

Understanding Self Image and Entrepreneurial Intentions of Prison Inmates in South West, Nigeria

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Abstract

The onus responsibility of reorientation and reformation of prison inmates is often meted with ignominy of inmates' mental conception and perception of self. Hence recidivism among inmates is common based on poor mental perception and desire to reinvent self. This study investigated the relationship of self image and entrepreneurial intentions of 300 randomly selected prison inmates in south west Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was applied in the study. Data were collected with two standardized instruments. Three research questions were raised in the study. PPMC and T-TEST were used for data analysis. The result has shown that the relationship between self image and entrepreneurial intentions is positively significant. There was also a significant difference in self image and entrepreneurial intentions based on their length of incarceration. It was recommended that prison training programmes, workshops and treatments targeting uplifting of self image are beneficial. However, it should be understood that other factors not controlled such as time of release or nature of incarceration may affect this finding.

Keywords: Self image, Entrepreneurial intentions, Prison inmates.

Introduction

Entrepreneurial intentions is the driving force for the achievement of economic development and job creation, contributing at the same time to personal development and effectively dealing with numerous pathogenic social phenomena (Nurwahida, 2007, Sarri & Trihopoulou, 2005). The intentions are born from the term intentionality, where the entrepreneurial behaviours and intentions to start up, would be helpful and determinant element towards performing entrepreneurial behaviours (Fayolle & Gailly, 2004). Understanding the antecedents of entrepreneurial intentions increases our understanding of intended

entrepreneurial behaviour. Accordingly, entrepreneurial intentions helps explain why many entrepreneurs decide to start a business even before they begin an opportunity search (Krueger et al., 2000). The development of a new business requires individuals to make conscious choices and decisions and is a deliberate behaviour that is intentional by nature. Therefore, it would seem logical that intentions could provide valuable insights into the type of individuals attracted to becoming entrepreneurs. In developing countries, self-employment intention may represent evidence of an emerging entrepreneurial cohort needed to surmount an economic depression. However, the same could hardly be said for prison inmates who are vulnerable to accepting negative judgments from authority figures because of a guilt feeling they have or/and the lack of competency in evaluating such reports.

Prisoners hail disproportionately from economically and socially disadvantaged circumstances in which violence, substance abuse, family disruption, and other traumatic experiences are common. There are cases of misfortunes, accidental occurrences and or unfortunate situations that have preceded prison inmates' incarcerations. Overall, they have experienced many more potentially damaging life experiences than their never-imprisoned counterparts. Thus, incarceration is but one potentially damaging hardship in many inmates' troubled lives. Highlighting this point, Maden, Chamberlain, and Gunn (2000) contended that deliberate self-harm by inmates results from long-term personality problems and cannot be simply attributed to short-term environmental stress. Other authors noted that inmates enter prison with backgrounds and characteristics that affect their relationships with other inmates and correctional staff as well as their ability to cope with anxiety and objective difficulties (Gullone, Jones & Cummins, 2000; Silverman & Vega, 1990; Verona, Patrick & Joiner, 2001). The effects of imprisonment are contingent on individual characteristics including ability to successfully manage life in prison environments (Derosia, 1998; Zamble & Porporino, 1988).

Another perspective is that, most prisoners had few resources and many problems before they began their prison sentence, and there is reason to be concerned that their resources might have depleted and their problems multiplied during incarceration. In the general population, evidence suggests that the likelihood of substance abuse and offending is greatest for those who have experienced adversity (Dohrenwend, 2000; Logan, Walker, Staton, & Leukefeld, 2001). The research results on how imprisonment affects future criminality are mixed, however many inmates certainly experience incarceration and some of the events associated with it as adversity.

Then again, variation in inmates' accounts of their prison experiences and the lasting psychological effects of incarceration is striking. Even those who have served comparable sentences in the same facilities often have experiences that are extremely different. For example, Nigeria has 228 prisons housing 47, 815 inmates (Agomoh & Ogbzor, 2006). Among the number of prisons, 145 prisons are for convicts while 83 serve as satellite prison camps. There are also three Borstal institutions for juvenile offenders. The two types of convicts' prisons operational in Nigeria are the Maximum and the Medium Security Prisons. The Satellite Prisons are built to serve as intermediate camps for the areas with courts that are far from the main prisons. Amnesty International, in its 2008 report, declared that Nigeria's prisons are filled with people whose human rights are systematically violated. It stated that 65 per cent of the inmates are awaiting trial. Agomoh and Ogbzor (2006) reported 25, 648 prisoners who are remanded in Nigerian prisons.

