

Challenges and Possible Solutions Facing the Effective Utilization of Information Resources by Inmates of Delta Correctional Institutions

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Abstract

The study probed the challenges and possible solutions facing the effective utilization of information resources by inmates of Delta correctional institutions. The five correctional centers in Delta State were used for the study namely: Agbor, Kwale, Ogwashi-Ukwu, Sapele and Warri correctional centers. The study employed a descriptive structure using the multi sampling technique. The population was made up of 2,821 respondents and a sample size of 341 chosen. The researcher developed instrument for data collection was validated by experts. A test result reliability was conducted with a reliability index of 92 and 87 which were above 70. Data collected were analyzed using mean and percentages and the study revealed the absence of educative programmes, no enough reading materials, noise from within and outside the library and the library uncomfortable for reading. The study therefore recommended among other things, the introduction of educative programs, reaching to the government to provide funds to acquire more reading materials and if possible relocating the library to where there will be no noise.

Key words – *Challenges, Solutions Correctional Institutions, Information Resources, Inmates, Delta State.*

INTRODUCTION

Libraries are described as engine rooms cum power houses that collect, store process and retrieve information for the use of its clientele (Ogunleye 2010, Obaro, 2021). Libraries are found in all institutions of learning both the kindergarten, primary, secondary, colleges of education, polytechnic and universities. Also to help the citizens of each state and country, libraries provide information through the National and public libraries. Individuals who know the worth of information also have libraries. Organisations like Correctional Centers, Institutions and facilities also have libraries (Obaro 2022).

Correctional centers/institutions libraries have been described as special libraries meant for users operating within the correctional institutes. Larson (2017) opined that correctional Institutions are

Institutions in which inmates are forcibly confined and denied variety of freedoms under the authority of the States. Information centers attached to them have been described as libraries (Obaro, 2021). They are also known as remand centers, detention centers, correctional centers and correctional facilities. In Nigeria, they were formally called prisons. They are most commonly used within a criminal justice system: people charged with crimes may be kept there until their trial. Those pleading or being found guilty of crimes at trial may be sentenced to a specified period of imprisonment. Infact, Larson, (2017) defined it as a building in which people are legally held as a punishment for a crime they have committed.

But these buildings in which people are held over the years have metamorphosed. There are now modern correctional institutions and they have adopted education as one of their cardinal reformation tools in correcting the inmates. The libraries attached to these centers help them in providing information and its resources hence this study.

Statement of problem

Information resources come in different formats like prints, non-print and electronic forms. They are housed in libraries which is an information center. Inmates of correctional institutions are expected to develop themselves in their incarcerations using the available information resources in their libraries. The sole aim of setting up libraries and making information resources available to inmates is for their rehabilitation. In all areas of life individuals including inmates otherwise known as prisoners need quality and timely information to facilitate informed decision making in their quest for development and life satisfaction.

There have been several studies on the availability and utilization of these information resources among inmates of correctional institutions, Eze& Dike (2014), Ibikunle(2015), Gbashima, Akpe and Lorfa(2016), Emasealu(2017), Obaro and Ekeno(2022).But there has been few studies on the challenges and possible solutions facing the effective utilization of information resources by these inmates of correctional institutions, therefore, this study is set to investigate the challenges and possible solutions facing the effective utilization of information resources by inmates of Delta State correctional institutions.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives guided the study.

1. To investigate the challenges facing the effective utilization of information resources by inmates of correctional institutions in Delta State Nigeria.
2. To proffer possible solutions to the challenges facing the effective utilization of information resources by inmates of correctional institutions in Delta State Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study has the following research questions

1. What are the challenges facing the effective utilization of information resources by inmates of correctional institutions in Delta State Nigeria?
2. What are the possible solution to the challenges facing the effective utilization of information resources by inmates of correctional institutions in Delta State Nigeria?

Literature Review

Over the years, inmates of correctional institutions have utilized library services and resources in various formats to enhance their literacy, navigate their legal issues and gain useful life skills. (Right to Access of Prisoners 2016). Invariably utilization of library resources by inmates have brought about many benefits. Nevertheless, a number of obstacles prevent inmates from effectively utilizing these resources.

