



ISSN 2278 – 0211 (Online)

## The Influence of Sports on the Mental Rehabilitation of Correctional Inmates in the Kogi State of Nigeria

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### **Abstract:**

*The study assessed and analyzed the influence of sport on the rehabilitation of correctional inmates in the Kogi state of Nigeria. The study population comprises about 2,500 selected correctional from the state's three geopolitical zones: Kogi-west, Kogi-east, and Kogi-central. A total of five hundred (500) subjects were randomly selected from correctional inmates of the state. The instrument used for the study was a well-developed and validated questionnaire that contains forty-five (45) items. One hypothesis was formulated to direct the study using one sample employed in testing the hypothesis on the influence of participation in sports on correctional inmates' mental rehabilitation. The outcome of the study revealed that the respondents were of the opinion that participation in sports has a positive influence on the mental rehabilitation of the inmates. As a way forward, sporting activities should be made mandatory for correctional inmates. The outcome of the study revealed that the respondents were of the opinion that sports participation positively influences the inmates' mental rehabilitation. As a way forward, sporting activities should be made mandatory for correctional inmates as such would influence their mental behavior and development.*

**Keywords:** Sports, mental, rehabilitation, correctional, inmates

### **1. Introduction**

The correctional is used to punish and help offenders change their bad behavior. This is why Jalai-Tehrom (2014) said that correction facilities owe it to the community to do more than detain or penalize prisoners until their release. The functional correction facility prepares the individual to return lives in harmony within the community. This is done through the introduction of various activities in the correctional. In accordance with the Nigerian Correctional Acts, it is the study of correctional service "to ensure that the deprivation of liberty is implemented in such a way as to promote (prisoners) ability and chances of socially adapting to a subsequent life of freedom and to ensure that harmful effects of imprisonments are reduced as far as possible. By Norwegian standards, which probably also applies to other countries affiliated with the Council of Europe, there is a high correspondence between the general legislation and the correctional Act in terms of the rehabilitation of inmates" (Norway2014).

According to Norway (2014) on French correctional service, individuals placed in the correctional establishment have the right to work and access various activities and sports. Bamidele (2014) stressed that in South Africa, music serves as one of the most effective modes of rehabilitation in correctional services. According to Skanara (2014), as an art, music indicates the desire to create something new. The ability to create anything and realize such a desire leads to high self-esteem. Seeing one's music being approved and appreciated by others raises one's self-regard. Sports have been used as a critical factor in correctional rehabilitation. In that, in 1983 the Norwegian central correctional administration launched a project with a physical activity program for substance abusers in the correctional. The project's purpose was to create a basis for the active and positive use of their leisure time both during their stay in correctional and after discharge.

With a view to a more deliberate effort to use physical training as an integral part of rehabilitation, the correctional authorities have employed sports consultants who were responsible for preparing and implementing activities for inmates. Their tasks include training in physical activities, in that these officers become greater resources for this sporting work (Bucher, 2014). Denis (2015) revealed that the rehabilitative program in the French correctional service included Culture, Sports, and Health. According to this article, Sports help preserve the mental balance of inmates. Sports play an essential role in improving detention conditions and maintaining a good atmosphere in correctional establishments. Sports force individuals to abide by rules, take responsibilities and get involved in group activities. The French correctional service has 188 correctional establishments with 96 Sports grounds, 67 exercise areas, 33 gymnasias, and 120 multi-purpose halls. The population has access to Sports facilities for 2 to 3 weeks on average. According to Dubie (2015), in most of New York's 70 state correctional facilities, inmates participate in basketball, softball, soccer, and handball in intramural leagues. Many correctional offer separate leagues for inmates.

More than 40 inmates play on all-star teams against outside squads (Spacteral, 2017). Duhu (2015) revealed that inmates in South Africa had the chance to represent their country in international Sports competitions. According to

Skosona (2016), Hendrik Mokgan represented the country in athletics in the Commonwealth Games in Manchester, Eugene Frances represented the country at the Rugby world cup in Australia, and Anton Chassen represented the country in Jenkslei and many others. In Nigeria correctional, there are many rehabilitative programs such as Vocational Jobs, where inmates are taught various skills in different trades. According to the correctional manual, Agriculture received a strong impetus in consonance with the Government policy on re-organizing the correctional service in 1971. Consequently, correctional farm use was established in different states with modern agricultural equipment. In addition, recreational and cultural activities such as football matches, Cinema shows, and lectures were introduced to break the monotony of correctional life.

