

The Strategic Benefits Of Rehabilitation Of The Prison Population Of The City Of Tshwane

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ABSTRACT

There are 158, 111 prisoners in South Africa. This figure includes pre-trial detainees or remand prisoners. Foreign prisoners account for about 7.5% of the South African prison population. There are 243 prison facilities in South Africa. The official capacity of South African prisons is 119, 134. There is a severe shortage of prison facilities in South Africa. Several studies have shown the need for rehabilitation programmes based on international best practice. A survey was conducted by collecting data from 408 residents of the City of Tshwane in South Africa in order to identify factors that affect the perception of people living in the City about the rehabilitation of prison inmates back into society. Multivariate methods of data analyses were used for data analyses. The results showed that 83.33% of respondents support the rehabilitation of South African prison inmates, whereas the remaining 16.67% do not support the rehabilitation of South African prison inmates. The results identified 3 influential factors. These 3 factors were the gender of respondents, the ages of respondents and the level of education of respondents.

Keywords: City of Tshwane; Prison Inmates; Rehabilitation; Ordered Logit Analysis

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO STUDY

The rehabilitation of prison inmates is one of the strategic priorities of the City of Tshwane (South African National Department of Correctional Services, 2019). The growing number of young inmates, the acute shortage of prison facilities and inability to alleviate abject poverty and unemployment has made it essential to roll out a rehabilitation programme for prisoners. The aim of study was to assess and evaluate factors that affect the perception of the general public on rehabilitating prison inmates in the City of Tshwane. The paper assesses the potential benefits and unintended consequences of rehabilitating prison inmates having them reintegrated back to their communities. The paper also assesses the view held by ordinary residents of the City of Tshwane on the benefits of allowing prison inmates to participate in community based and developmental projects operated by local municipalities as has been suggested by Bassinger (2016) and Bernard, Haas, Siler and Weahterby (2017). A review of the literature shows that prison inmates have been successfully integrated back into society in countries such as China (Qiu et al., 2017). Based on a study conducted in Nigeria, Uche et al. (2015) have shown that reintegration and rehabilitation programmes have become essential for alleviating the immense financial and administrative difficulties that are experienced by prison facilities and law enforcement agencies. Based on a study conducted in China, Li (2016) has shown the numerous tangible socioeconomic benefits of transforming prison inmates into productive citizens. Based on a similar study, Leigh and Blakely (2016) have shown that investing on prison inmates by way of providing them with skills-based training opportunities enables prison inmates to make valuable socioeconomic contributions to local communities. Some of the benefits of rehabilitating prison inmates are the reduction of the cost of managing prisons, the transformation of criminals into productive elements of society, and the promotion of labour-intensive community-based development projects. Transformation and rehabilitation enable prison inmates to be rehabilitated by way of giving back to their communities (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2015). Stephens and Nel (2014) have shown that willingness to respect the basic rights of prison inmates is associated with emotional intelligence. Participation in community development projects enables prison inmates to make valuable contributions to society (Huber, Rope & Sheahan, 2018).

The South African National Department of Correctional Services (2019) is responsible for the management and day-to-day administration of South African prison inmates. South African prison inmates with minor offences are entitled to rehabilitation and reintegration into their respective communities. This is especially true of young first-time offenders. There are 158, 111 prisoners in South Africa (South African National Department of Correctional Services, 2019). This figure includes pre-trial detainees or remand prisoners. Foreign prisoners account for about 7.5% of the South African prison population. There are 243 prison facilities in South Africa. The official capacity of South African prisons is 119, 134. The figures indicate that there is a shortage of prison facilities in South Africa. Ahmed and Ahmad (2015) have shown that South African prisoners are exposed to stigma, discrimination and abuse. The authors have called for respect for the basic rights of prison inmates. Benko (2018) and Burnett and Chebe (2010) have shown that asylum seekers who are sent to prison often experience abuse and stigma. Le Baron (2012) has shown that prisoners are often exploited by the American private sector. The author has described a number of cases in which manufacturing jobs in America have been shifted to prisons as a means of saving operational cost and avoiding interaction with unionized labour. Nonetheless, several firms will not wish to exploit on prison labour, either for moral or risk management motives, or because prison labour could turn out to be less efficient due to a lack of enthusiasm or time spent handling security issues have shown the potential benefits of using cheap labour from prisons as a means of reducing the high cost of labour in local markets. Garver (2016), Fletcher (2011) and Phelps (2011) have argued that the rehabilitation and development of prison inmates is helpful for alleviating socioeconomic problems such as crime and loss of productivity. The South African Government values the wellbeing and positive transformation of prison inmates. One expected output of study is the identification of feasible and affordable ways and means of rehabilitating and transforming prison inmates in the City of Tshwane.

