

Social Support and the Rehabilitation of Convicts in Calabar Correctional Service Centre, Cross River State, Nigeria

Fidelis Ngaji Akwaji¹, Emeka Josephat Owan², Ahakiri Francis Idiege³, Ibrahim Muhammad Hassan⁴, Opara Ikechukwu Jonathan⁵, Abonor, Lazarus Bassey⁶, Abang Paul Eno⁷, William Okon Williams⁸, Etta Oyen Etta⁹, Chimaobi Okorie¹⁰, Eteng, Felix. O¹¹, Chiaka Patience Denwigwe¹²

Abstract

This study examined the nexus between social support and rehabilitation of convicts. Social support for convicts has not received adequate research interest in Nigeria within the field of corrections. This is because correctional administrators have not acknowledged the importance of social support to the adjustment pattern and rehabilitation of convicts. Literature on social support is western based. This study will contribute in narrowing the methodological gap created by dearth of literature on social support. Survey design was used for the study. The study used 318 respondents as its sample. Data collection was carried out using structured questionnaire. Statistical analysis involved the use of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) and simple percentage. The study's results indicated a significant relationship between family, administrative and convicts supports and rehabilitation. Thus, it was recommended amongst others that; the family which is the basic unit of the society should always support one another.

Keywords: *Administrative support; Convict support; Family support; Rehabilitation and Social support.*

Introduction

Social support plays a fundamental role in human society, fostering communication, survival, recuperation, and adaptation for individuals and small groups both within and beyond an organization. However, due to the stigma associated with incarceration, the challenge of withdrawing social support from prisoners becomes a significant issue for both the convicts themselves and their families and allies (Olusola, et'al, 2020). Recognising how significant social support is to convicts' rehabilitation, Rule 37 of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rule provides that, prison inmates ought to be able to interact with their families and officials of institutions, and to get regular visit from these people, subject only to limits and supervisions essential for their care and the institution's security and maintenance of public order (Gulleng & Ezeadireje, 2015). Convicts face a lot of challenges in the corrections environment that affect their rehabilitative process. Social support from family, friends, correctional staff, the public and significant others is important to the lives of convicts (Sell, 2012). Friendly and equitable management of prisoners is praised for reducing psychological anguish, prison misbehaviour, and post-release criminal behaviour. In order to establish a fair custodian atmosphere and check the problem of reoffending, scholars have emphasised the importance of social support in the rehabilitation process for convicts (Beijersbergen, et'al, 2013).

According to Ugwuoke (2015), the Nigerian correctional service is currently facing a significant dilemma, primarily stemming from the perceived inconsistency within our penal philosophy. Consequently, one of the fundamental challenges confronted by correctional administrators in Nigeria is the lack of a consensus

¹ Department of Sociology, University of Calabar, Nigeria. E-mail: akwadelis@gmail.com. (Corresponding author)

² Department of Criminology & Security Studies. E-mail: Josphemeka34@gmail.com.

³ Department of Accounting, University of Calabar, Nigeria. E-mail: Ahakirifrancis.1@gmail.com.

⁴ Department of Social studies, Niger State College of Education, Nigeria. E-mail: dodondawa2000@gmail.com.

⁵ Department of Public Administration, University of Calabar, Nigeria. E-mail: Oparajonathan45@yahoo.com

⁶ Department of Social Work, University of Calabar, Nigeria. E-mail: abonor.laz@gmail.com

⁷ Department of Sociology, University of Calabar, Nigeria. E-mail: abangp626@gmail.com

⁸ Department of Sociology, University of Calabar, Nigeria. E-mail: williamokon4good@gmail.com

⁹ Department of Criminology & Security Studies, University of Calabar, Nigeria. E-mail: Etta4018@gmail.com

¹⁰ Department of Social work, University of Calabar, Nigeria. E-mail: chimaookorie@gmail.com

¹¹ Department of Public Administration, University of Calabar, Nigeria. E-mail: felixoneneten@gmail.com

¹² Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Calabar, Nigeria. E-mail: Chipaden@yahoo.co.uk

on the overarching objective when dealing with convicted offenders. Ugwuoke observes that different individuals hold varying viewpoints on this matter. Some argue that the objective should focus on making the criminal endure suffering, either as a form of repayment for the harm they've caused to others or as a deterrent to potential wrongdoers. On the contrary, there are those who advocate for a focus on rehabilitation and correction. While Nigeria's correctional service philosophy theoretically promotes reformation, in practice, it leans towards punitive retribution. It is certain that these aims are contradictory. A visit to any of Nigeria correctional service centre would readily reveal this unfortunate contradiction. Throughout the years and in times past, the correctional service institutions in Nigeria have reprimanded and convicted a lot of criminals, who after serving their jail terms still come out unrepentant, and uncorrected despite the various rehabilitative processes they go through while in custody. Convicts after completion of their jail terms are expected to come out of correctional centers as rehabilitated individuals, ready to contribute their own quota to the development of the society. More often than not, the reverse is always the case and one could not help but wonder if the resources, efforts and finances geared towards the rehabilitation of convicts in Nigeria is becoming counter-productive.