Olumba (2016) stated that Sports are as old as man. The early man's life was based on physical activity. He worked vigorously to get his daily needs, moved from one place to another, climbed trees and mountains in search of food, and protected himself against wild animals. Because of his vigorous daily activities, he lived a healthy life. In the modern world, Sports are viewed from many perspectives. According to Olumba (2016), sports worldwide are recognized as a means of training and molding the character of the youth for nation-building. Beyond the reaches of academic knowledge, Sports provides a culture that imports refinements, character blending, and stabilization of personality. Therefore, everybody, irrespective of gender, race, class, religion, and culture, needs exercise to be healthy and fit in the society or environment he or she finds himself or herself. Nixon and Jewett (2016) say sports in the modern world have undergone many changes due to the influence of technology. Technological advancement has resulted in both positive and negative transformations in many ways of life. For instance, due to technological advancements globally, crime has become so much on the crease. This is confirmed by the British Sports Council (2014), which revealed that although trans-national organized crime has become increasingly sophisticated, law enforcers worldwide have made some progress in rounding up ring leaders and closing networks down. Crimes range from sophisticated offenses such as drug trafficking, illegal arms smuggling, and armed robbery to crimes such as housebreaking, civil, religious, and political unrest. According to the Tenth United Nations Congress report on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders (2000), over the past decade, trans-nation criminal groups have built huge global networks which now make vast profits through a wide range of illicit and threatening acts. The report revealed that criminal groups are trafficking human beings, particularly women and children, who are used in economic slavery and prostitution. The criminal groups also smuggle arms and ammunition, traffic in illegal drugs and nuclear materials, commit fraud on a global scale, and launder huge sums of money. They corrupt and bribe public officials, politicians, and business leaders (Slusher, 2017).

Crimes are generally on the increase in Nigeria, most often with the media being dominated with reports of cases of crimes. For instance, the punch newspaper of 28<sup>th</sup> October 2003 and the new Nigeria Newspaper of 29<sup>th</sup> December 2005 reported the prevalence of crime in the country and the complicity of the Police even in violent crimes especially armed robbery. The paper also contained reports from the Taraba State Police Command, which expressed concern over the high rate of armed robbery and pipeline vandalism in the Wukari Local Government Area. Almost every day, armed robbers are arrested and sometimes killed instantly or put in correctional as punishment for their offenses. In the Kogi State, crimes such as home breaking, Rape, civil disturbance, and religious and political unrest have increased over the years.

Bucher (2014) concluded that the problem of crime is a major issue faced by all mankind. He further revealed that crime has reached glamorous proportions. The mass media is filled daily with a lurid description of murders, robbers, corruption, and embezzlement by respected financial officers and politicians. As a result of the increase in crime, there has been a corresponding increase in correctional congestion and overcrowding (FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA POLICY 2000). The correctional organization has specific roles to play in curtailing the law breakdown by the citizens. The Nigerian Correctional Service Annual Report of 1981 specified the statutory role of the Nigeria Correctional Service as trip or file in nature. These roles include safe custody of inmates, their treatment, and rehabilitation. The Tenth United Nations Congress on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders (2000) maintained that treatment and rehabilitation of offenders are completed through carefully designed and well-articulated administrative, reformative, and rehabilitative programs. The treatment aimed at including discipline, respect for laws and order, and the dignity of labor. The offender is assisted to become law-abiding and a useful citizen of a free society on discharge. Generally, the correctional department contributes its own quota towards the overall national security, peace, and economic development (Nigerian correctional service Annual Reports, 1983). Okonkwo (2016) asserted that sports can help to shape individual behaviors or help the individual adapt to society by getting off negative behavior such as aggression, anxiety, emotional stress, tension, fatigue, etc., which are mostly associated with idleness. These characteristics have to do with the mental and emotional well-being of the individual. Physical activities of a competitive nature have long been regarded as an effective medium of psychological illness espoused by components of competitive Sports are the development of character, adjustment to societal Norms and values, desirable personality traits, emotional control, positive attitudes, Sportsmanship, qualities of good leadership, consideration, self-actualization, self-confidence, initiative, courage, loyalty and self-expression. The attainment of one's potential in Sports requires the training of the body (physical) and the mind (psychological) (Okonkwo, 2016). Despite the government's rehabilitation of the correctional inmates, the inmates do not seem to appreciate the efforts. Against this background, this study is carried on the influence of Sports on the mental rehabilitation of correctional inmates in the Kogi State of Nigeria.

