

INFLUENCE OF PRISON EDUCATION PROGRAMMES ON PERFORMANCE OF EX-CONVICT SMALL SCALE BUSINESS VENTURES IN TAITA TAVETA COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

European Prison Education Association (EPEA) sees prison education as a moral right that meets a basic human need. Similarly, the advocacy of human rights claims that people held in prison are citizens, and that citizens are entitled to life-long education to ensure their full development, therefore prisoners should be offered meaningful education hence education is a very important human activity. It helps any society fashion and model individuals to function well in their environment. The purpose of education is to equip the citizenry to reshape their society and eliminate inequality. This study therefore sought to examine the influence of prison education programme on performance of ex-convict small scale business venture in Taita Taveta County, Kenya. The objective of the study was: To establish how entrepreneurial skill influences performance of ex-convict small scale business ventures. Data was collected by use of a semi-structured questionnaire and an interview schedule from the target population. The study focused on a total of 300 ex-convicts in Taita Taveta County that hosts four penal institutions namely; Voi prison, Taveta prison, Wundanyi and Manyani Maximum Security prison. From the four penal institutions in Taita Taveta county the data base for release (those completely served sentence, paid fine, power of mercy and appeal on the sentence) for three years (2012-2014) indicates 1,800 out of which 300 are from the Taita Taveta locality. The researcher also targeted 80 prison technical instructors who are tasked in training the inmates stationed in four penal institutions in Taita Taveta County. The researcher sampled 60 ex-convict and 16 prison technical instructors for the study. From the findings of the study, it was concluded that majority of small scale business ex-convicts had entrepreneurial skills. The prison education programme was found to be of great benefit to the ex-convicts. It was recommended that development and coordination of re-integration programme activities with conjunction with community based stakeholders and NGOs to receive immediate attention and form a core part of a new after care policy; the Kenya prison should work with the county governments to assist in reintegration of ex-convicts back in the society and assist them in starting businesses through funding and subsidized business registration. The government should also assist them through the Uwezo fund to start off their business venture and update prisoner earning scheme to reflect the current economic status.

Keywords; prison education programmes, ex-convicts, small scale businesses

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INTRODUCTION

Prison education and training have a significant role to play in the daily life of the prisoner as well as significant consequences for resettlement on release. The idea of prison as a positive environment for learning is wide-reaching and the application of the concept appears to vary considerably from country to country, (Sims, 2008). The European Prison Education Association (EPEA) sees prison education as a moral right that meets a basic human need. Similarly, the advocacy of human rights lies behind the council of EPEA (1990), which according to Costelloe and Warner (2008) claims that people held in prison are citizens, citizens are entitled to lifelong education to ensure their full development, therefore prisoners should be offered meaningful education.

We cannot change the behavior by locking it away and forgetting about it, this much has been proven already. There are those criminals that defiantly need to spend their lives behind bars and deserve probably far worse than even that, but for the mass amount of those incarcerated, change needs to happen. We need to invest in more rehabilitation programs for our juveniles and adult inmates that are convicted on non-violent, non-serious offenses so we can start putting money back into society, rather than taking it away and stop the cycle, (Schneider, Gruman & Coutts, 2012). Garland (2000) expresses that informal social controls can be an effective strategy to reduce unruly behavior and that community policing measures in the realization that informal social control exercised through everyday relationships and institutions is more effective than legal sanctions. Garland

continues to argue that informal social control methods, has demonstrated a get tough attitude by proactive citizens, and expresses a sense that disorderly conduct is not tolerated.

Numerous studies done by; Wilson and Kelling (2002); Kibui (2007); Schneider, Gruman & Coutts (2012); Newman (1972) have shown that rehabilitation programs, education, therapy, and vocational training have a significant effect on not only bettering the inmate, but on society as well because they are able to become productive members of society, rather than hindrances. The average benefit of rehabilitation programs for society when put back in for every dollar spent on those programs is great. This means rather than depleting our economic resources, we can increase them exponentially (Schneider, Gruman, & Coutts. 2012) by teaching them job skills and coping abilities, we are preparing them to be able to function normally rather than just returning them to the streets, often times even more dangerous than when they first detained. Many of the inmates that have been able to go through rehabilitative programs give back to the community by being a mentor for someone else in need as well.

After conducting a comprehensive literature search, Lois et al (2011) undertook a meta-analysis to examine the association between correctional education and reductions in recidivism, improvements in employment after release from prison, and learning in math and in reading. Their findings support the premise that receiving correctional education while incarcerated reduces an individual's risk of recidivating. They also found that those receiving correctional education had

improved odds of obtaining employment after release. The authors also examined the benefits of computer-assisted learning and compared the costs of prison education programs with the costs of reincarceration.

