be accepted by the community after their release. This paper discusses the relationship between skills imparted to recidivists and their reintegration into the community. Logistic regression analysis was used with a sample size of 253 respondents selected from Tabora, Dar es Salaam and Morogoro in Tanzania. The research found that prisoners were well prepared for normal life back to the community but vocational skills acquired were informal hence limited the success of reintegration. The study recommends more research to be directed to the role of prison rehabilitation programmes in imparting formal skills to prisoners in order to promote successful re-integration as well as transforming inmates into resourceful and loyal citizens.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, skills, recidivism and re-integration

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Statement of the Problem

Prisoner rehabilitation is one of the core elements of the Global programme for the implementation of the Doha declaration that was established after the 13th United Nations crime congress in Qatar (UNODC, 2019). Alvarez *et al.*, (2018) claimed that due to lack of education and knowledge some prisoners found themselves to be prejudiced, lacked confidence and were unable to do much because the society also rejected them. Preparation for reintegration ought to commence before the offenders are released from prison. After their release, interventions should support their immediate transition from the prison to the community and reinforce the gains achieved in prison for successful reintegration. Successful approach in reducing recidivism among offenders should be made to ensure a good coordination between community-based intervention and prison management in relation to skills imparted (Ajala and Oguntuase, 2011, UNODC, 2019 & National Informatics Centre, 2019)

1.1.1. Objective

The objective of the study is to examine the effects of skills imparted to Recidivists on their re-integration into the community.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Literature Review

2.1.1. Human Capital Entrepreneurship Theory

Human Capital Entrepreneurship theory has been discussed in several points of view such as involving learning capacities in the production of goods and services. Human capital increases through education and experience. Employees' knowledge and skills can be developed through investment in education or training and learning (Hatch and Dyer 2004). Szirmai, (2005) criticized the human capital entrepreneurship theory that education in itself does not contribute to a person's productivity. The relevance of this theory in the study is to enrich entrepreneurial traits to the recidivists for betterment of their release from Prisons.

2.1.2. Psychological Theory

The origin of psychology was in 1879 by Wilhelm Wundt (Cherry 2016). Psychological theory emphasizes personal characteristics that define entrepreneurship. There are variables under this theory such as personality traits needed for achievement and locus of control which are reviewed and empirical evidence presented for three other new characteristics that have been found to be associated with entrepreneurial learning. These are risk taking, innovativeness, and tolerance for ambiguity which are important to prisoners during their stay in prisons and after release (Simpeh, 2011). This theory is significant to the research as it influenced innovation and proactive behavior to the inmates after being isolated from the society and stigmatized. The theory insists on changing the perception of the community to avoid the problem of stigma on the part of recidivists. Practically this theory enables both prisoners and prison Officers in wider understanding of the critical aspect of rehabilitating and being rehabilitated during incarceration.

2.2. Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1. Knowledge and Skills Imparted to Prisoners to Promote Successful Reintegration

Prison Legal News (2016) reported that, most of the skills imparted to prisoners were virtually useless after the offenders were released from prison. Koo (2015) found that correctional education could reduce recidivism by giving inmates the basic educational skills and achievements that they lacked upon entry. However, the study by "Koo" was conducted in the USA and it differs from the current one which has been conducted in Tanzania. Methodologically the current study used a mixed approach employing thematic analysis, narrative analysis, ordered probit regression analysis. Theoretically the study employed labeling theory as a key theory and also supported by other theories which are human capital entrepreneurship and psychological theories. In relation to the current study it is claimed that the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes in Tanzania prisons can reduce structural stigma.

RODI (2017) found that imparting life skills like gardening to inmates would make their life much better after release. The study further added that it was useful to consider paralegal training, value addition, and general training on how to make market competitive products from locally available materials. The findings concurred with the study by Barick (2018) who claimed that skills like tailoring, weaving, soap making and phenyl were important to inmates. Johnson (2015) claimed that offenders who participated in adult education programmes in correctional facilities could make a significant contribution towards effective correctional education if the environment was favorable and supportive with adequate resources for learning. The study considered social facts as multi-dimensional and hence used more than one theory similar to what has been done in the current study. However, education programmes have been provided in correctional facilities worldwide for a long time but still reoffending behavior to some ex-convicts exist.

Clemance (2015) conducted a study at Polokwane Correctional Services Centre in South Africa on intervention strategies for improving vocational rehabilitation programmes for young adult offenders using a case study. In his study, inductive approach was employed using vocational rehabilitation, motivation, support, training and staffing as dependent variables while the variable young adult offenders was dependent. According to the study, young adult offenders received insufficient and inadequate vocational rehabilitation training due to lack of qualified trainers for specific field. Also, there was lack of resources such as textbooks, apparatus to conduct practical for engineering studies and skills development programmes.

