

**PRISON CONDITIONS AND INMATES IN BENIN MEDIUM SECURITY PRISON  
EDO STATE**

**BY**

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**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY,  
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BENIN CITY**

**JANUARY, 2024**

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**A RESEARCH WORK PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
AND ANTHROPOLOGY, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF  
BENIN, BENIN CITY, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR  
THE AWARD OF BSC DEGREE IN SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY**

**JANUARY, 2024**

**CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this project work was carried out by Hope Osabuese with Matriculation Number SSC2008709 and is adequate in scope, content and quality in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award B.Sc. in Sociology and Anthropology in the Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.

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Date

### **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated God Almighty

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examined the undesirable effects of Prison Conditions and Inmates in Benin Medium Security Prison Edo State. Thus, this study investigated how the prison culture negative effects and influence the lives of the inmates while in prison. The participants in this study were 200 of both inmates and staff selected through the use of stratified sampling technique. Survey design through structured questionnaire and structured and unstructured interview were used to extract relevant data for the study. The hypotheses of the study were tested using chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) statistical tool. The study discovered that there are negative effects of adverse prison conditions on inmates in Benin Prison, the prison culture enhanced the learning of criminal behaviour and that prison have negative influence on inmates' rehabilitation process, exchange of values by inmates result to recidivism. The study concluded that, the prison environment has negatively affected inmates and had proved*

*dysfunctional for failing to reform inmates, serving as crime school and have encouraged recidivism among ex-offenders. The study recommended as follows: provisions of more skills acquisition facilities for inmates' rehabilitations, the culture and lifestyles of inmates should be monitored by prison authority to engage in good conducts, discharge inmate should be well guided to avoid recidivism, and religion teachers should teach the inmates on moral ethics at all time to curb the rate of crime learning, among others.*

**Key words: Prison, inmates, recidivism, crime, Prison condition**

## CHAPTER ONE

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

A prison is a facility designed to detain individuals who are convicted of crimes or awaiting trial. It encompasses the land, structures, and systems intended for confinement (Eze, 2009). According to the Nigerian Prisons Act CAP 366, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990, the primary responsibilities of prisons include:

- Lawful custody of individuals remanded by courts.
- Producing suspects in court as required.
- Identifying the causes of anti-social behavior and initiating treatment mechanisms.
- Preparing inmates for reintegration into society.
- Administering prison farms and industries to rehabilitate inmates and generate government revenue (Ibrahim, 2012).

**Prisonization** refers to the process through which inmates adopt the culture and social norms of prison society. It includes the internalization of criminal values and the informal inmate code. This process is shaped by both individual characteristics and institutional features of the prison environment (Roxell, 2011). While inmates may enter prison with limited criminal tendencies, the socialization within prison often leads to an increased acceptance of deviant behavior (Tewksbury, 2006).

Research shows that prison culture can inadvertently foster criminality. Inmates often exchange criminal techniques and values, reinforcing deviant behaviors. Clemmer (1971), the originator of the prisonization concept, described how inmates adapt to the prison culture, including adopting prison slang, behaviors, and survival mechanisms.

In Nigeria, the prison system has been criticized for its inability to rehabilitate offenders. Instead, prisons are often described as criminogenic—fostering rather than deterring criminal behavior (Igbinovia, 1983). The mixing of seasoned criminals with petty offenders leads to the spread of criminal techniques, earning prisons the nickname "crime schools" (Roxell, 2011). Studies highlight that overcrowding, poor rehabilitation programs, and dehumanizing conditions exacerbate these issues (Osayi, 2015).

#### 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Globally, criminologists and correctional practitioners express concern over the criminogenic nature of prisons, where inmates often become more entrenched in criminal behavior due to their incarceration (Berk et al., 2003). Overcrowding, inadequate facilities, and a lack of effective rehabilitation programs make Nigerian prisons particularly problematic.

Rather than rehabilitating offenders, prisons often serve as environments where criminal skills are honed through interactions with seasoned criminals. This phenomenon contributes to high rates of recidivism, as inmates return to society more skilled in criminal activity.

The study seeks to explore the process of prisonization in Nigerian prisons, focusing on its impact on inmates' rehabilitation and likelihood of reoffending. It aims to address the gap in understanding the dynamics of prison culture and its implications for correctional policies.

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The primary objective is to examine the negative impacts of prisonization on inmates in Oko Prison, Edo State. Specific objectives include:

1. Investigating whether prison culture promotes the learning of criminal values among inmates.
2. Determining if prisonization hinders the rehabilitation of inmates.
3. Assessing whether prison culture contributes to recidivism among ex-offenders.

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the negative impacts of prisonization on inmates in Oko Prison, Edo State?
2. Does prison culture serve as a "crime school" for incarcerated individuals?
3. Does prison culture positively influence the rehabilitation of inmates?
4. Does the exchange of values among inmates lead to recidivism among ex-offenders?

### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study has both practical and theoretical significance:

- **Practical Relevance:**
  - It highlights how Nigerian prisons, through their mixed housing of petty and hardened offenders, inadvertently promote criminal learning and skills exchange.
  - It provides insights for policymakers and correctional staff, encouraging reforms that prioritize rehabilitation over punitive measures.
  - The findings can inform better strategies for reducing recidivism and improving the correctional system's effectiveness.
- **Theoretical Relevance:**
  - The study builds on prisonization theory and Sutherland's differential association theory, which emphasize the influence of social interactions on behavior.
  - It contributes to the broader discourse on correctional reforms and the role of prison culture in shaping inmates' post-incarceration lives.

### **1.6 AREA OF STUDY**

The study focuses on Medium Security Prison, Oko, Benin City, Edo State. Commissioned in 1988, this prison was designed to alleviate congestion in the existing Benin Prison. It houses various categories of inmates, including short-term offenders, awaiting trial individuals, and condemned convicts. Facilities include workshops for skills acquisition, aiming to support rehabilitation efforts.

### **1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study covers six blocks with 23 cells in Oko Prison. These blocks house diverse inmate categories:

- **Block A:** Short-term convicts.
- **Blocks B & C:** Awaiting trial inmates.
- **Block D:** Currently unused due to structural issues.
- **Block E:** Female inmates.
- **Block F:** Condemned convicts and solitary cells for disciplinary purposes.

## 1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS

- **Prisonization:** The adoption of prison culture and values by inmates.
- **Inmates:** Individuals incarcerated in the prison system.
- **Prison:** A correctional facility for detaining convicted offenders and awaiting trial individuals.
- **Inmate Culture:** Shared values and norms among prisoners.
- **Recidivism:** The repetition of criminal behavior after release from prison.
- **Rehabilitation:** Efforts to reform offenders into law-abiding citizens.
- **Crime School:** A metaphorical term for prisons that inadvertently teach criminal techniques.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### 2.1 EMPIRICAL REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

The relevant literature to this study will be empirically reviewed under the following sub-headings:

1. The nature of prison culture on inmates.
2. Effects of Prisonization on inmates
3. Problems/challenges of the prison on inmates.
4. Historical background of prisons

### **The Nature of Prison Culture and Its Impact on Inmates**

#### **Prison as a Criminogenic Environment**

Research has highlighted a growing concern that prisons often exacerbate undesirable behavior in inmates, fostering criminal tendencies rather than correcting them. Studies, such as those by Berk et al. (1999, 2003) and Berecochea and Gibbs (1991), suggest that high-security prisons may uniquely influence inmates. Dyer (2000) describes prisons as "schools of crime," where interactions among inmates lead to increased criminality after release. Clemmer (1971) also

emphasized the powerful influence of inmate interactions on prison life, which often outweigh formal rules and policies.

### **Life Inside the Prison**

Dambazau (2007) likened prisons to military barracks, where inmates are stripped of individuality and subjected to strict schedules and rules. These dehumanizing processes, including assigning prison numbers, regimented daily routines, and restricted communication, form the foundation of prison discipline. However, Nigerian prisons, characterized by overcrowding, idleness, and lack of basic amenities, are among the worst globally. Reports detail inhumane conditions, including inadequate medical care, unsanitary facilities, and extreme psychological strain on inmates. Overcrowding, with some facilities holding far more inmates than designed, exacerbates these issues, as noted by Soyinka (1972) and Obioha (1995).

### **Recidivism and Inmate Behavior**

The adverse conditions in Nigerian prisons contribute significantly to recidivism. Studies reveal that time spent in these environments often hardens individuals, increasing the likelihood of reoffending post-release. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) reported in 2017 that 70% of Nigerian inmates are awaiting trial, further stressing the already overburdened system. Without proper rehabilitation programs, many inmates return to society maladjusted and more deeply entrenched in criminal behavior.

### **Infrastructure and Administrative Challenges**

Nigerian prisons suffer from severe infrastructural deficiencies. Basic amenities like beds, clean water, and medical care are often unavailable, leading to diseases and preventable deaths. Inmates frequently sleep on bare floors, and the lack of proper ventilation and sanitation creates dire living conditions. These issues are compounded by corruption among prison staff, inadequate training, and insufficient resources to support both inmates and personnel.

### **Psychological and Social Impact**

Prisonization—where inmates adapt to prison life—often leads to profound psychological effects. Inmates experience a loss of individuality, constant surveillance, and a sense of emasculation, as described by Goffman (1961) and Sykes (1958). The lack of meaningful work, personal autonomy, and family connections creates a cycle of despair and disconnection from society. Foucault (1977) described prisons as systems of total discipline, aimed at reshaping individuals but often leading to emotional and psychological harm instead.