It is no gainsaying that the Nigerian prisons are very congested, and the development has become a major concern to the prison authorities, the judiciary and the police. Inmates have outnumbered the capacity of prison cells and facilities at the prisons are being overstretched. In this light, Onagoruwa (2001) opined that Nigerian prisons are glorified animal cages and that people sent there get a foretaste of hell as it were. According to him, the overall picture of Nigerian prison and the inmates is one of unredeemed gloom and hopelessness affirming that the whole structure is a repulsive cauldron of human squalor and degradation. This is

expected to have grave effect on the self image of the inmates and perhaps a diminished quality to be entrepreneurs when reunited with the society.

Self-image has typically been defined in terms of cognitive appraisal one makes of the expectations, descriptions and prescriptions one holds about one's self (Hattie, 1992). According to the Rogerian theorization of self-concept, self-image is one of the key concepts or pillars in self-conception. A person's self-image is the mental picture, generally of a kind that is quite resistant to change. It depicts not only details that are potentially available to objective investigation by others (such as, height, weight, hair colour, sex, I.Q. score), but also items that have been learned by that person about himself or herself, either from personal experiences or by internalizing the judgments of others.

Self-image is an attitude component of "self as known" or "Me" (Burns, 1982) and it means the individual's description of the self. Self image is often described as a circus mirror which dramatically twists size and shape into ungainly proportions which in no way resemble how a person actually appears. This self perception of how one view self, perception of how one is seen, and the thoughts and beliefs held about self, ones' world, and future, affect three areas, which are Self respect Self-worth and Self acceptance. These parts of self-image are commitments and beliefs, which are very important in cognitive appraisal processes of the situation (Slivar, 2001). According to Kobasa (1985), the coping ability is determined with individual's self-image, it is the part of individual's self-awareness or self-confidence. A positive self-image among other things may then be connected with psychological adaptedness and emotional stability, greater activity and the feelings of greater psychic power, increased resilience to negative feedback, positive emotional states and so on (Slivar, 2001). These are at the same time also factors that play an important role in the experiencing of isolation and solitude, respectively.

It should be noted that some information about an individual is not directly available to others, and that information may be very pertinent to the formation of an accurate and well functioning self-image. Hence, the consequences of a prevailing poor self-image among prison inmates are grave. These includes among many; low self-esteem, low self-concept, self-denial, violent behaviours, depression, anxiety, feelings of uselessness, feelings of uselessness, suicidal notions and every psychopathological disorder that undermines adjustment to life. These become worse when these inmates gain their freedom. After the difficulties to adjust to freedom and with the problems of stigmatization and segregation from the larger society, most inmates inflict their pain on their society. This is done through engagement of mastered antisocial and amoral behaviours while in incarceration, many become pawns for social and political violence, robberies and assassinations. Thus, accounting for the reason why many return to the prison no sooner than they left. The need to understand how inmates can become gainfully significant to the society when released is urgent and pertinent. It is on the basis that the authors are examining self-image and entrepreneurial intentions of prison inmates.

Research Questions

The following questions would be examined in this study:

1. What is the relationship between self image and entrepreneurial intentions of prison inmates in south west Nigeria?
2. Is there any significant difference in self image on the basis on duration of incarceration?
3. Is there any significant difference in entrepreneurial intention on the basis on duration of incarceration?

Method

Design

The design used in this study was the descriptive survey design. Survey is the process of inquiry for the purpose of data collection and analysis. The study employed descriptive design since it sought to explain current existence without the researchers' manipulation.

Population and Sampling Procedure

The population consist of all prison inmates who are currently serving terms in all prisons in South West Nigerian. Purposive random sampling technique was used for selecting the sample for this study. Two states from South West Nigeria (Osun and Oyo State) were purposively selected for the study. Out of these three prisons (two in Osun and one in Oyo) were selected. One hundred (100) prison inmates were then selected from each of the three prisons accounting for three hundred (300) participants.

Instrumentation

Two valid and standardized instruments were used in this study.

The Self-Image Scale

The self image scale developed and validated by Crocker & Canevello, (2008) is a 13 item scale designed to elicit information on an individual's degree of self-image. The scale is a 5-point likert format scale with response ranging from 1, not at all to 5, extremely. Typical item in the scale is "get others to recognize or acknowledge your positive qualities". The scale has an alpha coefficient of 0.81 and split half reliability coefficient of 0.77 (Crocker & Canevello, 2008) however, a pilot test on twenty prisoners in Oyo town yielded an alpha of 0.78 and a reliability coefficient of 0.71.

Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (EIQ)

Entrepreneurial intention Questionnaire (EIQ) was a set of questions proposed by Liñan (2005). This instrument consists of six items aimed at unveiling the respondents' intentions to start their own businesses in the future. The items are built on a seven-point Likert scales, ranging from 1 as strongly disagree and 5 as strongly agree. Sample items on the scale include I am ready to do anything to be an entrepreneur and I have the firm intention to start a company some day. The internal consistency of 0.95 was obtained by Liñan (2005) for the Spanish version of the instrument. The researchers obtained an alpha value of 0.78 for the scale which has helped to ascertain its adaptability and suitability for the present study.

Procedure and Data Analysis

The researchers personally distributed and collected the completed questionnaire from the participants. The participants were adequately informed confidentiality and the need to be precise and truthful in filling the questionnaire. The questionnaire was then filled and returned by the participants after adequate understanding. The data collection lasted for a month. The data was analyzed using the Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC), and multiple regression analysis to ascertain the patterns of relationship. The t-test was also used to test for statistical significance. In each case, the level of significance set for acceptance or rejection was 0.05.

Result

Table 1: Summary of correlation between self image and entrepreneurial intention

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	r-value	Sig
Entrepreneur intention	300	32.77	11.07	0.42	0.05
Self image	300	44.52	13.49		

From the table above there is a significant positive relationship between self image and entrepreneurial intention ($r = 0.42$; $p > 0.05$).

Table 2: T- Test analysis showing degree of self image and duration of incarceration

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Df	t- critical	t- cal.	Sig
Short time in incarceration	173	47.66	11.98	298	1.96	5.39	0.05
Long time in incarceration	127	40.01	12.25				

From the above table the t-calculated value of 5.39 is greater than the t-critical of 1.96. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. There is therefore a significant difference in self image of prison inmates in terms of duration of incarceration.

Table 3: T- Test analysis showing degree of entrepreneur intention and duration of incarceration

	N	Mean	Std. dev	Df	t- critical	t- cal.	Sig
Short time in incarceration	173	33.72	9.34	298	1.96	3.07	0.05
Long time in incarceration	127	29.3	10.11				

From the above table the t-calculated value of 5.39 is greater than the t-critical of 1.96. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. There is therefore a significant difference in entrepreneur intention of prison inmates in terms of duration of incarceration.

Discussion

The result has shown that the relationship between self image and entrepreneurial intentions is positively significant. The result further affirms the findings of previous studies in terms of the significant relationship between entrepreneurial intention and its antecedents. The implication if this finding is that as the self image of prison inmates improves, their entrepreneurial intentions increases. By the understanding of the tenets of self image which revolves around developing a positive mental worth and attitude towards self it is possible that it can explain intentions to engage in positive pursuits as entrepreneur. The result also showed that there was a significant difference in self image based on their length of incarceration. Those who had longer time of incarceration had poorer self image than those with shorter time of incarcerations. This could be explained as linked to the loss of freedom, lost time of socialization with family and friends, lost time of being significant in the society

as prison terms upheld. As the effects of incarceration bore down on the inmates the lack of belief and self worth heightens damaging a positive mental picture they may have of self.

Entrepreneurial intention was also found to significantly differ based on time of incarceration. In the modern criminal justice system imprisonment is the most important form of sanction and deterrent to crime (Drago et al. 2012) which is why in every country convicted criminals are locked up for specific period of time and it is common to hear a statement like 'lock them up and through the keys away' from crime victims, their relatives and politicians. With these type of perspectives apportioned to prison inmates it becomes difficult for most of the inmates to mentally conceive being an entrepreneur. Intentions are determined by attitudes, and attitudes are affected by 'exogenous influences' such as traits, education, demographics and situational variables (Souitaris et al., 2007). Being incarcerated and becoming a prison inmate in prison is one depressive tendency that could hamper ones positive intention. Therefore as the incarceration terms increases entrepreneur intentions become poorer.

Conclusion

This study has investigated the existing relationship between self image and entrepreneurial intentions. It has revealed that adequate knowledge of prison inmates with regards to their self image is necessary when considering develop internal cognitive orientations such as entrepreneurial intentions. Hence, the reorientation and reformation of prison inmates to becoming better persons when released to the society is greatly dependent on channeling adequate development of their self image. It is therefore recommended that prison training programmes, workshops and treatments targeting uplifting of self image are beneficial. However, it should be understood that other factors not controlled such as time of release or nature of incarceration may affect this finding. Further, the congested nature and treatments meted out to prison inmates could also damage a positive self image. While all these are recommended for future studies to verify the current finding it does not invalidate the current empirical finding.

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