Margaret and Oricho (2017) conducted a study on "education for prisoners as a driver for sustainable development in Kenya" they applied qualitative analysis while independent variables were, basic education, vocational education, prison work and tertiary education. Their dependent variable was sustainable development. The findings indicated that vocational education curriculum generally consisted of skill-oriented trades such as carpentry, shoe-making, tailoring, plumbing, weaving, sewing, laundry, cleaning, cooking, baking, and masonry. According to them acquisition of those skills by prisoners was viewed as the best preparation for post-release life. Many countries including Tanzania, apply vocational programs but recidivism still persist. Therefore, initiatives for imparting entrepreneurial skills to inmate can be a solution to the problem.

Mkosi (2013) conducted a study on "managing a full-time school within correctional services environment in South Africa. Findings indicated that education provided in prison helped ex-convicts after their release to get employment which resulted to the reduction of recidivism due to the ability to earn some wages. This means that structural stigma was avoided. This study concurred with Mkosi (2013) who claimed that self-employment was associated with entrepreneurial skills imparted to prisoners through rehabilitation programmes.

Mboje (2013) conducted a study on "assessment of the role of vocational skills in rehabilitation of Tanzania prisoners in Ukonga and Isanga central prisons." The study employed descriptive analysis where dependent variable was rehabilitation programmes and vocation skills were independent variables. According to his study vocational skills offered to prisoners as part of rehabilitation programs were poor due to the inadequate funds allocated for prisoners training, inadequate teaching and learning facilities and this caused inefficiency. However, his study was descriptive in nature and there was no statistical testing of variables contrary to this study which explains the relationship between the variables using quantitative methods.

Langat *et al.*, (2015) conducted a study on "efficacy of rehabilitation programmes on psychosocial adjustment of elderly male offenders in Kakamega main Prison in Kenya. The study employed a descriptive analysis method where independent variables were the demographic information, educational and vocational programmes on psychosocial adjustment of elderly offenders while recidivism was dependent variable. Their findings revealed a need to revamp rehabilitation programmes targeting the criminogenic needs of elderly offenders so as to increase their level of participation in educational and vocational programmes. However, the influence of vocational programmes was minimal

since majority of the elderly offenders were found to be recidivists. Contextually the study conducted in Kenya differed from the current one which was conducted in Tanzania. Theoretically the current study used three theories. This study concurs with their study in the sense that correctional systems emphasized on imparting life skills during incarceration.

Emmanuel (2014) conducted a study on "the provision, relevance and challenges of adult education in Dar es Salaam prisons, Tanzania." His study was guided by Eclectic Model on the provision and challenges of adult education in prisons. Qualitative approach was employed and found that adult education which was being provided to prisoners and prison officers covered all Adult education programmes including primary, secondary and vocation education, whereby university education was facilitated by Open University of Tanzania. Critically the study employed eclectic model and employed qualitative approach contrary to this which was both quantitative and qualitative. His study focused on adult education in prison but the real situation shows that even young are imprisoned. However, Farley and Pike (2016) argued that investing public fund in education and training in prison transformed prisoners. This indicates that a further initiative is needed in Tanzania to fill the gap by introducing entrepreneurship program for inmates.

3. Methodology

The current research used causal research design which explained the patterns of relationships between dependent and independent variables (Zikmund et al., 2012) and in this case re integration into the community as a dependent variable while skills imparted were the independent variables. The selected study area comprised of top three regions with a high rate of recidivism namely, Tabora, Dar es Salaam, and Morogoro (TPS, 2016). Questionnaires were administered to a sample size of 253 respondents. The structured questionnaires had two sections covering basic profile of respondents (demographic characteristics questions) and statements in Five-point Likert scale which were translated in Swahili language so as to help those who do not understand English language. The findings were based on the statements which required respondents to rate their level of agreement with them. The scales were 1= Strongly disagree 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree and 5= Strongly agree. Logistic Regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between imparted skills to prisoners and reintegration into the community.

4. Results and Conclusion

4.1. Relationship between Skills Imparted to Recidivists and Re-Integration

The full logistic regression analysis model utilizing various combinations of variables were transformed by three independent variables (prisoners were well prepared back to community, vocational skills promoted business establishments and provision of formal education in prisons rehabilitated inmates). The variables substantially affected the odds of inclusion in the dependent variable category of skills imparted to recidivists and Re-integration (IMP_SKIL). The skills imparted to recidivists supported their re-integration into the community and promoted business establishments and these were statistically supported by regression result displayed (IMP_SKIL _Prisocom) (IMP_SKIL _Voest).