Mohammed (2014) averred that the problems of ineffective utilization of information resources among inmates in Nigerian correctional institutions are caused by factors such as high rate of illiteracy especially in English Language, ineffective government policy towards the management of information resources, inadequate funds for acquisition and discrimination of information resources. Busayo and Elaturoti (2016) reported the unawareness of information resources stocked in correctional institutions libraries and the inability of the libraries to properly develop awareness programmes among the inmates of these institutions.

Gbashima, Akpe and Lorfa (2016) reported lack of infrastructure, modern information technology. Inadequate funding also as some challenges militating against the effective utilization of information resources by correctional centers inmates. Obaro & Ekeno (2022) emphasized on poor funding, incarcerations, uncomfortable nature of the prison library, long delays before trial are among factors leading to the challenges to effective utilization of the correctional institutions library.

In preferring possible solutions to the raised issues Igwuebuike and Agbo (2017) suggested the provision of separate library building, recruitment of qualified library staff, funding made available, and installation of modern information technology (Satellite and internet). Ijiekhuamhen and Aiyebilehin (2018) has the views that while recommending strategies to improve the utilization of information resources by inmates of correctional institutions the government should fund properly the prison libraries to enable them acquire current titles and carry out services that meet their information needs. They should also make prison libraries more comfortable for living as the uncomfortable nature of the prison libraries hinder their access and utilization to library resources.

Tayler (2017) in his report on improving California in-prison rehabilitation programs highlighted the conducting of regular assessment of information resources usage by the prison libraries management and the increment of library budgets. Obaro (2021) posited that these libraries serve both as a study center and workshop for inmates and so the management of correctional institution libraries should ensure the provision of adequate library facilities.

Methodology

The quantitative design of the correctional research was adopted for the study. The study area is Delta State of Nigeria. And in this state, there are five correctional institutions in the various towns of Agbor, Kwale, Ogwuashi-Ukwu, Sapele and Warri. As at the time of the study, there were 2, 821

inmates and 14 library welfare officers who worked as library assistants in these five correctional institutions as illustrated.

Table 1: Population and Sample of the Study

| SN | Inmates of Correctional Institution | Population of inmates | Sample |
|-------|--|-----------------------|--------|
| 1. | Correctional Institution Agbor, Delta State | 327 | 40 |
| 2. | Correctional Institution Kwale Delta state | 279 | 34 |
| 3. | Correctional Institution OgwashiUkwu Delta state | 666 | 80 |
| 4. | Correctional Institution Sapele Delta state | 312 | 38 |
| 5. | Correctional Institution Warri Delta state | 1, 237 | 149 |
| Total | | 2, 820 | 341 |

The correlational research was chosen to enable the researcher measure two or more variable. The sample size was also chosen using the multi sampling technique and Krejice&Morgans (1970) table which stated that sample size of 341 can be taken in a population of 3,000, hence the researchers took a sample size of 341 from the population of 2821 using the proportional sampling techniques which allows for a representative selection of samples relate to the entire population.

The instrument employed was the questionnaire entitled “challenges and possible solutions to effective utilization of information resources (CPSEUIR) which is divided into 3 selections.

Section “A” was on the demographic of the inmates, section “B” was on the challenges facing the effective utilization of information resources by inmates of correctional institutions and section “C” is on possible solutions to the challenges facing the utilization of information resources by inmates of correctional institutions.

However these sections have the dichotomous rating scales of Agree (2 points) and disagree (1 point). Face and content validity of the instrument were done by 3 professors in Library and Information Science Department and measurement and Evaluation. The final corrected copies of the questionnaire were administered to 30 inmates in Oko correctional institution Benin City in Edo State of Nigeria, in two intervals.

The Pearson product moment correlation was used to analyze the responses received from the different questionnaire administrations. The correction coefficients obtained for each section were section B 92, section C 87. These reliability index were above 70 indicating consistency of items which proved that the instrument is reliable as supported by Strauss, Sherman and Spreen (2016) who noted that magnitude of coefficient to denote reliability of a research instrument should be between 70 and 80 copies of the questionnaire were personally administered to the target respondents with the help of the library welfare officers who served as research assistants. This was done during the library opening hours. A period of three weeks was used for the administration and completion of the questionnaire. Mean frequencies and simple percentages were used to analyze the data received because of the descriptive nature of the data.