In Nigeria, as stated by Ugwuoke and Ameh (2014), the purpose of imprisonment is clearly outlined in decree No. 9 of 1972, which entrusted the corrective service with various responsibilities, including the education and training of detainees to become productive and law-abiding citizens upon release. Similarly, Igbo (2007) has observed that the Nigerian correctional service is presently tasked with the challenging role of ensuring the secure custody of wrongdoers while also working towards their reformation and recovery. These duties are carried out through meticulously crafted and well-structured programs encompassing administration, correction, and rehabilitation, all aimed at instilling discipline, respect for the law, and a commitment to honest labour. In this manner, the offender is prepared to not only become a law-abiding individual but also a valuable contributor to both their own well-being and society as a whole upon the completion of their rehabilitation (Igbo, 2007:223).

Imprisonment as an Objective of Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is designed to change the attitude of the offender by removing the motivation to engage in criminal behaviour and then replacing it with new motivations which do not encourage the convict to relapse into crime. Before the 18th C, ideas about correction may vary, but they all point at taking of vengeance, the reduction of crime and the protection of self and society. "Retribution, banishment, isolation and death as punishment for offenders were based on the reasoning that offenders were enemies of society as such, they deserved punishment and that harsh approaches would eliminate the potential for future crime" (Ugwuoke & Ameh, 2014). A new ideology began to emerge during the 18th century, the age of enlightenment that emphasised the dignity and imperfections of the human condition; "it fought against the ruthlessness of many punishments and conditions of confinement because of the cruelty of criminal law and procedure" (Siegel, 2005). William Penn The Quakers of Pennsylvania argued that incarceration is a sufficient harsh penalty in itself therefore, prisoners should be held in their endeavours to become rehabilitated (Sutherland & Cressey, 1978).

Correctional service institutions could increase recidivism due to demoralized workers, a lack of social protection, exposure to hardened offenders, or future prejudice. Conversely, prison time might discourage future crimes or help rehabilitate via education, social assistance, and job training. (Bhuller, et'al, 2020). As referenced by Sentse, et'al (2019), drawing from Boone, et'al, (2016), the key component constituting the atmosphere within correctional facilities, particularly the interpersonal relationships within these institutions, is the social organizations. This element plays a pivotal role in shaping the correctional environment and influencing how inmates perceive and are affected by their incarceration experience. Availability of social support is a relevant tool for the rehabilitation of convicts. Convicts who do not have access to any form of social support are probably not going to take rehabilitation programmes offered in correctional service centers serious and may also not adjust properly to the correctional service environment. However, correctional service officers and administration have failed to emphasis the relevance of social support, if convicts are to be fully and effectively rehabilitated (Gulleng & Ezeadireje, 2015).

In many nations of the world today including Nigeria, convicts suffer discrimination and isolation from family, friends and the general public. They are not given the opportunity and social support needed to prove how productive the time spent in correctional service custody had been when released from correctional service centers. Family members and the society at large don't trust them enough to have interpersonal relations and business dealings with them. Hence, the rehabilitative efforts of correctional service centers become thwarted due to lack of social support on which rehabilitation thrives. Gulleng and Ezeadireje (2015) posited that the family is very crucial in the lives of inmates and should not be denied access to their families considering the fact that incarceration causes traumatic separation leading to family estrangement. Interestingly, while visitation is considered an important part of the social support process and adjustment pattern in the lives of inmates, the process appears to be highly incoherent, haphazard and disorganised. In most prisons in Nigeria, there are no visitation rooms. Warders and officers of the correctional centre often subject family members to withstand lack of privacy, tedious and lengthy waits, humiliation and rude treatment. Often times, the correctional service centre becomes a training ground for crime due to the interaction and social relationships that exist between convicts while in correctional service centers. The rehabilitative skills learnt in correctional service institutions cannot be practiced in isolation nor in a vacuum, rather it is practiced in the society with the aid of social support. Although many scholars have studied and investigated different aspects of rehabilitation, the essence of social support in the rehabilitation of convicts has been given little or no attention especially in Nigeria and Calabar prison in particular. In the light of the above, this study seeks to examine the nexus between social support and rehabilitation of convicts in Calabar correctional service centers in Cross-River State, Nigeria with the view to proffer solutions.

