

## ASSESSMENT OF COUNSELLING ACTIVITIES ON INMATES IN INCARCERATION CENTRES IN SOUTHWEST, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

Despite the efforts of successive counselling activities towards reformation of inmates in Nigeria, the condition faced by inmates in Nigeria is unsavory, as inmates are still observed to be some of the most mal-adjusted people in the society. The study presented assessment of counseling activities on inmates in incarceration centres in South-west Nigeria using descriptive research design. Three states (Osun, Oyo and Ondo) were selected using convenience sampling technique. In each of the state, four incarceration centres were purposively selected in order to have enough representation of the population. Inclusion criterion of eligibility was solely the literacy ability of inmates with no age or gender bias. In Agodi (Oyo) and Akure (Ondo) incarceration centres, a total of 130 inmates were purposively selected with the assistance of the staff in each of the centres; and same method was adopted to select 125 inmates in Ilesa and Ile-ife (Osun) centres; totaling 255 respondents. Three research questions were raised and responded to in the study. A questionnaire titled Counselling Activities on Inmates (CAI) was adopted for data collection, with reliability coefficient of 0.81. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings of the study revealed that: inmates in the selected reformatory centres benefit from various counseling activities, including psycho-education workshops, one-on-one sessions, group therapy, mental health counseling, goal setting, family therapy, and peer support. Counseling in reformatory centres enhances inmates' interpersonal skills, emotional management, and accountability. Inmates expressed high satisfaction with specific counseling activities provided by the reformatory centres. Study recommended that correctional institutions: need to engage more in personalized counselling activities; should increase access to relevant psycho-education to ensure effective rehabilitation and reintegration

**Keywords:** counselling activities, inmates, incarceration centres, reformation centres, correctional centres.

DOI:

### INTRODUCTION

Counselling is a form of interpersonal service where a professional counsellor helps others explore their issues, identify under-

lying causes, with a view to developing coping strategies and techniques to manage their concerns. It involves expert activities aimed at helping clients in self-knowledge, self-discovery, personal development, navi-

gating alternatives while making new decisions, unlearning negative behaviours and learning new positive behaviours. Hence, it is a mediation targeted towards achieving beneficial attitudinal and behavioural changes in individuals, as well as emphasizing individual well-being, which is crucial to achieving self-goals.

According to the Cambridge dictionary (2025), incarceration is the act of putting or keeping someone in prison or in a place used as a prison. By Webster (2025), incarceration describes a confining or state of being confined. Incarceration centres, also known for sharing features and activities similar to correctional, reformatory or custodial centres, are facilities where individuals accused or convicted of violating the criminal laws of a state are detained and kept in custody. These centres serve as places of punishment to hold individuals who have been arrested, or awaiting trial, or have been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for crimes committed, with the aim of ensuring restraint and custody of offenders, ranging from short duration to long sentences. Igbinovia and Omorogiuwa (2019), described a reformatory centre as a total institution or a place of residence and work, where a large number of like-situated individuals are cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time together. Similarly, Hallajian (2018) defined it as a reform school or juvenile detention facility designed to rehabilitate individuals who have committed offenses or engaged in delinquent behaviours, typically juveniles, and securing them while awaiting trial or have been convicted of crimes. These individuals, known as inmates, are kept in continuous custody on a short or long-term basis. These centres are provided to serve various functions as: **retribution, thereby**

providing inmates a measure of punishment for the crime(s) committed; incapacitation, thereby preventing offenders from committing further crimes while incarcerated (Lippke, 2003); deterrence, by discouraging others from committing similar crimes; and rehabilitation, wherein programmes designed to reform and help offenders reintegrate into society are taught. Thus, reformation and correctional activities are designed in these institutions to address the causes of offenses through education, training, and behavioural modification programmes.

