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## Management of Hostile Behaviour of Prison Inmates with Psychoactive Substance History: The Role of Job Experience

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**ABSTRACT:** Considering the frequency of jail breaks, murder and homicides in Nigerian prisons and the resultant loss of lives of prison warders and inmates during such conflicts or attacks in the prison facilities; this study submits that the effective management of hostile behaviour of inmates will be best achieved with more experienced warders who have adaptable personality trait towards best practices in the criminal justice administration. Utilizing the Cullen's (1994) Advanced social support theory as a general theoretical framework for understanding criminology and criminal justice administration. Campbell's (1990) Performance theory was also explored to highlight job specific areas which need to grow in experience to deepen the support provided by prison warden officers as crucibles in understanding the psycho-sociological nature of prison deviance and the variance of drug psychoactive substances. Theoretical appraisals of both theories provided the needed linkage which implicated certain dispositional traits to be more suitable in coping and managing amorphous nature of prison inmates. The understanding thus provided, will be rich in managing deviant variance especially of inmates with psychoactive substance history. It is recommended that the management of Nigerian Prisons understand the need for personnel screening and the need to deploy more experienced officers than newbies in the supervision of inmates to be able to manage hostility, anticipate and control violence and other ensuing antecedents which will be directed either towards inmates or officers.

**KEYWORDS:** *Differential association, Advanced social support theory, Personality traits, Hostile behaviour, Nigerian prison inmates, and Psychoactive substance use.*

### I. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between psychoactive substance use and violence is well documented even among inmates; so also their consequences. West, Sabol and Greenman (2010) contended that nearly 60% of the US prison inmates' increase was due to availability of psychoactive substances leading to more violent offenders. Across most correctional facilities in Nigeria, evidence abounds of many life threatening circumstances including jail breaks, attacks, fights and other internal conflicts which emanate as a result of hostile rage of prison inmates especially those of them with psychoactive substance history (Ugwoke & Otodo, 2016). From Mumola and Karberg's (2006) study, there is a noticeable pattern of aggression and hostile behaviour (homicide (27%), robbery (41%), assault (24%) and sexual assault (17%) both among inmates and warden officers which mar the efforts of prison management in the providing a safe and crime free facility for correction and re-integration back into the society. These challenges, in one way or another are consequences of hostile behaviour.

Critically, in developing countries such as Nigeria, the integrity of warden officers may often be compromised through inducements by unauthorized persons who desire to illegally communicate with inmates. This form of communication has in many instances resulted in peddling of psychoactive substances into the prison facilities (Ugwoke & Mfon, 2018) with dire consequences with the latter becoming the major cause of hostility and violence (Smith & Robert, 2014).

Management of inmates involved with drugs or those with psychoactive substance history can be problematic (Gillespie, 2005; & Dillion, 2001) for officers and challenging with fellow inmates as there are often scourges of violence here and there with heightened aggression. There is also fear of getting injured and blacklisted in the criminals' diary especially those that have strong allies outside the facility who can harm officers or frustrate their efforts at work. In view of this circumstance, not all warden officers particularly agree that there is much to be done by officers to make the facility safer and conducive for correction and re-integration process. Whether

this assertion is valid or not; Zawilsk, and Andrzejczak, (2015) contend that the problem of managing inmates' aggression, hostility and violent outcomes remain a critical issue in prison management anywhere in the world. Consequently, both management professionals and the academia devote a lot of resources in search of sources, causes and outcomes of the inmates' hostility behaviour in a bid to provide insightful and robust management principle which will aid efficient management and control of hostility and drug-related problems in the prison or correctional facilities. There is also a strong indication from literature that overt and covert disposition of prison officers themselves could be also be a factor which abets hostile behaviour and violence among inmates especially regarding officer experience on the job and personality traits. There is therefore need to establish that job experience and traits of officers may be critical in efficient management of inmates especially in understanding the sociological variance of psychoactive substance deviance and its association with hostile behaviour and violence and other unfortunate inmates' outcomes e.g. assault, fights, homicide, murder and jail breaks. Based on the foregoing, the current research effort is directed towards the theoretical underpinning which supports that the experience and traits of prison officers could influence the effectiveness of managing inmates with psychoactive substance history.

## II. LITERATURE

### Prison officers and management of inmates

Correctional department is an important department in criminal justice administration and ministry of Interior of any country. Correction officers have enamours responsibilities in the management of inmates especially as regards re-integrating the inmates into the society with the right values. Outside correction and re-integration functions, correction department equally serves administrative functions such as reprimanding and detaining suspects before prosecution and during prosecution for security purposes.