Review of Literature

Social Support and Inmates Rehabilitation

Social support refers to the provision of financial, material and emotional assistance or comfort to convicts to help them cope and respond to rehabilitation in the correctional service environment. Warren, et'al (2004) posited that pragmatic issues (e.g., privacy, fitting in prison rule comprehension and making friends) were primarily important for measuring prisoners' quality of life. Similarly, Liu, et' al (2014) in their different study of Chinese prisoners found that inmates needed social support for adjustment. They also found that offenders who sought social support reported a high level of prison adjustment than those who did not. In a related development, VanTongerren and Klebe (2010) "argued that the orientation toward rehabilitation, ability to adapt to the new environment and other factors related to criminal thinking should be combined". Similarly, Carlson & Cervera (1991), found that when inmates participated in family reunion programmes through visits, they felt a part of their own families and also expressed closer ties to the family member. According to Kraus, (2004), most people turn to social support in an effort to contain stressful events in life including imprisonment. This social assistance may be practical, psychological, and informative. Owing to its effective communication components, support from musketeers, families, non-governmental organisations and the kind gestures of corrective officers have been described as a nostrum for emotional torture during imprisonment. It is therefore evident that, the state, relatives, and acquaintances can help recidivists change from the life of crime to becoming responsible citizens (Fehintola, et'al, 2020). Although prison life was perceived as stressful, social support in the form of companionship, the feeling of belonging, shared activities and everyday conversations were more important for the inmates than support focusing on coping with the stress of incarceration (Solbakken & Wynn, 2022). Also, Meifeng (2022) assert that for those released from prison, it is inevitable that there will be some alternative views or prejudice and discrimination in society. After serving their sentences, the released prisoners after their return to society are not very optimistic, so it has gradually become a social problem of universal concern. However, incarcerated offenders who use more constructive coping skills (i.e. problem solving and seeking social support) can deal with the challenges within the correctional environment (Jordaan & Hesselink, 2022). Reduced social support has been consistently shown to have a negative impact on rehabilitation of convicts and community re-entry (Kjellstrand, et'al, 2022).

Family Support and Rehabilitation of Convicts

The absence of social support and how it is perceived could have beneficial effects on both the families of incarcerated individuals and the government in terms of aiding in the rehabilitation of inmates and reducing the likelihood of reoffending, as suggested by Dadi, et'al, 2019. Having a strong family support is one of the most important factors contributing to successful rehabilitation and especially among adolescent convicts and ex-offenders and thereafter gain a sustainable livelihood (Lokenga, et'al , 2023). Additionally, Pettus-Davis, et'al (2017), emphasize that providing social support is a significant factor in promoting the recovery and overall well-being of inmates while they are in prison and after they are released back into society. Enabling visits between prisoners and their family members is deemed an essential tool for rehabilitation that could contribute to establishing a safer environment for incarcerated individuals. Additionally, those who consistently receive visits from friends and have a higher frequency of visits tend to benefit from strong social support, reducing their likelihood of reoffending, as indicated by Liu, et'al (2014). On the contrary, negative forms of social support, such as the inmate social system and its adverse inmate code, can foster criminal attitudes and perspectives that originate from both the prison environment and the outside world, as highlighted by Gulleng and Ezeadireje (2015).

It is therefore pertinent to research on issues surrounding social support and also introduce it in the Nigerian correctional service institution as convicts serve their jail terms. This is particularly important because it provides a safe haven inside correctional service centres for convicts and also increases their ability to tackle the hostile environment of correctional service centres by enriching the quality of day-to-day life (Van-Tongeren& Klebe, 2010).

Administrative Support and Rehabilitation of Convicts

Corrections staffs are always in daily routine interactions with convicts and in this unique situation, they have the power to positively or negatively impact on the rehabilitation process of convicts (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000). Correctional officers, who are responsible for the day-to-day management of correctional facilities play a crucial role in the functioning of any corrections system, as highlighted by Burtler, et'al (2019). They have various responsibilities, including ensuring the safety and security of correctional centers, supporting inmates' rehabilitation efforts, and managing administrative tasks, as pointed out by Bezerra, et'al (2016). The role of a correctional officer is indispensable within the correctional institution. Unfortunately, some correctional staff may have a limited understanding of the scope of their duties. Key responsibilities of correctional officers include coordinating activities, maintaining inmate conditions, and maintaining a balanced order in the hierarchical relationship between officers and inmates to enhance effective rehabilitation. Furthermore, they are tasked with creating a protective environment for inmates, guiding them towards appropriate counselling, providing social support, and establishing an effective rehabilitation perspective for inmates, as outlined by Ferdik and Smith (2016:498). A key part of successful correctional systems is the skill and mindset of corrections staff towards convicts. This in turn, is as a result of investment in training, recruitment standards, relationship with convicts, management practices and working conditions geared towards holistic rehabilitation of convicts (Sinclair, 2017). Given the fact that, correctional officers are present in corrections centers on a 24-hour basis and interact with convicts more than any other staff, corrections officers/convicts' relationship is crucial for the provision of social support and the realisation of rehabilitative goals (Smith & Schweitzer, 2012). A further palpable point of the corrections service terrain that may have positive goods on the recuperation of cons is the part of corrections officers. Corrections officers have routine connections with cons and the nature of their relations and social support can be organised to promote resistance and recuperation. Creating awareness on human rights among the correctional officers and convicts help enhance the provision of social support and a peaceful and safe environment within the correctional institution. Subsequently, the corrections officers strive to ensure that the physical and psychological needs of the convicts are met by upholding social support through effective communication, the building of trust, maintaining mutual responsibility and understanding the boundaries associated with exercising authority towards the convicts, as well as the roles of the correctional officer in the rehabilitation of convicts (Hulley, et'al, 2015). The relationship between correctional officers and inmates is crucial for comprehending the sense of safety and fairness among inmates. Safety and equitable treatment provided by correctional officers are regarded as fundamental components of the atmosphere within custodial facilities and have been observed to be

connected to the rehabilitation and overall welfare of inmates, as indicated in the research by Beijersbergen, et'al, in 2014. Rehabilitative and social support duties are now common for corrections officers who often facilitate communication between convicts and counselors as well as other professionals. A correctional officer may act as a community liaison for programmes outside correctional facilities and convicts. There is evidence that, convicts place emphasis on the rehabilitative social support offered to them by corrections officers (Akoensi & Tankebe, 2019).