There are various types of incarceration centres which include, but not limited to **jails** for individuals awaiting trial or serving short sentences, and often managed by local law enforcement agencies; **prisons** for longer-term sentences, often operated by state or federal governments; **correctional centres which broadly includes** various types of facilities designated by law to hold individuals accused or convicted of violating criminal laws within a country (Correctional Centre, 2019 ); **detention centres** for individuals awaiting deportation, particularly those who have entered a country illegally (Cambridge Dictionary); **juvenile detention centres which are** specifically designed for youths who have been arrested or charged with crimes, offering a range of services for rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

In Abba and Alkali (2021), Nigeria Prison Service (NPS) was formally re-named as Nigeria Correctional Service (NCS) following a Bill for an Act to repeal the Prisons Act Cap. P29 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004. This change of nomenclature is to underscore the human aspect of the reform focus of prisons administration, and conform to

provisions in the international instrument. The service, which according to Hassan and Oloyede (2013) is exclusively a Federal Government concern and phenomenon with the constitutional responsibility to operate or maintain inmates' correctional service or custodial centres. The institution is empowered to keep custody of people who are legally detained and to reproduce inmates in various courts when called upon to do so (Cap P. 29 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004). It is also vested with the responsibility of reformation, rehabilitation, reintegration of inmates into its care, such that these inmates are returned into the society as useful and obedient citizens.

In Nigeria, the NCS derives its operational powers from the Nigerian Correction Service Act, 2019 and operates facilities that serve as correctional institutions for offenders of all ages, including juveniles. **Orakwe (2019) in The Origin of Corrections in Nigeria informed that** the passage of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019 was an effort to comply with international best practice, which will place the Nigerian Correctional Service in a better position to achieve the aim of imprisonment. It is worthy to note however, that re-integrating ex-inmates into society is a complex issue that is multi-faceted and counselling has been recognized as one of the approaches that are desirable to achieve this, although at times it is inadequate to fully accomplish re-integration.

Counselling service in various incarceration confines therefore focuses at a range of psycho-social services meant to assist an inmate address convicting issues; make relevant decisions that will repair the criminal behaviour(s) for which he was incarcerated; adjust to the new life; give re-integration

training and support which prepares him for the post-incarceration life when he can return to his family and community and become a productive member. This service can be provided individually or in groups, depending on the specific issue of concern to be addressed. According to Van Voorhis and Braswell (2000), the main essence of counselors in correctional centres is to intervene therapeutically with various offenders on prison adjustment, pre-release and post-release vocational and marital/family readjustment, and work with adolescent adjustment problems. This was buttressed in Omoni and Ijeh (2009), which stated that reformation centres must be a centre for information for settling down at the commencement of incarceration; information towards transforming; and not a centre for punishment. In other words, the purpose of reformation centre should be to train inmates through appropriate conditions, so they can become better citizens on release. To achieve these therefore, it becomes imperative to provide effective reformatory counselling programmes and activities that will re-orientate them to have stable minds, as well as improve their inter-personal relationship with the outside world.

Counselling is a fundamental component of rehabilitation in incarceration or confinement facilities towards social integration. Thus, counselling activities are targeted at reformation of offenders/inmates on socio-personal skills, educational proficiency or skills acquisition towards vocational development. The re-entry process of transitioning from confinement to the community has received increased attention among scholars like Mallik-Kane (2008, in Li, 2025) who attested that it is important that services provided to incarcerated individuals specifically target their individual needs, since effective

re-entry practices recognize the important relationship that must be established between behavioral, physical and relational health (APA, 2017; in Li, 2025), thereby buttressing Voorhis and Braswell (2000), whose study affirmed that preparing inmates for life after completion of term is important for re-entry of inmates into employability, workforce participation and inter-relationships.

Understanding the influence of counseling activities on inmates is very crucial for the development and improvement of rehabilitation strategies within correctional settings. Counselling reformatory programmes for inmates are expected to be in any form of educationally-designed activities targeted towards: corrective measures; actively encouraging inmates become law abiding citizens; equipping inmates with new attitudes, appropriate mental abilities and moral values (Manoj & Manish, 2024). The intention should be towards reducing criminal engagement; pacifying and re-assuring inmates who need psychologically support; inspiring hope; settle inmates to skills acquisition; teach interpersonal relation; and providing other educational programmes necessary towards post incarceration. In other words, these programmes should encompass all forms of training undertaken by inmates for correction purposes. Since these centres are not only to restrict offenders who had gone against societal norms, but also to reform them towards becoming better citizens, good reformation programmes should therefore be directed at reducing the rate at which inmates will return to their previous behavioural patterns which is also termed as recidivism, and more importantly preparing them to face life anew.