### **Vocational and Rehabilitative Deficits**

The Nigerian prison system lacks effective rehabilitation programs. Vocational training and educational opportunities are minimal or nonexistent, leaving inmates idle and without skills to reintegrate into society. The absence of structured programs means prisons fail to fulfill their intended purpose of correction and reform, as noted by Obioha (1995) and Igbinovia (1983).

# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PRISONS

## Evolution of Punishment and Correctional Systems

### Historical Background of Punishment

Throughout history, societies have implemented various methods to punish and correct erring members, including branding, flogging, and confiscation of personal property. These measures reflect a societal belief in the deterrent and retributive roles of punishment. While imprisonment as a form of punishment has ancient roots, its modern conception is believed to have emerged during the 16th century. Three distinct phases of its growth have been identified:

1. **Middle Ages:** The development of houses of correction in Europe aimed at repentance through labor and an ordered life.
2. **Reform Period (18th Century):** Initiated by the Quakers, this period emphasized solitary confinement to prevent contamination of new inmates by seasoned offenders.
3. **Humanization (20th Century):** The focus shifted toward improving prisoners' conditions, influenced by global movements like the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Offenders (1955).

### Imprisonment in Africa and Nigeria

Before colonialism, African societies, including Nigeria, had systems to manage deviant behavior. For instance, the Yorubas used the Ogboni Kose, while the Fulanis, Tivs, and Igbos had similar confinement practices. Colonial rule introduced formalized prison systems, starting with the Broad Street Prison in Lagos in 1872. The British established prisons primarily to safeguard colonial interests, focusing on punishment rather than rehabilitation. The Prisons Ordinance of 1916 laid the groundwork for federal prison administration, but the philosophy of incarceration largely remained custodial.

Post-colonial Nigerian prisons continue to reflect this legacy, functioning more as holding facilities than centers for rehabilitation. Overcrowding, inadequate resources, and a lack of meaningful programs have perpetuated these issues.

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## Theoretical Framework: Differential Association Theory

### Core Premise

Edwin H. Sutherland's **Differential Association Theory (1949)** provides a lens to understand how prison culture influences inmate behavior. The theory asserts that deviant behavior is learned through interaction with individuals who endorse criminal norms. In the prison setting, this dynamic transforms the institution into a "school of crime," where inmates:

- Learn criminal techniques and motives.
- Internalize moral justifications for criminal activities.
- Develop affiliations that reinforce deviant behavior.

### Implications for Prison Culture

The theory suggests that rather than deterring crime, prisons often foster it due to the social dynamics among inmates. This undermines the institution's rehabilitative goals and perpetuates recidivism, placing the burden of criminal behavior on the individual rather than addressing broader sociological factors.

### **Relevance to Study**

The theory underscores the need for reforms to monitor prison culture and provide inmates with rehabilitative opportunities. If prisons are to serve as reformatory centers rather than breeding grounds for crime, interventions must address the social structures within these institutions.

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## **Research Hypotheses**

### **1. Impact of Prisonization**

- **H0:** Prisonization does not have negative impacts on inmates in Oko Prison, Edo State.
- **H1:** Prisonization has negative impacts on inmates in Oko Prison, Edo State.

### **2. Prison Culture as a Crime School**

- **H0:** The prison environment does not function as a crime school for inmates.
- **H1:** The prison environment functions as a crime school for inmates.

### **3. Inmate Value Exchange and Recidivism**

- **H0:** The exchange of values among inmates does not contribute to recidivism among ex-offenders.
  - **H1:** The exchange of values among inmates contributes to recidivism among ex-offenders.
- 

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The setting of this research is at Oko Prison Edo state. This study used a survey design, which sought attitude and opinion of inmates and staff of Oko prison on the impacts of the prison culture on inmates. This survey design was used on the basis that a sample of the population was studied, the selection of the sample was done in such a way that the entire population was represented by the sample size. Therefore, information gathered, was able to represents the entire population. This survey design embraced the gathering of both

quantitative and qualitative data which was collected systematically for this study to ensure for valid and reliable information.

### 3.2 STUDY POPULATION

The total population of this study is one thousand three hundred and sixty (1,360) respondents in Oko prison. The population of this study comprised of two categories of respondents: inmates and staff of Oko prison. A total number of 1,200 respondents were inmates: comprises of 160 convicts and 1,040 Awaiting trial persons (ATP). There are 1,169 males and 31 female inmates. A total number of 154 males are convicts and 1,015 are Awaiting Trial. There are 6 convicts and 25 Awaiting Trial females inmates. And we have a total number of 160 Staff in Oko Prison comprises of 130 males and 30 females.

**Table 3.1 – TOTAL POPULATION OF OKO PRISON**

<b>POPULATION OF OKO PRISON</b>	<b>MALES</b>	<b>FEMALES</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>CONVICTS</b>	154	6	160
<b>AWAITING TRIAL PERSONS (ATPs)</b>	1,015	25	1,040
<b>STAFF</b>	130	30	160
<b>TOTAL</b>	1,299	61	1,360

Source: Medium Security Prison Administrative records, at July 2017.