Convicts Support and Rehabilitation of Convicts

The fundamental human desire for belonging and connection is described as a basic and universal challenge that transcends age, backgrounds, and cultures. Within this context, the prison environment is especially thought-provoking. Individuals incarcerated, often referred to as "cons," are intentionally separated from their usual connections with their communities and families. Sustaining social bonds becomes exceptionally challenging due to the restricted methods and opportunities for communication, as outlined in Bronson's work from 2008. Convicts' attitude towards their fellow convicts and themselves are important because these attitudes are likely to influence the way convicts respond to the correctional administration and the overall effectiveness of the various rehabilitation programmes offered in corrections centers (Kjelsberg, et'al, 2007). Inmates often rely on their fellow inmates as their primary source of social connection, given the limited options available to them. However, the involuntary nature of incarceration and the presence of potentially dangerous individuals within correctional facilities create a challenging environment for building relationships (Wakefield & Uggen, 2010). According to Sentse, et'al, (2019), the hardships commonly experienced in correctional centers reinforce the informal roles that exist within these institutions. Consequently, inmates adapt to the difficulties of prison life by either leveraging their relationships with peers or fostering a sense of community solidarity to mitigate shared hardships and resist the dehumanizing aspects of institutionalization. In order to ease the pains of imprisonment, convicts go into peer relations within the correctional service centres. To Kelman, et'al, (2022), a particularly salient source of stress in prison is the fear of being victimized by fellow inmates while incarcerated. Moreover, social support can be particularly protective in buffering the experience of traumatic events such as victimization as well as enhance rehabilitation.

Correctional centers are total institutions that instantly severs convicts' ties with their gang members whom the long arms of the law are yet to catch up with but, still remain in the society (Volker, et'al, 2016). Thus, convicts' daily need for interaction, companionship, social support and material resources required for effective rehabilitation, falls primarily on the shoulders of fellow convicts (Schaefer, et'al, 2017). Convicts' relations often constitute majority of social interactions during a convict's sentence, forming a significant aspect of the correctional service experience. Convicts have certain character traits, which produce distinct cultures and communities.

In a moderately secure detention facility housing 205 primarily male inmates, Schaefer, et'al, (2017) discovered that the network structure within the correctional institution resembled the social networks found in adolescent communities like schools. Inmates tended to form social connections that were both reciprocal and followed a "friend of a friend" pattern (if my friends are friends with someone, I'm likely to be friends with them too). Additionally, they observed distinct patterns of homophily, meaning that inmates showed a preference for associating with others who were similar to them in terms of age, race, religion, and the amount of time spent in custody. Furthermore, they found that inmates who were older or had spent more time in correctional facilities held more central positions in the inmate network within the correctional center. Understanding the factors influencing the formation of relationships in correctional facilities and the inmates' positions within these networks can be valuable in shaping the inmate population and fostering positive peer relationships within correctional centers, which ultimately benefits both the inmates and the overall correctional facility environment (Veenstra, et'al, 2013). In research conducted by Bronson (2008), interviews with inmates revealed that inmates were highly selective when it came to choosing friends in correctional facilities. The establishment of social connections in correctional facilities was based on trust bonds, established through careful observation and assessment of others. Inmates only formed relationships with fellow inmates whom they believed they could trust, such as those with whom they could openly discuss personal matters and who demonstrated honesty and reliability.

Theoretical Anchorage

Rehabilitation Theory

The rehabilitation theory's fundamental premise is that individuals are not born criminals and that it is possible to return a criminal to a productive existence in which they can also positively contribute to the growth of themselves and community (Ugwuoke & Ameh, 2014). The major supporter of this theory Jean Hampton, sees punishment from a different point of view. He opined that treatment and correction should be the aim of the penal system. The major aim of rehabilitation is to restore a criminal to a useful life, in which they can contribute positively to the development of the society and themselves (Dambazau, 2007:310). Similarly, Siegel (2005) assert that rehabilitation accept the idea that, with the correct care and treatment, criminals may be transformed into responsible and law-abiding individuals. The idea of rehabilitation is to achieve equilibrium between retribution and rehabilitation. The theory opines that, convicted criminals should not only be seen and treated as worst set of people who should be punished by being sentenced to serve jail terms as a means of punishment, rather, they should be seen as sick people who need treatment for their sickness. The same way sick people are taken to the hospital and are being administered drugs and injections as a means of treating their sicknesses in order to make them fit and healthy again, so likewise should convicts who are serving their jail terms be given appropriate social support by family, corrections officers, religious organisations and even fellow convicts as a means of treatment that will help them to recover and become fully rehabilitated.

Methodology

Research Design: Cross-sectional survey design was adopted in this study due to its viability in using a sample drawn to represent the different elements within the population under study. It's also appropriate in obtaining the behavioural pattern of a given population on the basis of their attitude, knowledge and perception especially as it relates to convicts attitude towards rehabilitation.