The re-entry process of transitioning from

confinement to the community could also differ from the regular citizens because their incarceration history may limit their acceptance into legitimate labour market due to stigmatization, and are only likely to be engaged in low-wages, and/or low-skill employments. This probability has received increased attention among scholars like Connell *et al.* (2023), Mallik-Kane (2008); and APA (2017), in Li (2025) who affirmed that people released from prison experience challenges in re-settling into the community because employment rates are low, but with multiple interventions to support inmates into quality employment on release, they can be protected against future re-offending. To this effect, it becomes imperative to assist ex-inmates, even for those considered for amnesty, to receive appropriate education, counselling, rehabilitation and integration that would make their re-entry comfortable; otherwise, the non-provision of assistance may be strong incentives to commit survival crimes which are threats to the peace of the society.

Despite the efforts of successive counselling activities towards reformation of inmates in Nigeria, the condition faced by inmates in Nigeria is unsavory, as inmates are still observed to be some of the most mal-adjusted people in the society contrary to the expectations that the interventions ought to have positive impact on the lives and vocations of inmates. This observation has raised questions that have not yet been completely addressed on the systemic functionality and achievement of reformatory and corrective outcomes in the lives of inmates in these centres, hence creating a gap which has necessitated this research work to examine the influence of counseling activities on inmates in correctional centres in southwest Nigeria.

**Research questions:**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

What are the various types of counselling activities available to inmates in correctional centres in southwest Nigeria?

What are the influences of counselling activities on inmates in correctional centres in southwest Nigeria?

What satisfaction do inmates derive from counselling activities in correctional centres in southwest Nigeria?

**Significance of the study**

The findings could provide insights to the government, management of correctional centres, society, inmates and researchers on the efficacy of counseling programmes and potentially contribute to the enhancement of inmate well-being and preparatory for life after confinement. It would be significant to the government as it would expose them to the reality of what is operational in these centres such that they can take active steps that will assist holistic well-being of inmates during incarceration, and successful societal reintegration at post-incarceration, thereby reducing recidivism rates in the society. This study hopes that administrators in inmates' centres will realize the needs to engage counsellors for rehabilitation activities, so as to reduce recidivism after release. It would be significant to policy makers who will influence policies on provisions to be made to inmates by way of reformation programmes, and improved infrastructural facilities to be provided to strengthen guidance and counselling in reformation sector.

The findings of this study would expose counsellors to what should be done in order to coordinate rehabilitation activities appropriately, such that it would meet the individual needs of inmates, improve their psychological well-being, enhance their socio-interpersonal skills, encourage positive adjustment to the new experience and other relevant support. These might include acquisition of necessary tools and equipment, and effective vocational training programme that would be needed as upkeep towards easy adjustment through the period of inmate confinement. The inmates could also benefit from this study as it will draw their attention to the need to seek for adequate counselling intervention as the need arises so it would foster a sense of self-worth in them, help them adjust to the confinement, provide support which eventually prepares them for a responsible future. The outcome of the research may also assist existing and future counsellors in inmate services on the nature and extent of guidance needs among this special population.

**Objectives of the study**

The main purpose of the study was to examine the influence of counseling activities on inmates in incarceration centres in southwest Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives were to:

- examine the various types of counselling activities available to inmates in incarceration centres in southwest Nigeria.
- determine the influence of counselling activities on inmates in incarceration centres in southwest Nigeria
- confirm the satisfaction derived by inmates from counselling activities in incarceration centres in southwest Nigeria.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research design*

A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study.

### *Population of the study*

The population of the study consisted of inmates in incarceration centres in south-west Nigeria.

### *Sample and sampling techniques*

Three states were selected out of the six states that make up south west, Nigeria using convenience sampling technique. Four reformation centres were selected from the three states using purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique was also adopted in each of these reformation centres using the inclusion criterion to select two hundred and fifty five (255) eligible respondents.