Results

341 copies (100%), of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents and 305 copies (89%) were retrieved. This was accepted as the response rate for the study because most of the acceptable response rate for most studies is 60%.

Section A

This section deals with the analysis on the demography of the respondents.

Table 2: Age of the Respondents

| Age | Frequency | Percentage % |
|-----------------------|-----------|--------------|
| 21-30 years | 97 | 31.8 |
| 31-40 years | 102 | 33.4 |
| 41-50 years | 67 | 22.0 |
| 51-60 and above years | 39 | 2.8 |
| Total | 305 | 100.0 |

Table 3: Marital Status of the Respondents

| Marital Status | Frequency | Percentage % |
|----------------|-----------|--------------|
| Married | 129 | 42.3 |
| Single | 127 | 41.6 |
| Divorced | 49 | 16.1 |
| Total | 305 | 100.0 |

Table 4: Sex of the Respondents

| Sex | Frequency | Percentage % |
|--------|-----------|--------------|
| Male | 258 | 84.6 |
| Female | 47 | 15.4 |
| Total | 305 | 100.0 |

Table 5: Educational Qualifications of the Respondents

| Educational Qualification | Frequency | Percentage % |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| FSLC | 80 | 26.2 |
| WAEC/GCE | 160 | 52.5 |
| OND/NCE | 50 | 16.4 |
| HND/Bachelors' Degree | 10 | 3.3 |
| Masters/Ph.D | 5 | 1.6 |
| Total | 305 | 100 |

From the data collected, it was found out that those between the ages of 31-40 years are more in the correctional institutions, and there are more single persons there compared to married and divorced. Also there are more males and WAEC/GCE holders in these institutions.

Answering of Research Questions

Research Question One:

What are the challenges facing the effective utilization of information resources by inmates of these correctional institutions?

Table 6: Challenges faced by Inmates in the use of Information Resources in Correctional Institutions.

| S/N | Challenges encountered on the utilization of information resources | AGREE | | DISAGREE | | TOTAL | |
|-------|--|-------|------|----------|------|-------|-------|
| | | No | % | No | % | No | % |
| i. | I can't read in English Language | 60 | 19.7 | 245 | 80.3 | 305 | 100.0 |
| ii. | The reading materials are not enough | 199 | 65.2 | 106 | 34.8 | 305 | 100.0 |
| iii. | There are no radio and television programmes | 211 | 69.2 | 94 | 30.8 | 305 | 100.0 |
| iv. | The Library is not comfortable | 160 | 52.5 | 145 | 47.5 | 305 | 100.0 |
| v. | There is no enough time to read | 158 | 51.8 | 147 | 48.2 | 305 | 100.0 |
| vi. | I cannot easily locate library materials | 104 | 34.1 | 201 | 65.9 | 305 | 100.0 |
| vii. | Noise from within and outside the library | 174 | 57.0 | 131 | 43.0 | 305 | 100.0 |
| viii. | The library is too far from my cell | 125 | 41.0 | 180 | 59.0 | 305 | 100.0 |
| ix. | The prison rules and regulations are too strict | 146 | 47.9 | 159 | 52.1 | 305 | 100.0 |
| x. | The library staff are unfriendly | 202 | 66.2 | 103 | 33.8 | 305 | 100.0 |
| xi. | The reading materials are irrelevant and do not meet my needs. | 169 | 55.4 | 136 | 44.6 | 305 | 100.0 |

Research Question 2

What are the possible solutions to the challenges facing the utilization of information resources by inmates of these correctional institutions?