The South African penitentiary system allows young juveniles and first-time offenders to be rehabilitated with a view to have them reintegrated into their communities upon release from prison. Recommended treatments in this regard include reform and social rehabilitation. These treatments are available to all sentenced prisoners and pre-trial detainees. Pre-trial detainees make up a sizeable portion of the South African prison population. However, they are often excluded from rehabilitation activities due to shortage of resources and lack of leadership (Fazel, Hayes, Bartellas, Clerici & Trestman, 2016).

The study aims to make a valuable contribution to the literature on the rehabilitation of prison inmates in South African metropolitan municipalities by assessing and evaluating factors that affect the perception of the general public on the rehabilitation and social reintegration of prisoners.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The overall objective of study was to assess and evaluate the perception held by residents of the City of Tshwane on the potential benefits and negative consequences of reintegrating and rehabilitating prison inmates by way of creating community development and rehabilitation programmes. The study has the following specific objectives:

- To identify and quantify factors that affect the perception held by residents of the City of Tshwane on the potential benefits and negative consequences of the rehabilitation and reintegration of prison inmates;
- To determine the relevance of the rehabilitation programmes for prison inmates.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The South African Constitution states that prison inmates should be managed in humane conditions in which their basic human rights are respected. South African Law does not allow the abuse, torture and stigmatization of prisoners (South African National Department of Correctional Services, 2019). Imprisonment constitutes deprivation of liberty, loss of economic growth and productivity, and inability to acquire knowledge and skills that are required for the successful reintegration of prisoners to their local communities (Piquero, Schubert & Brame, 2014). The authors have conducted a longitudinal study of serious young offenders and have found that reaching out to young prisoners by way of mentorship, prison-based education, counselling, vocational training and community based programmes are quite helpful in transforming young offenders into productive citizens. Osayi (2013) has listed down various socioeconomic obstacles that undermine the successful reintegration of prisoners into their respective communities based on a study conducted in Southern Nigeria. Le Baron (2012) has argued that integrating prisoners back into their

communities provides them with an opportunity to go through a healing and rehabilitation process. Li (2016) has pointed out that the most widely acknowledged benefit of transforming the Chinese Criminal Penal Code is that prison inmates are allowed and supported to be legally and institutionally empowered to play the role of law-abiding and productive citizens. Leigh and Blakely (2016) have stated that allowing prison inmates to be educated, trained and reintegrated lowers the cost of managing prison populations significantly. Kang (2009) has shown numerous examples in which the basic human rights of prisoners are abused by state institutions. The author has provided examples from American prisons in which prison inmates are forced to work long hours under harsh conditions in prisons.

Conservative segments of society are opposed to the idea of reintegrating prison inmates back to society (Mackenzie et al., 2012). Indermaur (2012) and Lambert and Hogan (2009) have suggested remedial actions such as public education, awareness campaigns, engagement with faith-based institutions and the alleviation of social ills such as unemployment and poverty as a means of improving the plight of first-time young offenders. The remedial actions proposed by the authors are directed at prison administrations in which the ideas of rehabilitation are resented due to deeply entrenched conservative views, religious doctrines and socioeconomic hardships such as unemployment and abject poverty (James, 2011).