### *Instrument*

This research adopted an instrument titled: Counselling Activities on Inmates (CAI), to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section A contained items to gather demographic information of respondents. Section B had concentrated items measuring the various types of counselling activities available to inmates in the correctional centres; Section C strictly measured the influence of counselling activities on inmates; while Section D focused on items on the extent of satisfaction of inmates with counselling activities provided in their respective centres

### *Validity of Instrument*

The face and content validity of the instrument was established by colleagues that are experts in test and measurement. Corrections were effected before re-production

was made.

### *Reliability of Instrument*

The test re-test method was employed to determine the internal consistency of the instrument, while Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was administered twice to a set of twenty (20) inmates who were not part of the respondents.

### *Inclusion criterion*

The criterion emphasized the ability of the participant to read, understand the content and respond appropriately.

### *Procedure for Administration of Instrument*

Prior to data administration, the selected centres were visited and stamped authorization sought from the relevant authorities. Some officers in the centres assisted to identify inmates who fall within the inclusion criterion and administration of the questionnaire was done. Compliance to the instructions was ensured and completed questionnaires were retrieved upon completion. The instruments were administered in all the selected centres within two weeks.

### *Method of Data Analysis*

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis

## RESULTS

A total of 125 respondents were drawn from two incarceration centres in Osun State while 130 were drawn from one incarceration centre each in Oyo and Ondo States (Table 1). The age range of participants from Ondo and Oyo States was from 10 years upwards while those in the two centres in Osun State ranged from 18 years upwards.

65.88% of total participants were males while 34.12% were females (Table 1).

***Table 1: Distribution of inmates according to centre, age and gender***

<b>Name of Correctional Centre</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Number of Inmates</b>		
Akure (Ondo State)	30	11.71
Agodi (Oyo State)	100	39.23
Ife Reformation Centre (Osun state)	50	29.43
Ilesa Reformation Centre (Osun State)	75	19.63
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age (Oyo &amp; Ondo States)</b>		
10 -15 yrs.	2	0.78
16-20 yrs.	11	4.31
21-25 yrs	34	13.33
26 and above	83	32.55
<b>Age (Osun State)</b>		
18 -30 yrs.	70	27.45
31-40 yrs.	32	12.55
41-50 yrs	17	6.67
51 and above	6	2.35
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
<b>Oyo &amp; Ondo</b>		
Male	92	36.08
Female	38	14.90
<b>Osun State</b>		
Male	76	29.80
Female	49	19.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>100</b>

*Research question 1*

What are the various types of counselling activities available to inmates?

Personal development, vocational training, transitional support, and psycho-education ranked as the four topmost types of counselling activities available to inmates in correctional centres in Oyo and Ondo States (Table 2). Also identified by inmates as other counselling activities provided in the cen-

tres were: group counselling through bringing inmates with similar experiences together for mutual support, empathy and shared learning; involving inmates and their family members to address interpersonal conflicts, communication breakdown and issues related to separation; and providing family therapy to rebuild relationships, foster understanding and promote healthy communication patterns (Table 2).

**Table 2: Types of counselling activities available to inmates in Oyo and Ondo States**

Items	Total % response		Chi square	Mean	Rank
	Agree	Disagree			
Personal development rehabilitation counselling activities	92.3	7.7	8.765	3.48	1st
Vocational counselling and job readiness training to prepare inmates for employment opportunities upon release	99.2	0.8	0.759	3.35	2nd
Transitional counselling to assist inmates with reintegration into society, including housing assistance, employment support and access to community resources	86.9	13.1	5.062	3.29	3rd
Psycho-education workshops on topics like mental health awareness, communication skills, decision-making, and relapse prevention	91.6	8.4	10.310	3.25	4th
Bringing inmates with similar experiences, providing opportunities for mutual support, empathy and shared learning	86.9	13.1	10.194	3.17	5th
Counseling sessions involving inmates and their family members to address interpersonal conflicts, communication breakdown and issues related to separation	77.7	22.3	4.843	3.10	6th
Family therapy to rebuild relationships, foster understanding and promote healthy communication patterns	84.6	15.3	21.681	3.10	7th

\*Significant at 5%; p-Value is 0.000; df = 3; n = 130



The four topmost ranked types of counselling activities available to inmates in correctional centres in Osun State were: Psycho-education workshops on mental health awareness, communication skills, decision-making and relapse prevention; personalized counseling sessions; vocational and job readiness training, and mental health counseling and psychiatric services (Table 3). Other activities ranked lower were: goal setting and planning for personal development and rehabilitation; family therapies to rebuild relationships, foster understanding, and promote healthy communication patterns; bringing inmates with similar experiences together for mutual support, empathy, and shared learning (Table 3). Each of these activities was valuable in assisting inmates develop the capacity towards self-sustenance after incarceration.