Study Location: This research was carried out in Calabar Correctional Service Centre, Cross-River State, Nigeria. It was established in 1890 with an official capacity of 450 inmates. The custodial centre is a medium security correctional service centre. This research focused on convicted inmates because they are more stable in prison unlike those awaiting trial.

Population of the study: The population of this study consists of all convicts in Calabar, correctional service centres in Cross-River State.

Sampling Techniques: Simple random sampling by balloting was used in selecting three hundred and eighteen (318) respondents for the study.

Tool for Data Collection: The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of structured questions which as divided into two sections. Section A seek to identify the socio-demographic background of the respondents, while section B deal with the substantive issues of the study. The questionnaire was used because it covers a large range of respondents.

Administration of Instruments: For easy collection of data, the researchers recruit three (3) research assistants and trained them on the method and objectives of the study. The researchers supervised the administration and collection of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was self-administered. However, where the respondent cannot read and write properly, the instrument was other administered.

Method of Data Analysis: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used as the statistical tool for data analysis and simple percentage for tables.

Results of the Study

Table 1: Distribution of respondents' responses on family support and rehabilitation of convicts

Item	SA (%)	A (%)	SD (%)	D (%)	U (%)
Support provided by my family relate to change in behaviour.	130 (43.9)	97 (32.8)	7(2.4)	29(9.8)	33(11.1)
When my family members always keep in touch, it positively impacts on my attitude towards rehabilitation.	132(44.6)	108(36.5)	13(4.4)	17(5.8)	26(8.7)
Showing concern by my family when I'm in need motivates me to be rehabilitated.	147(49.7)	111(37.5)	5(1.7)	14(4.7)	19(6.4)
Moral advice provided by family members enhance my rehabilitation.	151(51.1)	119(40.2)	2(0.67)	3(1.0)	21(7.1)

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 1 indicates the distribution of responses measuring family support and rehabilitation of convicts in Calabar, correctional service centres, Cross-River State, Nigeria. Of the 296 respondents, 130 persons representing 43.9 percent strongly agreed that support provided by their family relates to change in their behaviour, 97 persons representing 32.8 percent agreed, seven respondents constituting 2.4 percent did not agree, 29 respondents constituting 9.8 percent disagreed while 33 persons representing 11.11 percent were undecided about the issue. This implies that family support contributes immensely to the rehabilitation of convicts. In responding to the statement that "having my family members around in times of need changes my behaviour", shows that 132 persons constituting 44.6 percent strongly agreed, 108 respondents representing 36.5 percent agreed, 13 respondents constituting 4.4 percent did not agree, 17 persons representing 5.8 percent disagreed while 26 respondents representing 8.7 percent were undecided about the issue. This shows that, family members' availability and prompt response to convicts in times of need plays a vital role in their rehabilitation.

The table also displays the responses from the statement, "showing concern by my family members when I'm in need helps to correct negative behaviour", indicating that 147 persons constituting 49.7 percent strongly agreed, 111 persons representing 37.5 percent agreed, five respondents representing 1.7 percent strongly disagreed, 14 respondents constituting 4.7 percent disagreed while 19 respondents established 6.4 percent were undecided. Finally, 151 respondents constituting 51.1 percent of the study population strongly agreed that, moral advice provided by family members enhance their rehabilitation, 119 persons established that 40.2 percent agreed, two respondents established that 0.67 percent strongly disagreed, three respondents showed that 1.0 percent disagreed, while 21 persons representing 7.1 percent were undecided. The analysis indicated that family support enhances rehabilitation of convicts.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents' responses on administrative support and rehabilitation of convicts

Item	SA (%)	A (%)	SD (%)	D (%)	U (%)
Correctional officers are always mean and this affects my response to rehabilitation	148 (50)	109(36.8)	7(2.3)	12(4.1)	20(6.8)
Care from correctional officers encourages me to change my negative behaviour.	136(45.9)	118(39.9)	10(3.3)	13(4.4)	19(6.5)

Correctional officers are always supportive and ready to help me become rehabilitated	144(48.6)	102(34)	11(3.7)	17(5.7)	22(7.4)
Communicating effectively with the correctional officers enhances my rehabilitation	138(46.7)	125(42.3)	9(3.0)	14(4.7)	10(3.3)

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 2 shows the responses of respondents on administrative support and rehabilitation of convicts in Calabar correctional service centres. The data on the table revealed that 148 respondents representing 50 percent of the study population, strongly agreed that correctional officers are always mean to them and it affects their response to rehabilitation, 109 respondents constituting 36.8 percent agreed, seven respondents representing 2.3 percent did not agree, 12 respondents representing 4.1 percent did not agree while 20 persons indicating 6.8 percent were undecided about the issue. 136 respondents representing 45.9 percent of the study population strongly agreed that, care from correctional officers encourage them to change their behaviour, 118 respondents representing 39.9s percent agreed, 10 persons representing 3.3 percent strongly disagreed, 13 respondents constituting 4.4 percent did not agree. While 19 persons constituting 6.5 percent were undecided. Table 2 also indicated that, 144 respondents representing 48.6 percent strongly agreed that correctional officers are always supportive and ready to help them change, 102 persons showed that 34 percent concurs, 11 persons constituting 3.7 percent strongly disagreed, 17 respondents representing 5.7 percent did not agree while 22 respondents indicating 7.4 percent were undecided. Finally, responses from respondents on the statement, "communicating effectively with the correctional officers enhances my rehabilitation" showed that, 138 respondents representing 46.7 percent strongly agreed, 125 respondents representing 42.3 percent agreed, 9 respondents representing 3.0 percent did not agree, 14 persons representing 4.7 percent disagreed in their opinion, while 10 respondents representing 3.3 percent were undecided about the issue. This means that administrative support positively relates with the rehabilitation of convicts.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents' responses on convicts support and rehabilitation of convicts