The function parameters were interpreted directly to mean the use of entrepreneurship programme as a means of reducing recidivism and promoting successful re-integration into the community. The prisoners were well prepared back to community and vocational skills promoted business establishments had positive sign and were statistically significant at the 5% level. This implies that any programs on imparting skills had other ways of improving the offenders' re-integration into the community and this effort traditionally should not be ignored by prison administration. The results are summarized in Table 1.1

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.262	.226		-1.162	.246
	IMP_SKIL _Prisocom	.326	.039	.422	8.393	.000
	IMP_SKIL _Voest	.309	.040	.391	7.749	.000
	IMP_SKIL _Provreh	-.020	.043	-.023	-.463	.643

Table 1: Coefficients on Skills Imparted to Recidivists and Re-Integration

Source: Field Data, 2018

The regression model was summarized by the equation:

$$REC_REINT = -0.262 + 0.422IMP_SKIL_{PRISOCOM} + 0.39IMP_SKIL_{VOEST} - 0.023IMP_SKIL_{PROVREH}$$

The definition of variables

In this perspective *REC* is the Re-integration into the community, *IMP_SKIL* is the Imparted skills/Training, *Prisocom* is the prisoners back to community, *Provreh* is the provision of formal education in the Prison rehabilitation Program while *Voest* is the vocational skills in prisons promoted business establishment.

Basing on the results shown in table 1.1 a one percent increase in the preparedness of ex-prisoners back to the community through vocational skills imparted leads to an increase of 0.422 in re-integration to the community. Most of the respondents agreed that prisoners were well prepared to go back into the community because of frustrations experienced in prisons. Likewise, one percent increase in promotion of business establishment through vocational skills led to an increase by 0.391 values in re-integration to the community. However, this result was based on the nature of the statement

in the research instrument where respondents were asked if they agree with the statement that “vocational skills in prisons promoted business establishment.” Respondent disagreed with the statement because in most of prisons there are no formal vocational skills which would have promoted successful reintegration. This result was supported by feedback received from focus group discussions. A 1% increase in the provision of formal education in the Prison rehabilitation Program led to a decrease of 0.023 re integration into the community. The result was not significant ($p > 0.05$). This implies that provision of formal education in prisons rehabilitation programs did not achieve the intended results as far as prisons are concerned.

The negative outcome was associated with the fact that some prisoners were not trainable due to frustration of being isolated from their families. Another reason could be due to depression of some recidivists who were imprisoned innocently by immoral police Officers for their interest as well as unfriendly policies and unemployment. Hence prisoners do not reintegrate successfully into the community. Similar findings by Grimwood and Berman, (2012) who claimed that the current rise in prison numbers was not driven by increase in crime rates but by national and local policy decisions. Office of the Auditor General (2014) in Zambia reported that there was no policy directive on how to manage the prisoners and address their rehabilitation and re-integration needs. MEIST (2018) contend that, there should be provision of skills to inmates for free including soft skills training and core skills so as to enable them to work in private job with ease and confidence.

In making prisoners more meaningful and useful while in custody and afterwards various skills should be imparted so as to help them successfully re-integrate into the community after their release (National Informatics Centre, 2019). Vocational training and/or work release programs were found to be effective in reducing recidivism rates as well as in improving job readiness skills for ex- offenders (Seiter & Kadela, 2003). In line with Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Prisoners attending education and training were less likely to re-offend while Legal Action Center (2004) in USA, argued that there were some restrictions in education provision. Also, the failure to successfully reintegrate in the community was linked with unemployment problem as discussed by some studies.

United Nation (2017) pointed out that prisoners who received vocational training but were then unable to obtain employment were unlikely to re-offend. Also, employers in the community do not prefer to employ people with a criminal history. It would have been better if prisoners were able to work after release and this would have been an indication of success of rehabilitation (Victoria, 2015.). There is a need to have an organized way that assist people to approach life after their release (brick making, tailoring, carpentry, electricians and auto mechanics) which will bring about a new life upon release to themselves, their families and society (UNODC, 2019).

The presence of a policy which supports the provision of formal education in rehabilitating offenders would decrease recidivism rate through imparting skills which could sensitize prisoners to behave in a moral way. This is through a well-established sentencing plan.

5. Conclusion

The findings revealed that provision of formal education in prisons rehabilitation programs have not achieved the intended results as far as prisons are concerned. Basing on the findings of the study it can be concluded that the imparted skills have no effects in the Re-integration of recidivists into their community. Since the absence of formal and informal entrepreneurship skills lead to reoffending. The reason for lack of success was absence of entrepreneurship professionals within prisons officers, unemployment and unfriendly policies. On the other hand, the Researcher associated this negative outcome with the fact that some prisoners were not trainable due to frustration of being isolated from their families. Another reason could be due to depression of some recidivists who were imprisoned innocently by immoral police Officers for their interest.

6. Direction for Future Studies

The study recommends future research to be directed to the role of prison rehabilitation programmes in respect to imparting formal skills for successful re-integration of ex-prisoners into the community as well transform inmates into resourceful and loyal citizens. Different methodology may be applied in the same sample to see if similar results will be obtained. The same study could be done in other regions with a low recidivism rate to see if similar results will be obtained.

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