Batiuk, (2005) postulates that engaging in illegal activity triggers a series of negative life outcomes at both individual and communal levels. Individuals in the criminal legal system experience lower levels of educational attainment and employment rates, higher rates of personal injury, worse mental health outcomes, and more complicated family support systems than non-criminalized people. Socially, the costs of illegal activities and criminal records lead to the outrageously high costs of punishment in society, reduced safety in communities, increased health care costs, increased educational and training costs, decreased property values, reduced future civic (e.g., voting) and economic contributions of criminalized individuals, and the potential of greater illegal behavior and worsening underlying social conditions for another generation-further deteriorating communities as viable places to live and support their members. When people in prison and those returning to communities are better able to attain higher educations, decent jobs, housing, and childcare for their children, the rest of us benefit as well. When people are productively employed, communities become safer, experience healthier populations, reduce poverty and improve human and social capital (Aos, Millerq & Drake, 2006).

A meta-analysis of the impact of college education in prison on post-release outcomes argues that methodologically sound observational studies support the

conclusion that correctional education reduces recidivism and enhances employment for people formerly incarcerated (Gaes, 2008; Vacca, 2004). Prison-based college education programming has also been shown to increase probabilities for enhanced problem-solving skills, improve self-esteem, increase opportunities for steady employment and safety on the outside, and provide safer and more manageable conditions inside prison (Contardo & Tolbert; Crayton & Neusteter; Karpowitz, 2005; Karpowitz & Kenner; Ross & Gangi, 2009; Winterfield *et al.*, 2009).

The Ghana Government has realized the need to find alternative means of responding to the educational needs of her people. PSIDL open schooling in technical and vocational education and training aimed at providing learners with livelihood skills and the prisons project that targets prison inmates interested in acquiring skills vital for re-integration into society upon their release.

While acknowledging the role of education in the prisons, Asiedu (2001) urged the prison administration to provide prisoners with facilities to promote their formal and informal education within the prisons service and institutions under its administration. Asiedu (2001) further stressed that although the prisoners may be incarcerated as a punishment, every thing done to avoid creating bitterness and resentment in them is ultimately for the good of the society to which they will eventually return. All programmes for civic or social education for the rest of the community may diminish in value, if prisoners are neglected in the national effort for general re-education.

The best that can be done to the prisons staff in Kenya to reform the department; so as to ensure performance and efficiency in rehabilitation, is to ensure that the present and future prison officers are trained in relevant disciplines for their work. In terms of training for the job, the core function of reformation and rehabilitation require that prison officers must first accept that prisoners are incarcerated as a punishment and not for punishment, and they must have the ability to facilitate behaviour and attitude change. This requires that professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologists, pastors, professional counsellors, social workers, sociologists, criminologists and other social scientists should serve as uniformed officers who come into contact with the prisoners daily because only such experts have what it takes to make positive changes in the human mind: where criminality is fostered. This is not the case as studies show that a good number of prisoners have attained university and college education compared to the prison officers, (Omboto, 2010).

Help Child/Mother Organization (HCMO) has developed an educational and life skills training program for the prisons. In implementing the project, HCMO has been granted permission by the Kenya prisons to facilitate proposed programs with Kamiti prison as a pilot project with room to expand to other prisons as resources allow. Activities include educating the inmates, their children, training of prison officers and training of trainers (TOT) for inmates and prison officers. The objective for TOT is to facilitate future trainings by inmates and staff as HCMO moves to other prisons. The outreach for inmates is

in preparation for integration into society upon release, (Kenya Prison, 2012).

The successful reentry of an individual back into the community can depend on a wide range of factors depending on the person's particular needs, including employment, housing, education, physical and mental health and domestic violence needs, substance use treatment, family support, and community resources. However, a recent summary of research consistently shows that education in prison, and even more so prison-based college education, is a key resource in lowering recidivism rates (Armstrong, Giever & Lee, 2012).

The prison system was introduced in the British East Africa Protectorate with the enactment of East African Prisons Regulation in April, 1902. The mandate of Kenya prison comes from; constitution of Kenya, Cap. 90 Cap. 92 laws of Kenya, children's act 2001, probations act, the betting lotteries and gaming act, community service, the code of regulations, financial management act, the procurement and disposal act of 2001, the public service act cap. 185 personnel, treasury and other circulars (UNODC, 2012). Just like any other prison in the world, the Kenya prison has its well defined functions that include containing in safe custody, rehabilitation and reformation of prisoners for social re integration, facilitation of administration of justice, containing and rehabilitating young offenders in borstal, institution and youth corrective training Centre, provision of care for children aged 4 years and below who are accompanying their mothers to prison, (Griffiths & Murdoch, 2009).