Item	SA (%)	A (%)	SD (%)	D (%)	U (%)
Relating with other convicts induces negative thought that can influence my attitude towards change	145(48.9)	99(33.4)	4(1.4)	8(2.70)	40(13.6)
Maintaining friendship with fellow convicts impacts positively on my rehabilitation and behavioural change	23(7.8)	31(10.5)	58(19.5)	132(44.6)	52(17.6)
Being maltreated by fellow convicts makes me hardened and resistant to rehabilitation	138(46.6)	140(47.3)	4(1.4)	6(2.0)	8(2.7)
Forming gang among convicts is common and does not allow for effective rehabilitation	140(47.3)	117(39.6)	10(3.3)	20(6.7)	9(3.0)

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2022.

Table 3 indicates that, 145 respondents representing 48.9 percent of the study population strongly agreed that relating with other convicts induces negative thoughts that can influence their attitude towards change

of behaviour, 99 persons indicating 33.4 percent agreed, four respondents representing 1.4 percent seriously disagreed, 8 respondents indicating 2.70 percent disagreed, while 40 respondents representing 13.6 percent were undecided. The data on the table also revealed that 23 respondents representing 7.8% strongly agreed to the statement that, "maintaining friendship with fellow convicts impacts positively on rehabilitation and behavioural change", 31 persons indicating 10.5 percent concur 58 respondents representing 19.5 percent strongly differs, 132 persons constituting 44.6 percent differs while 52 respondents representing 17.6 percent were undecided.

Also, the table shows the responses of respondents to the statement " being maltreated by fellow convicts makes me hardened and resistant to rehabilitation" , indicating that, 138 respondents making up 46.6 percent seriously agreed, 140 respondents making up 47.3 percent agreed, four respondents constituting 1.4 percent did not agreed, six persons representing 2.0 percent differs, while eight respondents representing 2.7 percent were undecided Lastly, 140 respondents representing 47.3 percent of the study population strongly agreed that, forming criminal gangs among convicts was common and does not allow for effective rehabilitation, 117 respondents making 39.6 percent concur, 10 respondents constituting 3.3 percent did not agreed, 20 respondents indicating 6.7 percent differs, while nine respondents making 3.0 percent were undecided. This implies that convict/convict relationship does not to a large extent enhance the rehabilitation of convicts.

Discussion of Findings

From the result in table 1, it was discovered that substantial relationship exists between family support and rehabilitation of convicts. This finding is in line with that of Berg and Huebner (2011) which states that relatives and friends may provide social support, which can improve rates of informal social control and buffer the harmful consequences of chronic stresses such as those connected with incarceration. The finding is also supported by that of Klein, Bartholomew and Hibbert (2002) which asserts that information about the interaction between the convicts and their relatives are critical to understanding the treatment plan, particularly in terms of the sort of social support that prisoners need. The implication of this finding is that supports given by friends and families to convicts will help them to change their negative attitudes and behaviours which will help them to display positive changes. Hence, family support plays a critical part in the reformation of convicted criminals.

Regarding administrative support, finding in table 2 shows that administrative support has a significant relationship with the rehabilitation of convicts. The finding indicates that all kinds of support rendered by correctional officers to convicts at the correctional centres help the convicts to have positive attitudes towards rehabilitation. This finding corroborates with that of Schaufeli et al (2000) which opined that, corrections staff are always in daily routine interactions with convicts and they have the advantage in this one-of-a-kind circumstance to positively or negatively impact on the rehabilitation process of convicts. Thus, cordial relationship between correctional officers and convicts can further help the convicts to neglect their negative ways of life and to be useful in the society.

From the analysis of table 3, it revealed that convicts support significantly relates to the rehabilitation of convicts. From this finding it can be indicated that convicts' relations often constitute the majority of social interactions during a convict's sentence, forming a significant aspect of the correctional service experience. This finding relates with that of Kjelsberg (2007) which asserts that the convicts' attitude towards themselves are important because these attitudes are likely to influence the way convicts respond to the correctional administration and the overall effectiveness of the various rehabilitation programmes offered in corrections centers. The findings is also in line with that of Kreager, et'al (2016), which revealed that, 58% of Dutch convicts reported trust in at least one fellow convict whom they can look up to as a source of social support. In a similar view, Kerley and Copes (2009), opined that, it is important to take cognisance of the fact that, convicts' particular connections and relations with one another are complex and aren't always negative. While fights between cons and other negative relations occurs in corrective installations,

these aren't the only social connections cons have. Cons have represented positive relations and connections with their fellow cons.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Social support has been observed to be of significant importance for effective rehabilitation of convicts in Calabar correctional service centers. However, it has received little attention because prison administrators have not acknowledged the importance of social support to the adjustment of inmates as well as their rehabilitation while in incarceration. The availability of family members, corrections staff and administrative support were part of the support that enhanced the effective rehabilitation of convicts. It can therefore be concluded that, family, administrative, and organisations support significantly relate to the rehabilitation of convicts in Calabar correctional service centers. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

The family which is the basic unit of the society should always look out for, and support one another in good and in bad times. Judging and rejecting family members who are convicted of crime will lead them into committing more crime.