According to Statistics South Africa (2019), the unemployment rate among South African youth (with ages of 15 to 34 years) is estimated at about 36.1%. Murithi (2017) and Craft (2018) have shown that the shortage of vocational and artisan skills among South African youth is a key obstacle to sustained economic growth and development. As such, the provision of training opportunities to prison inmates is valuable as a means of alleviating the shortage of valuable skills required by business, government and industry operating in the City of Tshwane. An annual report published by the Judicial Inspectorate for the South African National Department of Correctional Services (2019) for the financial year 2017/2018 shows that South African prisons are over-crowded, and that young, first time offenders are often kept together with hardened criminals. There is an urgent need to rehabilitate and reintegrate first-time young offenders back into their respective communities by way of equipping young prison inmates with the vocational skills they require to launch a livelihood upon release from prison. The report calls for measures such as capacity building by way of educating young prison inmates on vocational skills so that they can use these skills for earning a livelihood upon release from prisons. The plan acknowledges the merits of minimizing the likelihood of repeat offenses among prisoners who are released from prison (Fazel et al., 2016). These recommendations are consistent with measures taken in Ghana for rehabilitating Ghanaian prisoners (Ghana Prison Service, 2011). A similar assessment has been made in the USA by Durose, Cooper and Snyder (2014) based on a study conducted in 30 American States in the period between 2005 and 2010.

The study conducted on Chinese prisoners by Qiu et al. (2017: 1067-1078) shows that Chinese prisoners are often used as a productive workforce in large scale development and construction projects. Prisoners are viewed as a major productive workforce that should be put to good use by society. Prisoners in China are often used for meeting production targets both locally and globally. Chan (2016) has provided an example from China in which Chinese prisoners are required to work long hours in assembly lines as a means of extorting cheap labour from prisoners (Berry, Philo, Tiripelli, Docherty & Macpherson, 2012). The authors have discussed the merits of sentencing child offenders, and having them rehabilitated by way of counselling, practical supervision and education, mentorship and monitoring and evaluation. The study by Chen, Hannibal and Gold (2016) recommends therapeutic measures such as music therapy, as a means of alleviating anxiety, depression and loss of self-esteem among prison inmates.

Chin and Dandurand (2012) have highlighted numerous obstacles to the reintegration of prison inmates back into society. The authors state that a rehabilitated prisoner requires the ability and means for succeeding outside of prison. The authors recommend that prisoners should be supported while they are in prison in areas such as the mastery of vocational and artisan skills that are essential for maintaining livelihood upon release from prison. The act of denying a prison inmate the right of rehabilitation by way of acquiring skills-based training prompts prisoners to view members of the community as oppressors (Uche et al., 2015). Prisoners with such a negative view are often highly motivated to commit further offenses. In order to be effective, the rehabilitation of offenders should begin at the point of entry into prison and be continued until the date of release from prison. The annual report issued by the Ghanaian Prisons Service (2011) has shown that prisoners who are not adequately equipped for starting a fresh attempt at life are often compelled into coming back to prison as repeat offenders. A total of 7, 011 convicts were admitted into Ghanaian prisons in 2011. From among these, 413 of them had been in prison before. In 2011, the number of dead prisoners

increased from 78 in 2010 to 82 in 2011. The major causes of death among prisoners were communicable diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria (Ghana Prisons Service, 2011).

In order for intervention programmes to succeed, it is essential to create adequate awareness about the plight and aspirations of prison inmates. Such programmes of intervention are productive only when there is adequate policy-related commitment to rehabilitate prison inmates on the part of the South African Government (Chan, 2016). Local communities should be encouraged to grant a second chance to offenders to come back to local communities by way of working on community development programmes. The annual report issued by the South African National Department of Correctional Services (2018) shows that the prison population is increasing, and that there is a need to reduce the prison population by creating programmes of transformation and rehabilitation for prison inmates. This plan is in agreement with international best practice as has been pointed out by Chan (2016) and Chen et al. (2016).

