
Assessment of Training Instructors' Competencies in Vocational Education Programmes of Nigerian Prisons in Rivers State

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Abstract

The study examined the competencies of training instructors in vocational education programmes given to inmates of Nigerian prisons in Rivers State. A descriptive survey design guided the study. A sample of 214 vocational instructors was randomly sampled for the study. Three research questions were answered in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire validated by three experts and its reliability coefficient of 0.83 was established using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) coefficient reliability method. Data were analyzed with descriptive statistics of frequency and percentage. It was found that the vocational instructors had varying levels of academic qualifications; years of experience and involved in various vocational training capacity building programmes to improve their competencies as vocational training instructors of Nigerian prisons in Rivers State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that vocational training instructors in Nigerian prisons in Rivers State should be selected in terms of competency in academic qualifications to enhance effective vocational training of the inmates. Also, vocational instructors with high experience should be engaged and retained to train others in Nigerian prisons service.

Keywords: Competency, Inmates, Prisons, Training, Instructors, Skills, Vocational Education

1.0 Introduction

In Nigeria today, criminal activities and violence are now appearing in dangerous forms which disturb and threaten lives and property, the national sense of well-being and coherence, peace, social order and security as well as reducing the quality of life of the people (Agbola, 2000; Ahmed 2010). Also, for the purpose of survival in economic and political career, some Nigerians indulge in criminal activities. This point was buttressed by Tor-Anyiin (2010) who stated that many people in Nigeria partake or get involved in different crimes such as kidnapping, ritual killing, political killing, armed robbery, cybercrime, advanced fee fraud on a daily basis for economic and political survival.

Crime is defined by Danbazau (as cited in Alapata, 2012) as anything which is contrary to the law of the society or those things that violates the divine law. Similarly, Adetunji and Amaraeze (2012) viewed crime as the commission of an act or act of commission that violates the law and is punishable by the state. In order to sanitize the society and for people to be deterred from criminal activities, the prison community was set up and characterized with different people with distinct perceptions and ways of life which epitomize a complete design capable of transforming the beliefs and philosophy of an individual to be good or bad based on the personal background practice and the social action of the organization and structure (Obioha, 2011). As a way of reducing crime in the society, government of any

nation handles the defaulters by putting them in prison (imprisonment). Imprisonment is a method of making someone who breaks the law to repent and observe the set rules and regulations guiding the acceptable conduct in a socialized environment (Oyinloye & Salami, 2010). Such a law breaker that is kept in an isolated place from the entire society is known as prison inmates who are either male or female. According to Lectric Law Library Lexicon (2003), a prison is a place where persons are circumscribed, restricted, detained and compassed from personal choice, convenience and decision. Individual who execute, perpetrate and carry out abominable, outrageous and shocking crimes are consigned and ordered to prison for more years. The more severe the crime, the longer the prison authorities enforces and inflicts charges (Ayo, 2008).

From the foregoing, it is seen that the main purpose of instituting and regulating the prison system in all parts of the world including Nigeria is to provide a rehabilitation service for those who break the rules and regulations of the society. However, the degree to which this maxim is true in practice has been a sensitive and vulnerable argument and discussion in Nigeria. According to the United Nations report on the state and conditions of Nigerian prisons as recorded in the vanguard newspaper (2006, September), All the prisons visited in Nigeria had very limited facilities for rehabilitation of the inmates and even where they exist, they do not include basic facilities for vocational skills such as woodwork, tailoring, welding and electronics. Ayuk, Emeka and Omono (2013) reporting on the poor state of Nigerian prisons observed that the training facilities in Nigerian prisons are obsolete and not functional with incompetent vocational and technical training instructors and so on. For prison inmates in Nigerian prisons to be rehabilitated, the vocational training programmes must have competent based training instructors in terms of academic qualification, work experience and type of training programmes acquired in vocational and technical education.

Competency according to Adameji (2014) means the ability to be a competent, adequate possession of required skills and knowledge; qualification, or capacity. Competency reflects the ability to do something in contrast with more traditional ability to demonstrate knowledge. This implies that vocational training instructors in Nigerian prisons must be vocationally and technically competent to enhance inmates' rehabilitation.