Regular training and workshops should be organised by the government for correctional staffs to enhance their job efficiency as regard their attitude toward convicts

The government and correctional service administrators should put stringent measure and mechanism in place to ensure healthy and wholesome relationship exist among convicts.

Acknowledgement

The authors wish to express their deepest gratitude to individuals and organisations that contributed to the accomplishment of this study. The teams are grateful to the staff and convicts of Calabar correctional service centre, Calabar. The cooperation of the state comptroller of Calabar Correctional service for his permission to access the inmates is highly acknowledged.

Limitations of the Study: Certain problems were encountered by the researchers in the course of this study. Despite much enlightenment on the purpose of the study before giving the respondents the questionnaire to fill, the selected respondents thought we were paid to carry out this research and so they should be given money before they will volunteer information. After careful explanations of our mission and also emphasizing the fact that we didn't have any financial benefits for them, a few of them decline and refused to accept the questionnaire from us. Also, the research assistance were constantly requesting us to hurry up because of insecurity in Nigeria occasioned by activities of separatist groups and frequent jail break in the country.

Ethics Declarations: Not applicable

Competing Interest: On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author state that there is no conflict of interest.

Authors Contribution Statement: All the authors listed contributed to a significant extent to the development and writing of this paper.

Funding: Not applicable.

References

Akoensi, T.D. & Tankebe, J. (2019). Prison officer self-legitimacy and support for rehabilitation in Ghana. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, 40, 245-261.