**Table 3: Types of counselling activities provided to inmates in Osun state**

Items	Total % response		Chi square	Mean	Rank
	Agree	Disagree			
Psycho-education workshops on topics like mental health awareness, communication skills, decision-making, and relapse prevention	91.2	8.8	5.073*	3.26	1st
One-on-one sessions between a counselor and an inmate	92.8	7.2	10.935*	3.26	2nd
Vocational counseling and job readiness training to prepare inmates for employment opportunities upon release	91.2	8.8	5.546*	3.22	3rd
Mental health counseling and psychiatric services for inmates with diagnosed mental illness such as depression	86.4	13.6	6.609*	3.18	4th
Goal setting and planning for personal development and rehabilitation	88.8	11.2	8.011*	3.14	5th
Family therapy to rebuild relationships, foster understanding, and promote healthy communication patterns	83.2	16.8	2.911*	3.14	6th
Bringing inmates with similar experiences, providing opportunities for mutual support, empathy, and shared learning	88.0	12.0	3.719*	3.13	7th

\*Significant at 5%; p-Value is 0.000; df = 3; n = 125

**Research question 2****What are the influences of counselling activities on inmates?**

The highest ranking influences of counselling activities on inmates in Oyo and Ondo states correctional centres were identified (Table 4) as: enabling inmates to learn alternative strategies for problem-solving and decision making, fostering self-awareness, addressing mal-adaptive behaviours, promoting peaceful conflict resolution. Other

activities ranked lower as constituting other influences of counselling activities on inmates in these two States were: enabling inmates to take responsibility for their behaviour; helping inmates receive outside support concerning personal issues; offering a safe and supportive space for inmates to manage depression, anxieties, past trauma; and assisting inmates to address their underlying issues (Table 4).

**Table 4: Influence of counselling activities on inmates in Oyo and Ondo States**

Items	Total % response		Chi square	Mean	Rank
	Agree	Disagree			
Enable inmates to learn alternative strategies for problem-solving and decision making	84.6	15.4	10.945	3.09	1st
Enable inmates gain insight into the consequences of their actions	83.1	16.9	8.142	3.09	2nd
Help to address mal-adaptive behaviours and thought patterns that contribute to criminal conduct	79.2	20.8	3.168	3.02	3rd
Help inmates learn to resolve conflicts peacefully, build healthy relationships and collaborate effectively with others	74.6	25.4	21.434	2.99	4th
Enable inmates to take responsibility for their behaviour	76.9	2.3	2.407	2.93	5th
Help inmates receive outside support concerning personal issues	75.3	24.7	7.208	2.90	6th
Offer a safe and supportive space for inmates to manage depression, anxieties, past trauma, address underlying issues	74.6	25.4	7.506	2.90	7th

\*Significant at 5%; p-Value is 0.000; df = 3; n = 130

Inmates in Osun state centres affirmed that what constitute the four highest ranking influence of counselling activities on them were the ability of these activities to: (i) help inmates learn to resolve conflicts peacefully build healthy relationships and collaborate effectively with others; (ii) assist them in learning healthy ways to express emotions and identify triggers; (iii) help inmates acquire the capacity to foster social skills development, empathy and constructive communication among themselves; (iv) enable inmates to take responsibility for their behaviours (Table 5). Further responses confirmed other influences of counselling activities to include: helping inmates develop effective coping mechanisms to manage stress, anger and anxiety; enabling inmates gain insight into the consequences of their actions; and helping to prepare inmates and their families for successful reintegration into the community (Table 5).

