Effectiveness of Prisoner Reentry Programs for Reduction of Repeat Incarcerations in Nigeria

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Emmanuel Dejo Oluwaniyi, PhD

Problem
In spite of the prevailing high rate of repeat incarcerations among the Nigerian ex-felons, there's an absence of empirical evidence to suggest the effectiveness of faith and nonfaith-based reentry programs in Nigeria.

Purpose
To assess the effectiveness of prisoner reentry programs for reducing repeat incarcerations in Nigeria through a quantitative study that used a retrospective-comparative design.

Significance
Generate findings that could:
• contribute to the body of knowledge; providing further evidence to suggest the direction of relationship between reentry programs and repeat incarceration.
• give background statistics for enhancing prisoner reentry approaches.
• drive policy, inform practice, and provide evidence that may empower relevant stakeholders for achieving a more successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals into the community, free from further infractions.

Social Change Implications
The overarching social benefits are twofold: better life for ex-felons and safety for the community.

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Theory or Framework
The general personality and cognitive social learning (GPSCSL) model (Andrew & Bonta, 2010) explains the variables (biosocial, distal, and proximal) that predict repeat incarceration.

The transtheoretical model (TTM) of change (Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992).
- Explains transitioning of individuals away from influences that motivate deviant behaviors.
- Confirms necessity for intervention program for the inmates.

Participants
Samples drawn from population of male prisoners (N = 2026) released from 3 Nigerian medium security prisons between January 2010 and December 2013. The sample size consisted of:
• 818 men for treated/untreated analysis.
• 200 men for faith-/nonfaith-based treated.

Procedures
Sources of Data
• Prison records
• Records of organizations responsible for reentry programs.

Analysis
Analyses included:
• Multivariate analysis
• Propensity score matching.
• Logistic regression
• Cox regression (Survival analysis)

Findings
Treatment received before release statistically significantly reduced the odds of reincarceration for a released prisoner. Treatment reduced the odds of reincarceration by about 3%.

Age of a prisoner at release was associated with 8% decrease in reincarceration hazard. Likelihood of reincarceration was less with older ex-felons.

Offenders released closer to family base were about 39% less risky of reincarceration after release.

The odd reincarceration was 2.31 times higher for ex-felons with higher number of previous incarcerations.

Type of treatment received (faith or nonfaith-based) did not statistically affect reincarceration of ex-felons at a significant level.

Recommendations
Include findings in the body of knowledge: it contributes to the evidence suggesting that reentry treatment can minimize the odds of recidivism for a released prisoner.

Use findings as a background evidence to drive advocacy & policy change to improve prisoner reentry efforts.

Findings may inform further studies to identify a more effective reentry type for optimize resource usage.

Findings to encourage similar studies in other Nigerian prison commands to enhance external validity.

Interpretation
Findings suggest that:
• Treatments obtained by offenders while in prison may minimize their return into crimes after release.
• Factors such as age on release, criminal history, completed jail terms, and access to post release support may influence risk of reoffending for ex-felons in spite of pre-release treatment .
• Focus of intervention should be on addressing the criminological needs of offenders rather than on faith / nonfaith-based divide.

Limitations
Use of archival data contains the risks of inaccurate and biased data (internal validity impaired) - data collected on ‘best effort’ basis.

No national and gender diversities in the samples.

Small matched samples available for “treatment-type” analysis affected the accuracy of the regression estimation.

References


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