METHODS AND MATERIALS OF STUDY

Data was gathered from 408 residents of the City of Tshwane by using a self-administered questionnaire of study. The dependent variable of study (Y) was a measure of the perception held by respondents about the potential benefits and consequences of rehabilitating prison inmates back into their respective communities. That is,

$$Y = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if perception is positive} \\ 2 & \text{if perception is negative} \end{cases}$$

Data was collected on various socioeconomic variables that affect the perception held by respondents of the study about the potential benefits and consequences of rehabilitating prison inmates back into their respective communities. Ordered logit analysis (Hosmer, Lemeshow & Sturdivant, 2013) was used for estimating odds ratios as a measure of perception. Content validity was ascertained by using face validity (Hair, Wolfinbarger, Money, Samouel & Page, 2015). This was done by pre-testing the questionnaire of study based on a pilot study of size 5 respondents. Reliability and internal consistency were ensured by using the Cronbach Alpha test. The Cronbach Alpha test produces a coefficient that could be used for assessing the degree of reliability and internal consistency. Cronbach Alpha coefficients of 75% or above indicate that the data collection tools and instruments are internally consistent and reliable (Hair et al., 2013).

RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSES

Table 1 shows percentages for the general characteristics of respondents. The table shows that 83.33% of respondents supported the rehabilitation of South African prison inmates, whereas the remaining 16.67% of them did not support the rehabilitation of South African prison inmates.

Table 1. General characteristics of respondents (n=408)

| | | |
|--|---------------------------|--------|
| Perception on the rehabilitation of prison inmates | Positive: | 83.33% |
| | Negative: | 16.67% |
| Gender of respondent | Male: | 43.33% |
| | Female: | 56.67% |
| Race group of respondents | Black: | 47.50% |
| | White: | 17.50% |
| | Coloured | 17.50% |
| | Asian | 17.50% |
| Age category of respondents in years | 18 to 35 years: | 50.00% |
| | 36 to 50 years: | 30.00% |
| | 51 years or more: | 20.00% |
| Highest level of education of respondents | Grade 12 or less: | 9.17% |
| | Certificate: | 17.50% |
| | Diploma: | 34.17% |
| | Bachelor’s degree: | 28.33% |
| | Master’s degree or above: | 10.83% |
| Language of respondents | English: | 20.00% |
| | Afrikaans: | 9.17% |
| | Ndebele: | 0.83% |
| | North Sotho: | 16.67% |
| | Setswana: | 7.50% |
| | Swati: | 7.50% |
| | Venda: | 7.50% |
| | Xhosa: | 7.50% |
| | XiTsonga: | 4.17% |
| | Others: | 3.33% |

Table 2 shows a summary of the occupations of respondents who took part in the study. The table shows that 10% of respondents were entrepreneurs.

Table 2. Occupations of respondents (n=408)

| Occupation of respondents | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Academic | 5.00% |
| Business owner or operator | 4.17% |
| Civil servant | 15.00% |
| Diplomat | 5.00% |
| Entrepreneur | 10.00% |
| Entertainment | 5.00% |
| Health care professional | 4.17% |
| Hospitality industry | 4.17% |
| Journalist or member of the media | 4.17% |
| Member of faith-based institution | 4.17% |
| Member of the Judiciary | 3.33% |
| Others | 2.50% |
| Police Force or Army | 3.33% |
| Private sector employee | 3.33% |
| Real estate | 5.00% |
| Self-employed person | 4.17% |
| Social worker | 7.50% |
| Student | 5.00% |
| Transportation | 4.17% |
| Total | 100.00% |

Table 3 shows a list of 17 indicators of the degree of support residents of the City of Tshwane have for rehabilitating prison inmates.

Table 3. Factors that affect perception about rehabilitation (n=408)