Liebling and Arnold's (2004) studies of several UK prisons found that ethical issues which border on humanity such as; respect, fairness, trust and support have deteriorated in most correctional facilities and may be fingered in the causative factors of inmates' aggression, hostility and violence. As much as these human dimensions which often precede stereotyping end in negative terms, they have not been helpful especially with inmates with psychoactive substance history. There is always need for officers with a better understanding of the special needs of such inmates to step in. This is where experience and the officer's dispositional traits count. In the views of Coyle (2003), to effectively manage a variety of inmates there are important four elements which a prison officer ought to be well intimated about when upholding the prison laws and managing inmates. They are: preserving human dignity, respecting individuality, supporting family life, and promoting personal responsibility and development. Coyle (2004) argues that "humanity requires that prison staff regard prisoners as human beings like themselves. Prison staff should try to imagine what prisoners might be feeling, what kind of treatment might lead them to be humiliated, degraded, or being violent; and how their self-respect might be reduced as a result of any decision made by the prison authorities. Taking all these into consideration, there is need, to exercise understanding with emotion especially exercising coercive authority that is intrinsic to deprivation of liberty" (Coyle, 2003) and this type of understanding may be implicated by officers' traits and experiences on the job. García-Sancho, Salguero and Fernández-Berrocal (2014) contended that among inmates, there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and aggression which are dependent on the experience of the prison officer handling the scenario.

Critically, administering a modern prison is complex and could be very challenging for warden officers. These may be implicated with variations of personality trait not particularly equipped with high tolerance for aggression and provocative nature of people constrained with deprivation of liberty especially in carrying out the following functions of a prison officer:

- i. Induct a newly sentenced prisoner who may be fearful, angry, ashamed, resentful, suicidal and concerned about family.
- ii. Put himself or herself between two prisoners who are fighting.
- iii. Sit with an illiterate prisoner and help him write a deeply personal letter to his girlfriend.
- iv. Decide whether or not to submit an intelligence report about a colleague who is behaving strangely.
- v. Counsel a prisoner who is so desperate to kill herself that she is trying to jam her head in the toilet bowl and break her neck.
- vi. Maintain a professional approach in the face of abuse and threats, assaults or packets of faeces and urine thrown by an angry prisoner.
- vii. Forcibly remove an armed, violent prisoner from his cell.
- viii. Escort a prisoner to her mother's funeral.
- ix. Separate a prisoner from her newly born baby.

- x. Distinguish between their emotional response to a prisoner's criminal behaviour, and their duty to respect the prisoner's dignity, rights and capacity to change.
- xi. Console a prisoner who has received a phone call from their partner explaining their relationship is over.

The above responsibilities and more illustrate that more than the role, a prison officer's experience and personal disposition may be required to be successful at his or her job. To perform it effectively demands an extraordinary range of interpersonal skills, including understanding, adaptation, courage, endurance, strong will, self-control, self-discipline and humanity to ensure they exercise their responsibilities most professionally (West, Sabol & Greenman, 2010; King 2006). In developing countries such as Nigeria the experience of correctional officers may even be nastier requiring more personal disposition and experience of the officers to be successful.

Summarily, the correctional officer's role is narrowly ensuring prisoners do not escape or hurt someone, and ensuring the correction and re-integration intentions are achieved during the inmate's term (Okwor, 2010). O'Toole (2005) asserts that considering these complexities and responsibilities inherent in criminal justice; education, training and career development of officers are salient. This is both to facilitate learning and experience and to model acceptable conduct beneficial towards efficient prison administration.

### **Prisoners, prison officers and psychoactive substance use and abuse**

Finding psychoactive substances in the hands of prison inmates can be problematic (Ugwoke & Mfon, 2018; Ugwoke & Otodo, 2016; Zawilsk, & Andrzejczak, 2015). Unfortunately, the half-lives of some psychoactive substances can as well influence inmates' behaviour even several months after usage which can pattern reactant behaviours of inmate with such history. Considering the frequency of troubles in prisons, Smith and Robert (2014) and West, Sabol and Greenman (2010) found high levels of hostility among drug users, (barbiturate, opiate, amphetamine, cannabis and other designer substances). Previously, Valdez and Sifaneck (2004) found that potential significant contributor to hostility may be; gang affiliation leading to hostility, criminality and incarceration. Their qualitative study among Mexican Americans who were involved in gangster using a population of 26 active gangs in Texas was found to be more likely to use drugs. Valdez et al. (2004) contend that members of gangs are expected to be involved in violent acts and those who do not meet those expectations likewise face physical violence and other repercussions. For instance, there is evidence in Mumola and Karberg's (2006) study that DSN-IV screening proved two-thirds of American prison inmates to have come in contact with psychoactive substances with half of the this population with history of abuse. This finding is substantiates that high prevalence of inmates with drug related history may present a big challenge in the management of inmates because of what is required to understand, cope and manage aggressive and hostile tendencies which are most tenable consequences of drug use and abuse.