Statement of the Problem

The deplorable state of Nigerian prisons leaves one in doubt with too many questions and fewer answers why Nigerian inmates become more hardened than when they never went behind the bars and commit more outrageous crimes (Ayuk, Emeka & Omono, 2013). Prisons are assumed to be a place for rehabilitation to enhance inmates' reintegration into the society. The prisons among other things should have vocational educational training programmes that can facilitate the rehabilitation of the inmates with skills to be useful in the society when they eventually leave the prison walls. Yongo (2012) noted that Nigerian prisons cannot rehabilitate its inmates since the prisons lack functional vocational educational training programme for skill development of the inmates. Key among the implementation of the vocational training programme is the competency of the instructors for the programme. This study therefore seeks to assess the competency of training instructors in vocational education programmes of Nigerian prisons in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the competencies of training instructors in vocational education and training programmes in Nigerian prisons in Rivers State. Specifically, this study sought to:

1. Ascertain the academic qualifications of instructors in vocational educational training programmes in Nigerian prisons in Rivers State.
2. Find out the level of experience of instructors in vocational educational training programmes in Nigerian prisons in Rivers State.
3. Determine the capacity building programmes for instructors in vocational education training programmes in Nigerian prisons in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed and answered to guide the study:

1. What are the academic qualifications of instructors in vocational educational training programmes in Nigerian prisons in Rivers State?
2. What are the levels of experience of instructors in vocational educational training programmes in Nigerian prisons in Rivers State?
3. What are the capacity building programmes for instructors in vocational education training programmes in Nigerian prisons in Rivers State?

2.0 Materials and Methods

The design of the study is a descriptive survey research. This study was carried out in Nigerian prisons in Rivers State. The population of the study consisted of all the prison officials in the four Nigerian prisons in Rivers State. As at the time of this study, Nigerian prisons in Rivers State have 533 prison officials (Source; Department of Statistic, Nigerian Prisons Service, Rivers State Command, 2016). A sample of 214 officers (instructors) were selected which represent 40% of the population through simple random sampling technique from all the Nigerian prisons in Rivers State. The instrument for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire titled “Competency Assessment of Vocational Instructors in Nigerian Prisons Questionnaire” (CAVINPQ). The CAVINPQ was divided into different sections based on the purpose of the study. Section A was design to capture information on the academic qualifications of training instructors while Sections B and C were used to elicit information relating to the levels of experience and capacity building programmes for training instructors in vocational educational programmes in Nigerian prisons in Rivers State.

In order to establish the validity of the instrument, copies of the instrument were given to three experts in the Department of Vocational and Technology Education in Rivers State University, Port Harcourt for face and content validation. The reliability of the instrument (CAVINPQ) was established through test-retest method for measure of stability with 11 instructors out of the population who were not part of the sample within two weeks interval. The initial (test) and the re-test scores of the sample were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) method. A reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained which was considered reliable and adequate since Helmstadter (as cited in Maduabum, 2007) stressed that tests that have reliability estimates close to 0.80 are reliable. The administration of the instrument was done with the assistance of four prison officers who were trained by the researchers as research assistants. Completed copies of the instrument (CAVINPQ) were collected analysed with descriptive statistics of frequency and percentage through the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0

3.0 Results

The analysis of data in relation to each of the research questions are presented in Tables 1- 3

Research Question 1: What are the academic qualifications of Instructors in vocational

educational training programmes in Nigerian prisons in Rivers State?

Table 1: Percentage and Frequency Scores of Instructors and their Academic Qualifications

S/NO	Academic Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage
1	Ph.D	-	-
2	M.Sc	2	0.94
3	B.Sc/HND	23; 20	10.75; 9.35
4	NCE/ND	8; 17	3.74; 7.94
5	SSCE/NABTEB	119; 12	55.61; 5.60
6	FSLC	13	6.07

The result presented in Table 1 shows that 6.07% of the instructors possess the First School Leaving Certificate (FLSC) while those that possess Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) as their higher academic qualifications were 55.61% and NABTEB as 5.60%. Other qualifications were ND 7.94%, NCE 3.74%, HND 9.35%, B.Sc 10.75%, M.Sc 0.94% while no instructor had Ph.D.