### 3.3 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The sample size for the study will be **200 respondents** in Oko medium security prison Benin City, Edo State. That comprised of convicts, awaiting trial persons, and staff of the prison. The study adopted **stratified technique** as it will aid in establishing strata that are homogenous in nature.

**Table 3.2 Sample Selection Of 200 Respondents. From A Population Of 1,360 Using Stratified Technique;**

<b>S/NO</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>POPULATION</b>	<b>PROPORTION</b>	<b>SAMPLE SIZE</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Convicts</b>	<b>160</b>	<b><u>160</u> x <u>100</u></b>	<b>24</b>

			$\frac{1,360}{1} = 0.12$	
<b>2</b>	<b>Awaiting trial</b>	<b>1,040</b>	$\frac{1,040}{1,360} \times \frac{100}{1} = 0.76$	<b>152</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>160</b>	$\frac{160}{1,360} \times \frac{100}{1} = 0.12$	<b>24</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>200</b>

**Source medium security prison administrative record at July 2017.**

$$0.12 \times 200 = 24$$

$$0.76 \times 200 = 152$$

$$0.12 \times 200 = 24 \text{ (How the sample was derived).}$$

### **3.4 INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION**

The questionnaire and interview instrument were used to elicit responses from participants. The questionnaire was divided into two sections (A and B). Part “A” was designed to collect demographic data of respondents, section “B” comprised items used in finding answer to research questions. The questionnaire comprised both closed ended and open ended questions. And the participants were interviewed to have indebt knowledge of this topic of study.

### **3.5 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION.**

In collecting the quantitative data from inmates and staff, the required numbers of questionnaires were reproduced and administered directly (hand to hand) to the prisons personnel, their approval and consent were obtained before the questionnaire were administered to them. Retrieval of the questionnaires were done within few minutes of administering them or after some days. In other to ensure that respondents understood the questions in the questionnaire and give reliable and valid responses, the researcher gave value-free or objective clarifications. Systematic efforts and strategy were employed to ensured that the response rate was high and that all questions are appropriately answered. For the

qualitative data, the selected interviewees were first contacted and briefed about the exercise after which their consent were obtained, and then an appropriate time and venue were fixed for the in-depth interview. The language of communication for the interview sessions were English Language and Nigerian Pidgin. Responses to questions by the in-depth interviewees were tape recorded.

### **3.6 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS**

The study relied on primary source of data that are contained in the questionnaire and interview guide. Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed by means of simple statistical tools like tables, frequency distribution and percentages that were used in the analysis of data while the hypothesis was tested by the use of Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) statistical tools at a confident level of 0.05 value was adopted for test of significance.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4.1 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

In this chapter the researcher analysed and present the data collected from the field through interview and questionnaire administered for the understanding of the prison culture on inmates. Convicts, awaiting trial inmates and staff of Oko prison were sampled. The use of structured and unstructured in-depth interview and structured questions contain in the questionnaire were used to gather the data for the analysis. Two hundred (200) respondents were sample from the population chosen for the study of Oko prison. The two hundred (200) respondents sampled, all returned their questionnaires. Thus, the analysis is based on the two

hundred (200) questionnaires and interview guides that were returned by the respondents. The analysis shall be presented based on the socio demographic profile of the respondents, thematic issues which includes, responses from the interviews conducted and the hypotheses propose for the study. The descriptive statistics such as tables, frequencies, and percentages were used for the analysis of the socio demographic profile and the thematic issues of the respondents. While on the other hand inferential statistics, chi-square in particular was used to accept or reject the propose hypotheses for the study.

#### **4.2 SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

The socio demographic profile of the respondent can be understood from their sex, marital status employment status, religion affiliation, age, educational qualification, one status in the prison and one duration in the prison.

**Question 1. Table 4.1 Gender distribution of respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	180	90%
Female	20	10%
Total	200	100

Source: Field Work (2017)

From the table above, it shows that 90% of the respondents sampled are males, while 10% are females. That there are more males than females may be due to the fact that, males are more involved in illegal activities that can take them to the prison than their females counterpart

**Question 2. Table 4.2 Marital Status of the Respondents.**

<b>Marital Status</b>	Frequency	Percentage
Married	26	13%
Single	170	85%
Divorce	4	2%
Total	200	100

Source: Field Work (2017)

The table above reveals that, 13% of the respondents are married, 85% are single and 2% are divorce. This may be link to the notion of social bond. That is, the lesser the bond an individual have with significant others, the higher the intent of crime, this explained the high proportion of single inmates found in the prison.