| | Factors that affect perception about rehabilitating prisoners in the City of Tshwane | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree |
|----|--|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | It is worthwhile to rehabilitate prisoners by having them reintegrated with local communities (worthwhile) | 5.83% | 4.17% | 0.00% | 85.00% | 5.83% |
| 2 | It is not too costly for the taxpayer to pay for the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners (too costly) | 6.67% | 5.83% | 0.00% | 82.50% | 5.00% |
| 3 | Minor offenses must be expunged from records (law) | 5.00% | 3.33% | 0.00% | 85.00% | 3.33% |
| 4 | Community service should be explored as an alternative sentencing strategy for petty crimes (comservice) | 5.00% | 5.00% | 0.00% | 84.17% | 5.83% |
| 5 | Correctional rehabilitation will not be successful if people are not willing to forgive criminals (forgive) | 5.00% | 5.83% | 0.00% | 83.33% | 5.83% |
| 6 | A second chance must be given to non-violent, first-time offenders (second chance) | 6.67% | 11.67% | 27.50% | 47.50% | 6.67% |
| 7 | Ex-offenders must be given employment opportunities so that they can support their reintegration into society (employment) | 5.00% | 3.33% | 19.17% | 56.67% | 15.83% |
| 8 | The creation of working opportunities for offenders should be the responsibility of the State and communities towards fulfilling the rights of offenders (working) | 10.83% | 10.83% | 34.17% | 37.50% | 6.67% |
| 9 | Prisoners should have the right to take up paid jobs even when unemployment rates are high (paidjobs) | 3.33% | 6.67% | 31.67% | 45.00% | 13.33% |
| 10 | Past history of conviction makes it almost impossible to be employed again (history) | 5.00% | 3.33% | 0.00% | 85.00% | 6.67% |
| 11 | Prisoners deserve to be paid the national minimum wage like everybody else (wage) | 5.00% | 4.17% | 0.00% | 85.00% | 5.83% |
| 12 | Prisons are not suitable for rehabilitation. As such, it is worthwhile to let prisoners be rehabilitated outside prisons (rehab) | 6.67% | 5.83% | 0.00% | 82.50% | 5.00% |
| 13 | Prison inmates should be allowed to pay restitution for their crimes by providing free services to local communities (restitution) | 5.00% | 11.67% | 29.17% | 48.33% | 5.83% |
| 14 | The successful completion of rehabilitation by offenders can help prisoners to bond with society effectively (bond) | 6.67% | 3.33% | 20.00% | 56.67% | 13.33% |
| 15 | Prison labour assists prisoners in acquiring vocational skills and developing work ethics (skills) | 11.67% | 11.67% | 33.33% | 36.67% | 6.67% |
| 16 | South Africa’s correctional system must be good enough in order to win public confidence (confidence) | 5.00% | 6.67% | 32.50% | 48.33% | 7.50% |
| 17 | The prison system has not been successful in controlling offenders and changing their behaviour (change) | 5.00% | 3.33% | 0.00% | 85.00% | 6.67% |

Table 4 shows 6 variables that are significantly associated with the perception of respondents at the 5% level of significance. These 6 variables are gender, age, level of education, the belief that it is worthwhile to rehabilitate prison inmates, the belief that community service is enough as punishment for petty crimes and believing that prison inmates should be allowed to pay restitution for their crimes by providing free services to local communities. The table shows that female respondents, respondents with ages of 35 years or less, and respondents with bachelor’s degrees or above were strongly in favor of rehabilitation initiatives.

Table 4. List of 6 significant two-by-two associations (n=408)

| Variables associated with positive perception on rehabilitation | Chi-square value | P-value |
|---|-------------------------|----------------|
| Gender of respondent (Female respondents) | 17.8001 | 0.000*** |
| Age category of respondent (35 years or younger) | 14.4148 | 0.000*** |
| Highest level of formal education of respondent (Bachelor’s degree or higher) | 10.2659 | 0.000*** |
| Believing that it is worthwhile to rehabilitate prison inmates | 9.5142 | 0.001** |
| The belief that community service is enough as punishment for petty crimes | 8.0904 | 0.003** |
| Believing that prison inmates should be allowed to pay restitution for their crimes by providing free services to local communities | 7.1940 | 0.006** |

Key: Significance of association at * P<0.05; ** P<0.01; *** P<0.001

Table 5 shows significant odds ratios estimated from ordered logit analysis. The table shows 3 influential predictors of perception at the 5% level of significance. These 3 variables are gender (female respondents support the rehabilitation of prison inmates), age (respondents with ages of 35 years or less support the rehabilitation of prison inmates) and level of education (respondents with bachelor’s degrees or higher academic qualifications support the rehabilitation of prison inmates).