In Nigerian prisons, inmates' use of drugs is real as Ugwoke and Mfon (2018) and Adesanya, Oheri, Ogunlesi, Adamson and Odejide, (1988) identified alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, cannabis, and opiates as common psychoactive substances which inmates use and abuse. Other designers in form of codeine tablets, tramadol and certain cough syrup are well used and abused in disguise.

Without doubt, the restiveness of some inmates and overreaction in trivial issues with inmates always portray hyper-reaction which trail psychoactive substance use or abuse. The consequences are implausible as much as it risks the lives of both inmates and warders due to ill-fighting; assault, stabbing, homicide and manslaughter are common outcome behaviours of psychoactive substance users.

Psychoactive substance use and dependency no doubt are connected to hostility since their use alters the biochemical component and reaction of the human body. Among the academia evidence abounds that being under the influence of alcohol or drugs increases the prevalence of hostility among the prison inmates. The exciting and hallucinating effects of psychoactive substances are one of the causes of its hyper-active tendencies which have been indicative to be an active behavioural pattern among the people with psychoactive substance use/abuse which need to be effectively managed and controlled to reduce hostile behaviour among inmates and against the prison officers.

### **Job experience and management of prison inmates**

Job experience is an acquired human-job attribute central to efficient means of task accomplishment. It is those observable and non-observable characteristics that useful to achieving both qualitative and quantitative efficiency in task execution. Experience may be direct-linked on the job or indirectly linked on the job as in the behavioural aspect of the worker. According to Campbell (1994), job experience is not a single unified construct; it has multi-dimensionality which is interwoven with the oriented tasks of the job (managing prison

inmates in this case), behaviour of the manager as in relationship and support behaviours and outcome or product of management. This concept to a large extent determines outcomes of jobs. To understand how experience is acquired, Lamarck's (1829) evolutionary theory of Use and Disuse becomes potent. Experience on the job is acquired through use of disuse of job traits in line with what is potent and works better and in observance with those who have successfully executed such job tasks.

In the organization, use and disuse theory can apply with the exposure of workers to various job titles in form of rotation or posting either to acquire direct experience from the performer on the job or to understudy the principle governing their actual performance. Officers who have been exposed more often to work with senior and more accomplished patrol wardens, units heads or prison governors have more opportunity of being successful with inmates from diverse backgrounds. Such officers can anticipate their behavioural changes and impulses through direct observation on the job and through guided education by superiors on conduct outcomes of inmates especially those of them with psychoactive substance background. This aspect of job experience has to do with improvement theory by Council, Giles and Teregowda (1997) as the worker tries to acquire more technical, tactical, fundamental, spatial and behavioural experiences from the observed and studied and transferring same to adaption to daily demands of job tasks.

To understand the importance of job experience in the management of job outcomes, the concept of performing a job was evaluated in view in harnessing aspects which needs to grow in experience. Campbell (1990) proposed an eight model factors that attempts to capture dimensions of job tasks. These aspects are the critical areas which require improvement and whose experience can grow for the betterment of any organization.

- i. Task specific behaviors - which include those behaviors that an individual undertakes as part of a job. They are the core substantive tasks that delineate one job from another. How these are performed in term of speed, quantity and quality can be improved. Applicably, warden officers can improve on reaction time to events in the prison, the routine check of the inmates, pay more attention to details pertaining observable changes in inmates etc. This will deepen their experience of inmates' behaviour especially those of them with psychoactive substance use history.
- ii. Non-task specific behaviors - are intuitive behaviours of the individual towards job tasks. To gain more experience, an officer may engage in conversation with inmates or ask specific questions to understand the inmates' situation and behaviours.
- iii. Communication tasks – either of written or oral; formal or informal refer to activities which help sharing of information using different presentations between inmates and the prison officers. An individual's experience can grow in terms of information gathered either day to day, or when there are extraordinary circumstances. This factor reflects the degree to which people commit themselves to job tasks and can be utilized in understanding criminal behaviour of inmates with drug history.
- iv. Effort - an individual's performance can also be assessed in terms of effort, either day to day, or when there are extraordinary circumstances. An officer's effort to duty in certain circumstances may be enough to prevent an unfortunate event e.g. jail break or homicide.
- v. Personal discipline – warden officers would be expected to be in good standing with the law, not to abuse their tasks, privileges as officers. They are expected deal with inmates without fear or favour although taking precaution in extraordinary times of violence and aggression.
- vi. Interdependent – experience also comes from the degree to which a person helps out other officers, groups and his or her colleagues on duties to actualize job tasks. This might include acting as a good role model, coaching, giving advice or helping maintain group goals. The prison officers need to work in support with other officers as a team and integrate their experience through sharing of information and experiences.
- vii. Supervisory or leadership component – officers ought to be relied upon to undertake many of the things delineated under the previous factor and in addition will be responsible for meting out rewards and punishments. These aspects of performance happen in a face to face manner. How best an officer does it grows his or her experience.
- viii. Managerial and administrative performance - entails those aspects of officers' job which do not involve direct supervision. They are those tasks he initiates on his or her own which are intended to help him or her delivery on the task. A managerial task would be setting an organizational goal or responding to external stimuli to assist another officer in achieving his or her personal or organizational goals. Coordinating and supervisory tasks are learnt by practicing.