**Question 3. Table 4.3 Employment Status of the Respondents.**

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage
Employed	160	80%
Unemployed	40	20%

Total	200	100
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Source: Field Work (2017)

The above table indicates that 80% of the respondents are unemployed and 20% of the respondents are employed. This in a way expose the unemployment rate in the country and this also shows that unemployment may be a major factor to crime.

**Question 4. Table 4.4 Religion Affiliation of the Respondents.**

Religion Affiliation	Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	180	90%
Islam	13	6.5%
Traditional Worshipers	5	2.5%
Non	2	1%
Total	200	100

Source: Field Work (2017)

The table reveals that majority of the respondents of 90% are Christian and 6.5% are Muslims, 2.5% of the respondents belong to Africa Traditional Worship and 1% of the respondents belong to neither faith. This tends to show that Christianity is the predominant religion in the area.

**Table 4.5: Age Distribution of Respondents.**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
15-19	10	5%

20-24	30	15%
25-29	120	60%
30 above	40	20%
Total	200	100

Source: Field Work (2017)

The table shows that 5% of the respondent fall within the age bracket of (15-19 yrs), 15% are within (20-24yrs), 60% fall within (25-29yrs) and 20% of the respondents are 30yrs above. This suggests that majority of prison inmates are youths.

**Table 4.6: Educational Qualification of the Respondents.**

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Primary Six Certificate	15	7.5%
W.A.E.C/SSCE	130	65%
OND/BSC	45	22.5%
MSC/PHD	8	4%
Non	2	1%
Total	200	100

Source: Field Work (2017)

The table revealed that 7.5% of the respondents posses primary six result, 65% are SSCE result holders, 22.5% are OND/BSC degree holders, 4% are MSC/PHD degree holder and 1% have no formal education. This connotes that one exposure to formal education especially at a lower level (low I.Q) could be a reason for committing crime.

**Table 4.7: Distribution of Respondents Category in Oko**

Category of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Convicts	24	12%
A.T.P.	152	76%
Staff	24	12%
Total	200	100

Source: Sample Selection of 200 from 1360 population using stratification technique.

This portrayed that 12% of the respondents are convicts, 76% of the respondents are awaiting trial person and 12% are staff of Oko prison. It shows that there is high proportion of awaiting trial person in the prison.

**Question 8. Table 4.8 Distribution of Respondent According to number of years spent in the prison**

No of Years	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	56	28%
6-10 years	68	34%
11-15 years	54	27%
20 years above	22	11%
Total	200	100

Source: Field Work (2017)

The table revealed that 28% of the respondents have spent 1-5 years in the prison environment, 34% have spent 6-10 years, 27% have spent between 11-15 years, and 11% have spent 20 years and above. This in a way shows that inmates spend longer period in Nigerian prisons due to delay in our criminal justices system.

**4.3 ANALYSIS OF THE THEMATIC ISSUES**

In answering the research questions, a five point rating scale was adopted.

Strongly Agreed: S.A,

Agreed: A,

Undecided: UD,

Disagreed: D,

Strongly Disagreed: SD,

### **Research Question 1**

**Table 4.9 Does prisonization have negative impacts on inmates in Oko prison Edo State?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	153	76.5%
Agreed	38	19%
Undecided	2	1%
Disagreed	4	2%
Strongly Disagreed	3	1.5%
Total	200	100

Source: Field Work (2017)

The data presented above show that 153 or 76.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that the prison culture have negative impact on inmates, 38 or 19% agreed, 2 or 1% was undecided, 4 or 2% disagreed while 3 or 1.5% strongly disagreed

### **Research Question 2**

**Table 4.10 Can the prison culture serves as crime school for the inmates?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	134	67%

Agreed	51	25.5%
Undecided	3	1.5%
Disagreed	8	4%
Strongly Disagreed	4	2%
Total	200	100

Source: Field Work (2017)

The analysis of responses indicates that 134 or 67% of the respondents strongly agreed that the prison serves as crime school, 51 or 25.5% agreed, 3 or 1.5% are undecided, 8 or 4% disagreed and 4 or 2% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

### Research Question 3

**Table 4.11 Does the prison culture positively influence inmates rehabilitation process?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	9	4.5%
Agreed	14	7%
Undecided	7	3.5%
Disagreed	40	20%
Strongly Disagreed	130	65%
Total	200	100

Source: Field Work (2017)

The data above shows that only 9 or 4.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that the prison culture positively influence inmates rehabilitation process, 14 or 7% agreed, 7 or 3.5% was undecided, 40 or 20% disagreed and 130 or 65% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

### Research Question 4

**Table 4.12 Can the exchange of inmates values in the prison leads to recidivism among ex-offenders?**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	118	59%
Agreed	39	19.5%
Undecided	10	5%
Disagreed	13	6.5%
Strongly Disagreed	20	10%
Total	200	100

Source: Field Work (2017)

The data in the table above indicate that 118 or 59% of the respondents strongly agreed that exchange of values by inmates is a strong factor for recidivism among ex-offenders, 39 or 19.5% agreed, 10 or 5% was undecided, 13 or 6.5% disagreed and 20 or 10% strongly disagreed.