### *1.1. Hypothesis Testing*

For the purpose of the study, one (1) hypothesis was formulated to direct the study. There is no significant influence of participation in Sports on the mental rehabilitation of correctional inmates in the Kogi State.

## 2. Methodology

The information is required to assess Sports' influence on the mental rehabilitation of correctional inmates in the Kogi State of Nigeria. It was already available without the manipulation of variables. Therefore, Ex-post facto research design was used in this study. The sample for this study consisted of five hundred (500) subjects from the population of two thousand five hundred (2,500) correctional inmates from the three geopolitical zones of the Kogi state of Nigeria. They were randomly selected from 5 units of correctional inmates for the study. The main instrument used was a structured and validated questionnaire to elicit appropriate information from the respondents. The designed questionnaires were presented to experts in the field of sports management for their input and necessary comments. Their suggestions and corrections were adopted in the final printout of the questionnaire. Then, it was personally distributed to the selected subjects from the correctional inmates for the study. The filled and returned questionnaires were, however, collected for data analysis, and a t-test was used to assess the influence of sports on the mental rehabilitation of correctional inmates in the Kogi state of Nigeria.

### 2.1. Result and Discussion

The result of the study is presented below with one sample t-test on the influence of participation in sports on correctional inmates' mental rehabilitation.

$t(453) 1.96 < 0.05$ .

Variable	Mean	SD	SE	DF	T	P	T-critical
Observed Mean	4.0431	0.5926	0.0278	453	19.526	0.000	1.96
Constraint	3.5000						

Table 1

The above table revealed a significant difference between the constant and the observed mean. The observed mean is significantly higher.

The observed t-value in the test is 19.526, while the critical value is 1.96, implying that the observed t-value is higher than the critical value.

The probability level of significance for the test is 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The null hypothesis, which says that there is no significant difference between sports participation and correctional inmates' mental rehabilitation, is, therefore, rejected. From the discussion in table 1, it was observed that the respondents were of the opinion that participation in sports has a positive influence on the mental rehabilitation of the inmates.

## 3. Discussion of Findings

One of the major purposes of this study was to assess the influence of participation in sports on the mental rehabilitation of correctional inmates in the Kogi state. The effect of participation in Sports on the mental rehabilitation of the correctional inmates revealed a positive effect of participation in sports by prisoners. In the hypothesis test, the one sample t-test revealed that sports participation could significantly improve correctional inmates' mental rehabilitation. According to the respondents, there was no doubt that the inmates all agreed that participation in sports significantly contributed to the mental rehabilitation of the correctional inmates. This finding is in line with the finding of Dubie (2015), who reported that organized sports are an essential part of correctional life; it eases aggression and relieves boredom and other mental disturbance among correctional inmates.

## 4. Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendation

### 4.1. Findings

The study's finding is as follows; it is revealed that correctional inmates' participation in sports significantly contributes to their mental rehabilitation.

### 4.2. Conclusion

Based on the finding and also in view of the limitation of this study, the following conclusion is drawn. Participation in sporting activities by the inmates significantly contributes to their mental rehabilitation.

### 4.3. Recommendation

In light of the finding of this study, the following suggestion is made: standard sports programs should be made available for correctional inmates to enhance their physical, intellectual, emotional, and moral well-being development.

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