Due to democratization and enlightenment on human rights issued in the 1990s, the Kenya Prison service came under pressure to allow members of the public know how the prisons are managed and to what extend prisoners` human rights are observed. In the year 2000, the service adopted the Open Door Policy (ODP) allowing members of public especially human rights activists and the press access to prisons. This has contributed immensely to collaboration with stakeholders leading to improvement in prisoner rehabilitation programmes as a result of contribution from Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and faith based organizations. Currently there are about 52,000 inmates against staff strength of 20,008 country wide and 1401 inmates against 678 staff strength in Taita Taveta County.

Prisoners face the consequences of the negative social stigma that follows a crime conviction. They may also have a history of isolation and marginalization physical emotional abuse, poor employment or unemployment, and involvement in a criminal life style that began at an early age. According to Muchiri (2009) governments and states spend an exurbanite amount of money to punish these criminals and then just setting them loose with no life or job skills to become productive members of society again. They in turn go back to criminal activities and end up right back in the justice system. By teaching them job skills and coping abilities, they are prepared to be able to function normally. Many of the inmates that have been able to go through rehabilitative programs become productive and add economic value to the community. With the rising level of

unemployment especially in Kenya, there is need to impact skills that will equip inmates and ex-convicts to start and run businesses for their economic support and contribute towards self-supporting communities (penal reform international, 2012). Once the inmate is institutionalized, they are no longer able to function normally in society. They lose proper socialization skills and coping abilities to handle the stresses and pressure they encounter once they are released hence the meaning of rehabilitation is lost. Many times they cannot get a job or assistance in finding somewhere to live, so they turn back to life crime because it is the only thing they know, thus completing the vicious circle. Research has shown that rehabilitation programs along with shorter prison stays are more effective in preventing crime than mere punishment alone. Although the ex-convicts get funding by donors to start up their enterprises many have been reported to collapse before the end of two years. The inability to sustain themselves and their dependents leads to frustration and disappointment hence the ex-convicts turn back to criminal activities. This study therefore sought to find out the influence of entrepreneurial skills on growth of small business venture by ex-convicts in Taita Taveta County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Prisons in Kenya offer various educational and technical training to both female and male inmates that include: carpentry, joinery, masonry, hairdressing, tailoring and dress making, weaving, art and sculpture, theology, computer studies, mechanics, building and construction among others. These programmes are offered to equip the inmates with skills and

expertise to enable them to be of economic benefit when they are in prison and when they leave the prison, be role models, be self-sustainable, sustain their families and be useful to the community. These education programmes go a long way to help the inmates to avoid recidivism.

Garavan and O’Cinnéide (1994) identifies opportunity, evaluation, business plan, resource gathering, incorporation, market entry and market penetration as precursors of entrepreneurship. Baron (2004) refers to entrepreneurship process as screening ideas for feasibility; assembling needed resources; and actually developing a new business. While prisoners are equipped with training, skills and ideas on business start-ups, they continue to struggle with challenges of resources and penetrating the market (Rosa et al., 1996). This is supported by Hisrich & Peters (2002) who articulate that stages of entrepreneurial process include identifying and evaluating the opportunity; developing the business plan; determining the resources required; and managing the resulting enterprise. Rwigema & Venter (2004) also put forward that successful entrepreneur identifies, measures and refines an opportunity from multiple ideas; formulates a realistic business plan; amasses resources and oversees creation and growth of the new venture.

Support for inmate entrepreneurship is not one-dimensional, however; research from developing nations suggests that inmate support can be conditioned by interrelated factors both within and beyond social attitudes and that income generation can depend with relative status (Njeru & Mjoka, 2001). In an inherently resource-constrained context such as the social status of prisoners, manifold obstacles

prevent all but the most determined entrepreneurs from perceiving and pursuing opportunities, because of obstructed access to resources and the presence of social risks. However, some inmate entrepreneurs do succeed, and their new ventures conform to a wide range of theoretical models highlighting various inter-related concepts of value creation, pursuit of opportunity, use of resources, feasibility and planning (Timmons, 2003; Hart et al., 1997).