**The tables below present responses from our interview guide and they are presented as follow:**

**Table 4.13 How does prisonization have negative impacts on inmates?**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
The prison make inmates to be more criminal-like	121	60.5%
Little or lack of opportunity for self improvement	47	23.5%

The inmate code impacts the inmates negatively	18	9%
Others	14	7%
Total	200	100

Source: Field work (2017)

The data above show that, 121 or 60.5% stated that the prison creates harden criminals, 47 or 23.5% identified little or lack of opportunity for self improvement, 18 or 9% agreed that the inmate code as a negative factor, and 14 or 7% made mentioned of other factors such as the nature of the prison environment, overcrowding, prison strict rules etc.

**Table 4.14 How does the prison serves as crime school for the inmates?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Inmate learn criminal value from on another in prison	151	75.5%
Inmate engage in activities that destroy their personality	13	6.5%
The existence of gangs promotes crime learning in prison	30	15%
Others	6	3%
Total	200	100

Source: Field work (2017)

The data in this table show that 151 or 75.5% believed that inmates learn criminal values from one another in prison, 13 or 6.5% were of the view that inmates engage in activities that destroy their personality, 30 or 15% opined that the existence of gangs group is a factor for crime learning in prison and others point to the existence of tribes and ethnic groups identity as a factor that aid crime learning.

**Table 4.15 What influence does prisonization have in the rehabilitation of inmates?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	28	14%
Negative	172	86%
Non	_____	_____
Others	_____	_____
Total	200	100

Source: Field work (2017)

The data above show that 28 or 14% of the participant believed that prisonization have a positive influence in the rehabilitation of inmate. And as high as 172 or 86% of the participant strongly believed that prisonization negatively influence inmates rehabilitation process.

**Table 4.16 How can exchange of inmates values result to recidivism?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Discharge inmates took to crime because they learn more skill from peers in prison	64	32%
They claim to be criminal tutor in wider society	44	22%
They identify with deviant gangs outside prison	80	40%
Others	12	6%
Total	200	100

Source: Field work (2017)

The data in the above table revealed that 64 or 32% of respondents claim that discharge offenders took to crime again if they feel that the prison environment have equipped them with more skills to commit crime. 44(22%) argued that ex-offender serves as teachers of crime, 80 (40%) reasoned that ex-convict identify with deviant gang outside prison hence they recidivate. And 12(6%), identified other factors residing in a crime prone area and constant association with deviant peers.

#### 4.5 HYPOTHESES TESTING

The hypothesis to be tested in this study are stated below:

- (1) There are no negative impacts of prisonization on inmates in Oko prison Edo State
- (2) The prison environment does not serves as crime school for the inmates.
- (3) The exchange of criminal values by inmates does not lead to recidivism among ex-offenders.

**TABLE 4.17 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRISONIZATION AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON INMATES**

Options	Convicts	Atp	Staff	Total
Agreed	18(20.28)	138(128.4)	13(20.28)	169
Disagreed	6(3.72)	14(23.56)	11(3.72)	31
Total	24	152	24	200

Source: Field work (2017)

S/N	O	E	O-E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
A	18	20.28	-2.28	5.20	0.2564
B	138	128.4	9.6	92.16	0.7178
C	13	20.28	-7.28	53.00	2.6134
D	6	3.72	2.28	5.20	1.3978
E	14	23.56	-9.56	91.39	3.8790
F	11	3.72	7.28	53.00	14.2474
TOTAL					23.1118

Source: Field work (2017)

From the table above the calculated value  $\chi^2 = 23.1118$ . To determine the critical  $\chi^2$  value we first determine the degree of freedom (df) thus,  $df = (R-1) \times (c-1)$

$$(2-1) \times (3-1) = 1 \times 2 = 2.$$

At 0.05 level of significance, 2 under the chi square table = 5.99 which is the critical value.

#### CONCLUSION

Since the calculated value (23.1118) is greater ( $>$ ) than the critical value (5.99), we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. This implies that there exist a negative relationship between prisonization and inmates. In other words, the prison culture/environment influences the inmates negatively in Oko prison Edo State.

**Table 4.18: Relationship between prison environment and inmates crime learning**

Options	Convicts	ATP	Staff	Total
Agreed	16(14.64)	93(92.72)	13(14.64)	122
Disagreed	8(9.36)	59(59.28)	11(9.36)	78
Total	24	152	24	200

S/N	O	E	O-E	$(O-E)^2$	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
A	16	14.64	1.36	1.85	0.1264
B	93	92.72	0.28	0.08	8.6281
C	13	14.64	-1.64	2.69	0.1837
D	8	9.36	-1.36	1.85	0.1976
E	59	59.28	-0.28	0.08	1.3495
F	11	9.36	1.64	2.69	0.2874
TOTAL					10.7727

Calculated value = 10.7727

DF = (C-1 = (R-1)

(3-1) = (2-1)

2x1 = 2

## CONCLUSION

At 0.05 level of significance,  $\chi^2$  under chi-square table is 5.99. Since the calculated value (10.7727) is greater ( $>$ ) than the critical value (5.99), we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. This connotes that the prison culture/environment is a centre of training criminals. In other word, the prison environment makes the incarcerated individuals to be committed to a life of crime, instead of being a reformatory centre for criminals.