### III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### Advanced Social Support Theory (Cullen, 1994)

Cullen's (1994) advanced social support theory serves as a general framework for criminology and criminal justice. Social support is defined as the perceived and actual amount of instrumental and expressive/emotional supports that one receives from primary relationships, social networks, and communities. Across multiple levels of analysis and outcome measures if there is support from officers to inmates, effective management is often achieved. In criminal justice administration, this form of support is required among those involved in various stages of the administration to ensure successful apprehension, prosecution, correction and re-integration.

According to Cullen (1994), social support is theoretically important to criminology because it serves as a protective factor to both insulate persons from criminal/deviant behavior and assist in the process of correctional rehabilitation. In this sense, social support is germane to crime prevention and offender treatment in the prison. In particular, Cullen's (1994) "general" proposition is that, all things being equal, individuals—from would-be offenders to those who have already broken the law—who receive higher levels of social support (during the various stages of criminal justice administration of apprehension, prosecution, correction and re-integration) will be at a lower risk for engaging in wayward behavior in the future and even while in custody or incarceration. In the correctional setting, social support may serve as a resource and safety net to help steer former prisoners along conventional pathways. Indeed, in subsequent work, Cullen and his colleagues (Colvin, Cullen, & Vander Ven, 2002; Cullen, Wright, & Chamlin, 1999) articulated that the social support approach was particularly suited to rehabilitate prisoners because recidivism has been shown to be reducible via programs that develop interpersonal skills, provide support counseling from caring providers, and furnish multiple social services. Thus, social support theory predicts that much of the potentially harmful effects of prison conditions on inmates' behavior can be mediated by the provision of social support which can be provided by the warden officer.

### IV. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The current theoretical appraisal revolves around the effectiveness of the employee's job-tasks execution given the influence of job experience as an aspect of total quality management in organizations. The right person on the right job with the right personal disposition (traits) is one of the most important factors for job selection criteria which cannot be said to be at its best. Outside having capacity to specific job tasks, ensuring that the right traits of; personal discipline, hard work, effective interpersonal communication and high tolerance are critical job success characteristics which can be deepened through exposure to experience. The uniqueness of prison management tasks require a wide range of traits to enable adaptation to varying prison circumstance which can throw up a complicated situation if managed poorly. If the right people are selected, there is also need for them to grow on the job through acquired experience. This experience is what compliments their task competence in terms of utilizing them against complicated circumstances especially when dealing with inmates with backgrounds of psychoactive substance use or abuse. Also, without training and retraining of warden officers on the current and practical issues regarding best prison management practices, they may be routine officers without anticipatory instincts of inmates' behaviour which is dangerous as it can lead to both job and life threatening circumstances in view of homicide, murder and jailbreak in the prison.

### V. LIMITATIONS

Although, the study was anchored on Advanced support theory which require that officers doing their job effectively is a form of support to inmates in actualizing the aim of correction and re-integration. However, the framework only provided for effective and efficient execution of officer jobs as support itself; it does not however, consider extra-role behaviour of officers due to laws guiding the conduct of officers' interaction with inmates to ensure strict compliance with the prison regulations for inmates and officers. Although, officer traits were analyzed in terms of Campbell's model, the assumption that officer on the job dispositions towards inmates is limited. There is need to explore personality traits which may be implicated for greater effectiveness and adaptation from the humanistic approach.

### VI. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the management staff of Nigerian Prisons understand that effective management of inmates require robust human resource planning especially as regards qualitative aspects. Selection criteria ought to be in accordance to temperamental needs of the job which ought to be anchored on personality trait evaluations. Posting of officers should be based on age and experience of the officers to ensure that those who can manage the inmates best are what are deployed on the patrol and monitoring aspects of the jobs. There is also the need to further train and retrain staff especially at the wake of complexities of the criminal behaviour and mindset. This will enable the officer understand the relationship between inmates crime and the anticipated behaviour.



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