**Table 5: Influence of counselling activities on inmates in Osun State**

Items	Total % response		Mean	Rank
	A	D		
Help inmates learn to resolve conflicts peacefully, build healthy relationships, and collaborate effectively with others.	95.2	4.8	3.33	1st
With counselling sessions, inmates learn healthy ways to express emotions and identify triggers	92.8	7.2	3.28	2nd
Foster social skills development, empathy, and constructive communication among inmates.	91.2	8.8	3.27	3rd
Enable inmates to take responsibility for their behaviour	91.2	88.8	3.25	4th
Help inmates develop effective coping mechanisms to manage stress, anger and anxiety	86.4	13.6	3.25	5th
Enable inmates gain insight into the consequences of their actions	88.0	12.0	3.22	6th
Help to prepare both inmates and their families for successful reintegration into the community	92.8	7.2	3.21	7th

\*Significant at 5%; p-Value is 0.000; df = 3; n = 125

### **Research question three**

What satisfaction do inmates derive from counselling activities in correctional centres in southwest Nigeria?

Responses of inmates in Oyo and Ondo State centres as conveyed in ranking re-

vealed the inmates' expression of areas of satisfaction with counselling activities to include satisfaction with: the enhancement of decision-making, provision of support towards positive decision making, provision of required opportunities and necessary re-

sources to assist their experiences in the correctional centres, developing emotional well-being, giving great mental and cognitive awareness on increasing career interest, and consistent motivation of inmates towards reformatory and post-incarceration success (Table 6),

**Table 6: Satisfaction of inmates with counselling activities in Oyo and Ondo States**

Items	Total % response		Chi square	Mean	Rank
	Agree	Disagree			
Guidance and counselling activities change the way I make decision	90.8	9.2	13.589	3.34	1st
Guidance and counselling activities have been a support programme for me	96.9	3.0	3.671	3.32	2nd
Guidance and counselling activities motivate me when making difficult decisions in correctional centres	96.9	3.1	7.080	3.23	3rd
Guidance and counselling activities have provided all the required opportunities and resources to assist my experience in this correctional centre	96.9	3.1	2.173	3.22	4th
Guidance and counselling activities have developed me emotionally	93.1	6.9	4.156	3.22	5th
Organization of different career programmes in this correctional centre has given me great mental and cognitive awareness on my career interest	91.5	8.5	1.513	3.22	6th
My counsellor always motivates me to be more successful in life after reformatory and correlational services	96.2	3.8	6.206	3.20	7th

\*Significant at 5%; p-Value is 0.000; df = n = 130;

Ranking the satisfaction of inmates in Osun State centres with counseling activities, the order was observed in the following aspects: the offer of support programmes that motivate inmates in handling tasks in preparation to become more successful in life after incarceration, the ability to encourage inmates to get involved in productive activities, positively assisting inmates' relationship with their families, empowering inmates with the ability to change the way they process and make decisions, as well as provision and organization of different career programmes which have given inmates great mental and cognitive awareness on career interactions (Table 7).

**Table 7: Satisfaction of Inmates' with counselling activities in Osun State**

Items	Total % response		C h i square	Mean	Rank
	A	D			
Guidance and counselling activities motivate me in handling tasks	91.2	8.8	3.502*	3.31	1st
My counsellor always motivates me to be more successful in life after reformatory and correlational services	93.6	6.4	2.500*	3.30	2nd
Counsellors have encouraged me to get involved in productive activities in the reformatory centre	90.4	9.6	0.660*	3.29	3rd
Guidance and counselling activities has positively assisted my relationship with my family	93.6	6.4	2.770*	3.29	4th
Guidance and counselling activities change the way I make decisions	90.4	9.9	2.142*	3.26	5th
Organization of different career programmes in this reformatory centre has given me great mental and cognitive awareness on my career interaction.	97.6	2.4	2.846*	3.25	6th
Guidance and counselling activities have been support program for me	87.2	12.8	3.036*	3.232	7th