**Table 4.19: Relationship between the exchange of inmate values and recidivism among ex-offenders**

Options	Convicts	ATP	Staff	Total
Agreed	14(15.36)	99(97.28)	15(15.36)	128
Disagreed	10(8.64)	53(54.72)	9(8.64)	72
Total	24	152	24	200

S/N	O	E	O-E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
A	14	15.36	-1.36	1.85	0.1204
B	99	97.28	1.72	2.96	0.0304
C	15	15.36	-0.36	0.13	8.4635
D	10	8.64	1.36	1.85	0.2141
E	53	54.72	-1.72	2.96	0.0541
F	9	8.64	0.36	0.13	0.0150
Total					8.8975

Calculated value = 8.8975

DF = (C-1) = (R-1)

(3-1) = (2-1)

2x1 = 2

## **CONCLUSION**

At 0.05 level of significance, 2 under chi-square table is 5.99. Since the calculated value (8.8975) is greater ( $>$ ) than the critical value (5.99), we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. This implies that the exchange of inmates values while in prison do result to recidivism among ex-offenders that had been discharged from the prison. Therefore sharing of different criminal ideas by inmates is a strong factor for recidivism.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Discussion of Findings

The study examined the negative impacts of prisonization on inmates in Oko Prison, Edo State. Key findings are summarized below:

#### Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

- **Gender:** The majority (90%) of respondents were male, suggesting men are more involved in anti-social behavior leading to incarceration.
- **Marital Status:** A significant portion (85%) of inmates were single, indicating that weaker social bonds might increase the likelihood of criminal behavior.
- **Employment:** A high unemployment rate (80%) among inmates highlights economic vulnerability as a factor in criminality.
- **Age:** Most inmates (80%) were between 18–35 years, aligning with previous studies (Otu, 2003; Senator, 2011) that youth are more involved in crime due to energy and agility.
- **Education:** The majority of inmates had primary or secondary education, with only 26.5% having tertiary education, supporting the link between low educational attainment and crime.
- **Prison Tenure:** Many inmates had spent extended periods (1–15 years) in prison, often awaiting trial, reflecting systemic inefficiencies in the justice system.

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### Research Questions and Hypotheses

#### 1. Negative Impacts of Prisonization

- **Findings:** A significant majority (95.5%) confirmed that prisonization negatively impacts inmates, leading to hardened criminal behavior, lack of self-improvement, and dehumanizing conditions.
- **Support:** These findings align with Ugwuoke (2010) and Osayi (2015), who argue Nigerian prisons fail to reconcile offenders with societal norms, fostering criminal exchange instead.

#### 2. Prison as a Crime School

- **Findings:** Most respondents (92.5%) agreed that the prison environment facilitates the learning of criminal behavior.
- **Support:** Sutherland and Cressy's (1974) theory of differential association and studies like Roxell (2011) reinforce that inmates adopt criminal techniques and motives from peers within the prison.

#### 3. Prison's Role in Rehabilitation

- **Findings:** Only 11.5% believed prison culture positively influences rehabilitation, while 85% disagreed, citing the institution as counterproductive.

- **Support:** Earlier studies (Igbinovia, 1983; Oshodi, 2010) support this conclusion, describing Nigerian prisons as criminogenic systems that degrade rather than rehabilitate.
4. **Exchange of Values and Recidivism**
- **Findings:** A majority (78.5%) linked the exchange of values among inmates to high recidivism rates, as discharged offenders often return with enhanced criminal skills.
  - **Support:** Studies (Orsagh & Chen, 1988; Berk et al., 2003) demonstrate that prolonged incarceration and peer influence increase the likelihood of reoffending.
- 

## Summary of Findings

- The study revealed significant issues in Oko Prison, including overcrowding, poor health facilities, and a criminogenic culture.
  - Prisons are more likely to foster criminal behavior than rehabilitate inmates, with minimal opportunities for education, skill acquisition, or personal growth.
  - Prolonged incarceration and the mingling of awaiting trial inmates with convicts promote recidivism and a cycle of crime.
- 

## Conclusion

The findings highlight that Nigerian prisons, particularly Oko Prison, fail to serve as rehabilitative institutions. Instead, they exacerbate criminal behavior, perpetuate recidivism, and offer limited prospects for inmates' reintegration into society. Prisonization has serious negative implications, making prisons "schools of crime" rather than centers for reformation.