- Armstrong, G. S. & Griffin, M. L. (2004). Does the job matter? Comparing correlates of stress among treatment and correctional staff in prisons. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 32(6), 577-592.
- Beijersbergen, K.A, Dirkzwager, A.J, Eichelsheim, T, Vander der laan, P.H. & Nieuwebeerta, P. (2014): Procedural justice and prisoners mental health problem. A longitudinal study. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, 24, 100-112.
- Beijersbergen, K.A, Dirkzwager, A.J, Molleman, T, Vander-Laan, P.H. & Nieuwebeerta, P. (2013). Procedural justice in prison: The importance of staff characteristics. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 9(3)97-112.
- Berg, M. T. & Huebner, B. M. (2011). Reentry and the ties that bind: An examination of social ties, employment and recidivism. *Justice Quarterly*, 2, 382-410.
- Bhuller, M, Dahl, G., Loken, K. V., & Mogstad, M. (2020). Incarceration, recidivism and employment. *Journal of Political Economy*, 12(4), 1269 – 1324.
- Boone, M., Athoff, M. & Koenraadt, F. (2016). Prison climate in custodial institutions. The Hague: Boom Juridisch.
- Bronson, E. F. (2008) "He ain't my brother.....he's my friend". *Friendship in medium security prison. Critical Issues in Justice and Politics*, 1(1), 63 – 74.
- Burtler, H. D. Tascas, M., Zhang, Y. & Carpenter, C. (2019). A systematic and meta-analytic review of the literature on correctional officers: Identifying new avenues for research. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 60, 84-92.
- Carlson, B. E., & Cervera, N.J. (1991). Incarceration, coping and support. *National Association of Social Workers*, 36(4), 279-285.
- Dadi, A. F., Dachew, B. A., Tahiru, A., Habitu, Y.A. & Demissie, G. D. (2019). Status of perceived social support and its associated factors among inmate prisoners in North West Amhara, Ethiopia. Retrieved from www.researchgate.com
- Dambazau, A. B. (2007). *Criminology and criminal justice*. (2nd edition). Kaduna: Nigeria Defence Academy press.
- Fehintola, V. A., Mojirade, F. F., Ochuko, O.E., Adeleke, I. E. & Umanhonlen, S. E. (2020). Role of social support in the reformation, reintegration and rehabilitation of recidivists in Nigeria correctional service, Oyo State. *Al-Hikmah Journal of Educational Management and Counselling*, 2(2), 23-44.
- Ferdik, F. & Smith, H. (2016). Maximum security correctional officers: An exploratory investigation into their social bases of power. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 41(3), 498-521.
- Gulleng, E. Y. & Ezeadireje, C. P., (2015). Social support and inmates' prison adjustment: a study of male inmates in Jos prison. *Jos Journal of Social Issues*, 8(1), 130 - 144.
- Hulley, S., Ben, C. & Wright, S., (2015). Re-examining the problems of long-term
- Igbo, E. U. M. (2007). *Introduction to criminology*. Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press Ltd.
- Jordaan, J. & Hesselink, A. (2022). Predictors of aggression among sample-specific young adult offenders: Continuation of violent behaviour within South African correctional centres. *International Criminal Justice Review*, 32(1)68-87.
- Kelman, J., Gribble, R., Harvey, J., Palmer, L. & MacManus, D., (2022). How does a history of trauma affect the experience of imprisonment for individuals in women's prisons: A qualitative exploration. *Women and Criminal Justice*, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08974454.2022.2071376>
- Kerley, L. R. & Copes, H. (2009). Keeping my mind right. Identity maintenance and religious social support in the prison context. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Criminology*, 53(2), 228 - 224.
- Kjellstrand, J., Clark, M., Caffery, C., Smith, J & Eddy, J. M. (2022). Re-entering the community after prison: Perspectives on the role and importance of social support. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 47(2), 176-201. Doi: 10.1007/512103-020-09596-4
- Klein, S.R., Bartholomew, G.S. & Hibbert, J. (2002). Inmates family functioning. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 7(3), 93-101.
- Kraus, S. J. (2004) Attitudes and the prediction of behaviour: A meta-analysis of the empirical literature. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, (21), 58 -75.
- Kreager, D. A., Palmen, H., Dirkzwager, A. J. & Nieuwebeerta, P. (2016). Doing your own time: Peer integration, aggression and mental health in Dutch male detainment facilities. *Social Science and Medicine Journal*, 151, 92-99.
- Liu, S., Pickett, J. T. & Baker, T. (2014). Inside the black box: Prison visitation, the costs of offending and inmates social capital. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 27(8), 766-790.
- Lokenga, J. N., Norvy, P. & Asatsa, S. (2023). Family support and social reintegration of adolescent offenders in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of Congo. *Journal of Advanced Sociology*, 4(1),34-57. <https://doi.org/10.4>
- Meifeng, M. (2022). Paradigm and path of released prisoners' rights of rehabilitation from the perspective of social governance. *Journal of Environmental and Public Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/6266082>
- Olusola, E. O, Temitope, R. O. & Omitogun, O.M. (2020). Availability of social support among inmates of maximum security prisons, South West Nigeria. *African Journal of Health, Nursing and Midwifery*, 3(6), 47-54.
- Pettus-Davis, C., Veeh, C. A., Davis, M. & Tripodi, S. (2017). Gender differences in experience of support among men and women released from prison. Institute for Advancing Justice Research and Innovation. <https://www.researchgate.com>.
- Schaefer, D. R., Bouchard, M., Young, J.T. & Kreager, D. A. (2017). Friends in locked places: An investigation of prison inmates network structure. *Social Networks*, 51, 88- 103.
- Schaufeli, W. & Peeters, M. (2000). Job stress and burnout among correctional officers: A literature review. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 7(1), 19-48.
- Sell, T. A. (2012). The relationship of life satisfaction and happiness with anger and depression in male inmates. Capella.
- Sentse, M., Kreager, D. A, Bosma, A. P, Nieuwebeerta, P. & Palmen, H. (2019). Social organization in prison: A social network analysis of interpersonal relationships among Dutch prisoners.
- Siegel, L. J. (2005). *Criminology the core*. Thompson and Wadsworth, Inc.
- Sinclair, J. (2017). *Volunteers and NGOs in a rehabilitative system*. www.academia.edu

- Smith, P. & Schweitzer, M. (2012). The therapeutic prison. Retrieved from. <http://www.researchgate.com>
- Solbakken, L. E. & Wynn, R., (2022). Barriers and opportunities to accessing social support in the transition from community to prison: A qualitative interview study with incarcerated individuals in Northern Norway. *BMC Psychology*, 10(185). <https://doi.org/10.1186/540359-022-00895-5>
- Sutherland, E. H. & Cressey, D. R. (1978). *Criminology*. Lippincott.
- Ugwoke, C. U. & O.S.Ameh, (2014). Rehabilitation of convicts in Nigerian prisons: A study of federal prisons in Kogi State. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(26), 33 – 43. <https://www.core.ac.uk> (ONLINE) 2225-0484.
- Ugwuoke, C. U., (2015). *Criminology: Explaining crime in the Nigerian context*. Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press Limited.
- Van-Tongeren, D. R. & Klebe, K. (2010). Reconceptualising prison adjustment: A multi-dimensional approach exploring female offenders' adjustment to prison life. *Prison Journal*, 90, 48-68.
- Veenstra, R., Dijkstra, J.K., Steglich, C. & Van-zalk, M. H. W (2013). Network behaviour dynamics. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, (23)3, 399 – 412.
- Volker, B., Decuyper, R., Mollenhorst, G., Dirkzwager, A. Van der laan, P. & Nieuwbeerta, P. (2016). Changes in the social network of prisoners: A comparison of their networks before and after imprisonment. *Social Networks*, (47), 47-58.
- Wakefield, S. & Uggen, C. (2010). Incarceration and stratification. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 36(1), 387- 406.
- Warren, J. I., & Hurt, S., Loper, A. B., & Chauhan, P. (2004). Exploring prison adjustment among female inmates. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, (31), 624 - 645.