Research Question 2: What are the levels of experience of instructors in vocational educational training programmes in Nigerian prisons in Rivers State?

Table 2: Percentage and Frequency Scores of Instructors and Levels of Experience

S/NO	Level of Experience	Frequency	Percentage
7	Below 5 years	41	19.16
8	6 – 10 years	62	28.97
9	11 – 15 years	76	35.51
10	16 – 20 years	23	10.75
11	Above 20 years	12	5.61

The result in Table 2 reveals that 19.16% of instructors have experience of 5 years and below while 28.97% of the instructors are experienced between 6 – 10 years. Furthermore, 35.51% and 10.75% have experience between 11 – 15 years and 16 – 20 years respectively. Again, 5.61% of the instructors have vocational experience above 20 years.

Research Question 3: What are the capacity building programmes for instructors in vocational education training programmes in Nigerian prisons in Rivers State?

Table 3: Percentage and Frequency Scores of Instructors and Capacity Building Programmes

S/NO	Training Programmes Acquired	Frequency	Percentage
12	Apprenticeship	41	19.16
13	Technical College	17	7.95
14	Industrial Training (In-Service)	83	38.79
15	Polytechnic/College of Education	41	19.15
16	University	32	14.95

Table 3 indicated that 19.16% of the instructors have undergone apprenticeship training; 7.95% attended technical colleges; industrial training (in-service training) 38.79% while 19.15% and 14.95% of the instructors have attended polytechnic/college of education

and university respectively.

4. Discussion

The findings of the study in Table 1 reveals that only eight (8) instructors (3.74%) possess the minimum qualification of NCE for entry into teaching profession while a total of 119 instructors were found to have qualification lower than the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). However, the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) stated that the minimum qualification for entry into any teaching profession shall be the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). This implies that many of these instructors in Nigerian prisons in Rivers State are professionally not qualified for the task of training the inmates in the prisons' vocational training programmes.

On the issue of instructors' years of experience in teaching vocational and technical trades in Nigerian prisons in Rivers State, the results in Table 2 show that over 70% of the instructors with 6-20 years of experience have been engaged as instructors in the prisons vocation. This finding supports advocacy that experienced teachers need to be retained in schools if higher productivity is to be achieved because learners achieve more from these experienced teachers. For example, Akinsolu (2010), Adeyemi (2008), Chhinh and Tabata (2003), Abu and Fabunmi (2005) found that teachers or instructors' teaching experience contribute significantly and positively to trainees performance in a chosen vocation or trades. This development is good and healthy in the achievement of inmates' rehabilitation through vocational training.

The findings in Table 3 show that 83 (38.79%) of the instructors have attended industrial training (in-service training) in vocational courses. This is justified by the remark of Abdullahi (2003) who suggested that, apart from encouraging instructors to hold a minimum teaching qualification of NCE, prisons authorities should encourage vocational instructors to go for workshops, seminars, conferences, courses, industrial training in order to update their skills in their respective areas. Consequently, if vocational technical instructors are not provided with the intellectual and professional background, the realization of fully skilled rehabilitated inmates could be an illusion.

5. Conclusion

Vocational education training in such areas as carpentry, plumbing, bricks laying and so on, exposed to inmates help their rehabilitation to be better citizens upon discharge. The acquired vocational skill by inmates in Nigerian prisons in Rivers State had a positive effect on the rehabilitation of any inmate who genuinely participated in the vocational training during their period of imprisonment. However, the competency of the vocational training instructors in terms of academic qualifications, years of experience and the capacity building structure for vocational instructors is a function of the quality of vocational training given to the prison inmates being rehabilitated for a better citizenry in the society upon being discharged. in Nigerian Prisons in Rivers State.

6. Recommendations

Base on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Vocational training instructors in Nigerian prisons in Rivers State should be selected in terms of competency in academic qualifications to enhance effective vocational training of the inmates.
2. Vocational instructors with high experience should be engaged and retained to train others in Nigerian prisons service.

3. Nigerian prisons service should make effort in the training and retraining (in-service) of vocational training instructors to be abreast of new technical and vocational skills, knowledge and innovation.

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