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## Recommendations

1. **Address Overcrowding:** The government must reduce overcrowding by expediting trials and creating alternative sentencing options.
2. **Skill Acquisition Programs:** Establish and promote skill development centers to empower inmates for post-incarceration independence.
3. **Monitor Prison Culture:** Implement measures to curb the spread of criminal values and subcultures within prisons.
4. **Promote Moral Rehabilitation:** Engage religious leaders and counselors to instill positive values among inmates.
5. **Discourage Gangs and Tribalism:** Prohibit group formations that reinforce criminal behavior and divisions.
6. **Reform Justice System:** Ensure timely trials to minimize the interaction between awaiting trial inmates and convicted criminals.
7. **Improve Infrastructure:** Provide basic amenities, including health facilities, proper sanitation, and sufficient food, to make prisons more humane.
8. **Enhance Education Opportunities:** Offer scholarships and educational programs to help inmates improve their literacy and skills.

9. **Post-Release Support:** Establish guidance systems for discharged inmates to reduce recidivism and aid reintegration into society.
- 

## Limitations of the Study

- **Financial Constraints:** Limited resources restricted the scope of the research.
  - **Access Challenges:** Unpredictable prison visitation schedules hindered data collection.
- 

## Suggestions for Further Study

1. **Expand Scope:** Examine prisonization impacts in other Nigerian prisons, such as Warri, Lagos, and Enugu, to validate findings.
2. **Positive Impacts:** Investigate potential positive outcomes of prisonization and identify best practices for reform.

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## APPENDIX

Department of Sociology and Anthropology,  
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City,  
Edo State Nigeria.

### THE IMPACTS OF THE PRISON CULTURE ON INMATES

Dear respondent,

I am a post graduate student of the above named Department, carrying out a research to understand **the impacts of the prison culture on inmates in Oko Prison, Benin City**. The research is precisely for academic purpose, and I humbly request you to help me complete the attached questionnaire. You are required to complete both the close ended and open ended questions. The information you will give shall be treated with strict confidence, and will be used for no other purpose than for the research.

Thanks for your understanding and assistance.

Yours faithfully,

Akaenye Senator

#### **SECTION: A**

##### **Demographic Data of the Respondents**

Please tick [ ✓ ] appropriately.

1. Sex: (a) male (b) female
2. Marital status: (a) single (b) married
3. Employment status: (a) employed (b) unemployed
4. Religion affiliation: (a) Christianity (b) Islam (c) African tradition Religion  
(d) none
5. Age: (a) 15-19 (b) 20-24 (c) 25-29 (d) 30 above

6. Educational Qualification: (a) first school leaving school certificate (b) W.A.E.C/SSCE (c) OND/BSC (d) MSC/PHD (e) None
7. What is your status in Oko prison? (a) staff (b) convict (c) awaiting trial person
8. How long have you been in Oko Prison? (a) 1-5 yrs (b) 6-10yrs (c) 11-15yrs (d) 20 years above

**SECTION B**

9. Does the prison culture have negative impacts on inmates? (a) Strongly Agreed (b) Agreed (c) Undecided (d) Disagreed (e) Strongly Disagreed
10. Can the prison serves as crime school for the inmates? (a) Strongly Agreed (b) Agreed (c) Undecided (d) Disagreed (e) Strongly Disagreed
11. Can the prison culture positively encourage the reformation of inmates? (a) Strongly Agreed (b) Agreed (c) Undecided (d) Disagreed (e) Strongly Disagreed
12. Can the exchange of inmates values in the prison increase recidivism rate? (a) Strongly Agreed (b) Agreed (c) Undecided (d) Disagreed (e) Strongly Disagreed
13. Does the prison environment allowed for the rehabilitation of inmates? (a) Strongly Agreed (b) Agreed (c) Undecided (d) Disagreed (e) Strongly Disagreed

**INTERVIEW GUIDE**

1. How does the prison culture negatively impact the lifestyle of the inmates?
  - (a) The prison makes inmates to be more criminal-like (b) little or lack of opportunity for self-improvement (c) the inmate code impacts the inmates negatively

If any other Please  
state? .....

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2. In what way does the prison environment serves as school of crimes? (a) inmate learn criminal value from one another in prison (b) inmate engage in activities that destroy their personality (c) the existence of gangs promotes crime learning in prison.

If any other Please state? .....

3. Does the prison culture negatively or positively affect inmates rehabilitation process? (a) positive (b) negative (c) non

4. How does the exchange of inmates values result to recidivism? (a) discharge inmates took to crime when they learn more skills from peers in prison (b) they claim to be criminal tutor in wider society (c) they identify with deviants gangs outside prison If any other Please state?.....

5. Do you believe that prisonization have negative impacts on inmates? .....

6. What do you think are the negative impact of prisonization on inmates? .....