Table 7: Solutions to the challenges faced by inmates in the use of Information Resources in Correctional Institutions

| S/N | Solutions to Challenges on the Utilization of Information Resources in Correctional Institution Libraries | AGREE | | DISAGREE | | TOTAL | |
|-------|--|-------|------|----------|------|-------|-------|
| | | No | % | No | % | No | % |
| i. | There should be reading materials in different formats like visual and audio format to solve the challenges of reading in English. | 281 | 92.1 | 24 | 7.9 | 305 | 100.0 |
| ii. | The librarians should make more provision for reading materials. | 284 | 93.1 | 21 | 6.9 | 305 | 100.0 |
| iii. | More educative radio and television programmes should be introduced by the media houses. | 286 | 93.8 | 19 | 6.2 | 305 | 100.0 |
| iv. | Awareness should be created by the librarians in the correctional institutions | 287 | 94.1 | 18 | 5.9 | 305 | 100.0 |
| v. | The library should be made comfortable by acquiring the right kind of library furniture | 277 | 90.8 | 28 | 9.2 | 305 | 100.0 |
| vi. | The library should be open to every inmate without any restrictions | 274 | 89.8 | 31 | 10.2 | 305 | 100.0 |
| vii. | Correctional institutions should design programmes that will encourage reading time for inmate for self development | 290 | 95.1 | 15 | 4.9 | 305 | 100.0 |
| viii. | The librarians should be more patient and accommodating to the inmates | 293 | 96.1 | 12 | 3.9 | 305 | 100.0 |
| ix. | Librarians should assist inmates in locating reading materials | 290 | 95.1 | 15 | 4.9 | 305 | 100.0 |
| x. | The library should be at a separate building and silence maintained within the library. | 287 | 94.1 | 18 | 5.9 | 305 | 100.0 |
| xi. | Inmates should be encouraged to use the library | 297 | 97.4 | 08 | 2.6 | 305 | 100.0 |
| xii. | The rules and regulations should be explained to the inmates so that they understand the reason for them. | 289 | 94.8 | 16 | 5.2 | 305 | 100.0 |
| xiii. | Correctional institutions should seek out the type of reading materials desired by the inmates and provide them. | 283 | 92.8 | 22 | 7.2 | 305 | 100.0 |

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that the challenges facing the effective utilization of information resources by inmates of the correctional institutions in Delta State are the unavailability of radio and television programmes, unfriendliness of library staff, no enough reading materials, noise from within and outside the library, the reading materials are irrelevant and do not meet inmates information need, the library is not comfortable, no enough time to read and no free access to the

library. These findings are line with the findings of Sambo, Usman and Rabi (2017) where they reported that the factors affecting the prisoner's information seeking behavior and use of information resources include the uncomfortable nature of the prison, long delay before trial, poor funding of the library and prison as whole, unfavourable library building, and other factors. Gbashima, Akpe and Lorfa (2016) also reaffirmed the challenges by reporting lack of modern information technology, inadequate findings, qualified staff and library books.

The study revealed that the possible solutions to the challenges facing the inmates of correctional institutions in Delta State are: inmates should be encouraged on the use of the library, the library staff should be more patient and accommodating to the inmates, library staff should assist inmates in locating reading materials, rules and regulations should be properly explained to the inmates so that they know the reasons for them. A separate building for silence within the library should be maintained, more educative radio and television programmes should be introduced by the media houses and librarians should make more provisions of reading materials. The findings agrees with Igwebuike and Agbo (2017) when they stated some of the strategies that would alleviate the issues affecting inmates utilization of information resources as provisions of separate library building, recruitment of qualified library staff, fund should be made available, prison libraries should diverse other ways of building their collection and modern information technology should be installed like satellite and internet.

Conclusion

The study concludes that challenges facing the effective utilization of information resources include no radio and television programmes, unfriendliness of library staff, no enough reading materials, noise from within and outside the library, the library is not comfortable, the inmates cannot easily locate the reading materials. However, the possible solutions to these challenges include: librarians/welfare officers should be more patient and accommodating to the inmates, assist them in locating reading materials, explaining the rules and regulations to them and introducing more educative radio and television programmes to them.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study: it is recommended that

- a. Inmates should be encouraged on the use of the library.
- b. Librarians, library officers and welfare officers should be more accommodating to the inmates.
- c. Inmates should be assisted in the use of the library effectively.
- d. Radio and television programmes should be introduced into the correctional institution for inmate's accessibility.
- e. The correctional institution administrators should reach out to the government to make more provisions of reading materials.
- f. The rules and regulations of the correctional institutions should be well explained to the inmates.
- g. If possible, a separate building should be built for the library, or the library relocated to a separate building to reduce noise.

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