Table 5. Result from ordered logit analysis (n=408)

| Factors that affect the perception of respondents on the rehabilitation of prison inmates | Odds Ratio | P-value | 95% C. I. |
|--|-------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Gender of respondent | 3.12 | 0.000 | (2.44, 5.49) |
| Age category of respondent | 2.89 | 0.001 | (2.11, 4.13) |
| Highest level of formal education of respondents | 2.78 | 0.004 | (2.04, 4.01) |

The theoretical reliability of the odds ratios estimated in Table 5 was ensured by using 5 commonly used diagnostic measures for ordered logit analysis. These were the P-value from the likelihood ratio test (P=0.0000 < 0.05), the overall percentage of accurate classification (77.12% > 75%), percentage sensitivity (55.63% > 50%), percentage specificity (82.38% > 50%) and the P-value from the Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test (0.0408 > 0.05). By all 5 accounts, the fitted logit model was theoretically reliable.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The study has found that 83.33% of residents of the City of Tshwane support the rehabilitation of South African prison inmates, whereas the remaining 20 respondents (16.67%) do not support the rehabilitation of South African prison inmates. About 43% of respondents were male, whereas 57% of respondents were female. About 48% of respondents were black, about 18% of respondents were white, about 18% of respondents were coloured, and about 18% of respondents were Asian. About 50% of respondents had ages of 18 to 35 years, about 30% of respondents had ages of 36 to 50 years, and about 20% of respondents had ages of 51 years or more. About 9% of respondents had Grade 12 level of formal education or less. About 18% of respondents had certificates. About 34% of respondents had diplomas. About 28% of respondents had bachelor’s degrees. About 11% of respondents had master’s degrees or above. About 10% of respondents were entrepreneurs. Results obtained from logit analysis showed that the perceptions held by the 408 respondents who were selected for the study on the rehabilitation of prison inmates back into society was significantly influenced by 3 predictor variables. These 3 variables were gender (female respondents support the rehabilitation of prison inmates), age (respondents with ages of 35 years or less support the rehabilitation of prison inmates) and level of education (respondents with bachelor’s degrees or higher academic qualifications support the

rehabilitation of prison inmates). These findings of study are in agreement with findings reported in the past by Bassinger (2016), Benko (2018), and Leigh and Blakley (2016).

The major finding of study is that there is an overwhelming support for the rehabilitation of prison inmates in the City of Tshwane. The use of prisons for the incarceration of prisoners for the period of their sentence is more than two hundred years old. The grief and distress of living conditions to which inmates are exposed in overflowing prisons cannot be calculated in numbers and diagrams. The prison population in the City of Tshwane has increased steadily in the past two decades. This increase in the number of prisoners has not been matched by a commensurate increase in prison facilities or administrative budgets. It is now time to allow prison inmates to be rehabilitated and reintegrated back into their local communities so that they can be part of society once again. Such a move requires the use of comprehensive monitoring and evaluation programmes by social workers and law enforcement officials.

The victims of crime may find it hard to forgive prison inmates. As such, awareness campaigns and community-based initiatives should be used for improving the plight of prison inmates who live in correctional facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF STUDY

Based on findings obtained from the study, the following recommendations are made to the South African National Department of Correctional Services (DCS) so that where possible, feasible remedial actions could be taken by the leadership of DCS in order to provide improved rehabilitation services to South African prison inmates.

There is benefit in allowing young first-time offenders back into the community provided that the necessary support is provided to prison inmates and their communities (Templeton, Kelly & Lohan, 2019). Developing. This entails the provision of educational, counselling, monitoring, evaluation and control services to prison inmates and their mentors.

In order to ensure successful reintegration and rehabilitation, partnership should be forged between the South African National Department of Correctional Services (DCS) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) whose duty is to support the rehabilitation and reintegration of prison inmates back into their communities. This includes faith-based institutions who promote the rehabilitation and reintegration of prison inmates back into their local communities (Butts & Pfaff, 2019; Pratt, 2019).

The South African National Department of Correctional Services (DCS) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should consider the training of prison inmates on vocational and artisan skills for which there is demand in the South African job market. Prison inmates could be transformed into productive members of the society if such support is provided (Goshe, 2019).

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

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