\*Significant at 5%; p-Value is 0.000; df = n = 125

## DISCUSSION

Findings on the various types of counselling activities available to inmates in Oyo and Ogun States incarceration centres collectively aim to enhance inmates' personal growth, employment prospects, and re-integration into the society, while addressing mental health, communication, and familial relationships to reduce recidivism and promote successful societal re-entry. In Osun State also, the existence of various types of counselling activities available to inmates implied that the centres are mindful of the need to support inmates' transition, development and re-entry. Inmates found no preferred option between individual therapy and group counseling as both processes help inmates enhance their self-image and accept personal responsibility. The results support Lawal *et al.* (2021), whose study reported that rehabilitative counseling programmes promote independent relevance of inmates towards post-incarceration survival. Similarly, Chen and Shields (2020), emphasized that vocational and career well-being are crucial for the successful re-integration of ex-offenders, enabling them to become productive and useful members of the society. Findings in Anyanwu *et al.* (2018), found dissonance that although vocational education is provided in Enugu prisons, the practical aspects of the preferred activities are often neglected, leading to low interest in counselling activities among inmates. The study also found credence in Mukeredzi (2021), which confirmed that prisoners engage in educative activities for self-improvement towards post-release employment, to prevent relapse into criminal activities, and to occupy their time lucratively.

On the influence of counseling activities in Oyo and Ondo States correctional centres,

inmates conceived counseling activities as influencing learning healthy ways to express emotions and identify triggers, resolving conflicts peacefully, building healthy relationships, and effective collaboration, fostering social skills development, fostering personal accountability and self-reflection, effective coping mechanisms to manage stress, anger, and anxiety, building empathy, and constructive communication with others. This explains that counseling plays diverse roles in helping inmates develop emotional awareness, manage their responses effectively, and contribute to their personal growth in the rehabilitation journey. These echo the sentiments of Tenibiaje (2020), who emphasized the pivotal role of counseling in empowering inmates through attitudinal and behavioral modifications aimed at curbing criminal tendencies. Lawal *et al.* (2021) also acknowledged the multifaceted objectives of counseling rehabilitation programmes on post-incarceration expectations among female inmates towards independent survival without constant financial reliance on others, which are achieved in emotional distress alleviation, fostering of positive shifts in inmates' perceptions, thoughts, lifestyle and enhancement of self-awareness. Thus, counseling emerges as a trans-formative tool that not only addresses immediate behavioral issues but also cultivates long-term personal growth and resilience among incarcerated individuals, ultimately contributing to their successful rehabilitation and reintegration into the society

The topmost priority areas in which guidance and counseling activities have satisfied the needs of inmates in the centres of study were indicated as; motivation of inmates in handling tasks, towards becoming more successful in life, and positively assisting their relationship with their families through fol-

low-up services. These views were consistent with the findings of Sofyan and Willis (2014), who emphasized the value of counseling activities, especially individual counselling as, developing the client's potential for independent problem-solving, while Baji (2020), expressed that counselling activities help prisoners to overcome culture shock, make meaningful self-exploration and reintegrate into the society as valuable members to a great extent.

### CONCLUSION

The study revealed that inmates expressed high satisfaction with counseling activities and reported that these activities motivate them. The activities essentially support their post-reformatory success, encourage productive engagement, improve decision-making, enhance career awareness, and positively impact relationship with their families. The counseling activities are satisfactory to the inmates; they motivate and support their post-reformatory success. The activities encourage productive engagement, provide essential support, improve decision-making, enhance career awareness, and positively impact relationship with their family

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

Counselling intervention and skills building should commence at entry, as most inmates usually do not usually have any stable means of income before incarceration.

There is the need to improve on the rehabilitative aspect of counselling activities

Correctional institutions should increase access to psycho-education by providing more workshops on topics such as mental health awareness, communication skills, decision-making, and relapse prevention.

Concentration should be on personalized support plans tailored to each inmate's specific needs and circumstances, so as to match individual interests and job market demands, as this will ensure effective rehabilitation and reintegration.

More efforts should be geared towards strengthening family therapy programmes to rebuild relationships, foster inmates self-esteem, and support inmates' reintegration into the community

Implementing effective post- incarceration referral and follow-up activities to monitor inmates' progress, address ongoing challenges, and adjust counseling strategies as needed for continuous support.

Professional competence in counselling staffing should not be compromised

Rehabilitative plans for inmates' post-incarceration survival should include comprehensive transitional support in housing, gainful employment, and access to community resources, to facilitate smoother reintegration into society and reduce recidivism.

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