Entrepreneurial talent exists in all human beings but its emergence depends upon creating awareness, providing motivational factors and building self-confidence in addition to acquiring management skills for tackling problems and calculating risks in running day-to-day business operations and development (Allen & Truman, 1993). Empirical research suggests that these skills can be developed in humans by imparting training and providing on-the-job assistance (Carter & Anderson, 2001; Gorman et al., 1997; McMullen & Long, 1987) that result in the establishment and development of new enterprises. However, lack of access to training and advisory services is one of the main reasons often pin-pointed to explain the non-existence, failure and under-performance of entrepreneurs (Brown et al., 2002; Brush & Hisrich, 2002). Additionally, the wrong sorts of training and support can be ineffective, especially when they fail to achieve access to social capital or cannot operate properly within larger social institutions (Chrisman et al., 2005). In a field of endeavour where relationships are crucial to success, and where social institutions greatly influence the establishment and facilitation of

relationships, any blockage to these forces can undermine chances of success.

Zimmerer and Scarborough (1996) postulates that the skills that every successful entrepreneur needs include: Resiliency- the ability to weather the ups and downs of any business since it never goes exactly the way the business plan described it. This skill enables the entrepreneur to keep going when the outlook is bleak; Focus-after setting a long term vision, knowing how to “laser focus” on the very next step to get closer to the ultimate goal. There are so many distracting forces when trying to build a business that this skill is not easy to master; Invest for the long-term-most [entrepreneurs](#) are not patient and focus only on what comes next, rather than where the company needs to go. Overnight success may take 7 to 10 years. Entrepreneurs need to stop, pause and plan on a quarterly basis; Find and manage people- only by learning to leverage employees, vendors and other resources will an entrepreneur build a scalable company. They need to learn to network to meet the right people.

Entrepreneurs strive to guarantee that they will get honest and timely feedback from all these sources; Selling- every entrepreneur is a sales person whether they want to be or not. They are either selling their ideas, products or services to customers, investors or employees. They work to be there when customers are ready to buy. Alternately, they know how to let go and move on when they are not; Learning- successful entrepreneurs realize they don't know everything and the market is constantly changing. They stay up to date on new systems, technology,

and industry trends; Self-reflection- allow downtime to reflect on the past and plan for the future. Always working only leads to burnout physically and emotionally and self-reliance- while there is a lot of help for the entrepreneur, in the end, they need to be resourceful enough to depend on themselves, (Stolze, 1999).

Berengu (2012) examined the influence of entrepreneurial skills on the performance of jua kali artisans in a developing country like Kenya using the current operating jua kali artisans in Meru Town as a case. The objectives of the study were; Influence of managerial skills on performance of jua kali artisans, influence of Technical skills on performance of jua kali artisans, Influence of IT skills on performance of jua kali artisans and influence of communication skills on performance of jua kali artisans. Performance was based on net profit and sales. The sample purposely consisted of 235 jua kali artisans who were selected using stratified random sampling. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. Data was collected using both open ended and closed ended questionnaires. The Design for the study was correlation research design where it was established that there was a positive correlation between performance and entrepreneurial skills. The study established that managerial skills had a positive correlation with respect to performance with a correlation coefficient being $r=0.204$. On technical skills the correlation coefficient was 0.653 indicating a very strong correlation between technical skills and performance. With regard to communication skills the study established that there was a weak

positive correlation between these communication skills and performance.

Wamahiu, (2012) carried a study to investigate the influence of entrepreneurship development on employment creation among the youth in Kikuyu District, Kenya. Four research objectives were formulated to guide the study. The study employed the descriptive survey. The target population comprised of one hundred and sixty (160) registered youth groups in the district who were eligible for funding, The sample comprised of 108 respondents. Findings revealed that awareness, of entrepreneurial duties influenced employment creation. The study also revealed that motivation of entrepreneurs affected employment creation, that self perception influenced employment, creation and that entrepreneurship education and training influenced employment creation.

The good life model (GLM) is the main theory that guides this study; GLM is a theory of offender rehabilitation that contains three hierarchical sets of conceptual underpinnings: general ideas concerning the aims of rehabilitation that account for the onset and maintenance of offending, and practical implications arising from the rehabilitation aims and etiological positioning. The GLM is grounded in the ethical concept of human dignity (Ward & Syversen, 2009) and universal human rights, and as such it has a strong emphasis on human agency. The GLM is a strength-based rehabilitation framework that is responsive to offenders' particular interests, abilities, and aspirations. It also directs practitioners to explicitly construct intervention plans that help offenders acquire the capabilities to

achieve things and outcomes that are personally meaningful to them. It assumes that all individuals have similar aspirations and needs and that one of the primary responsibilities of parents, teachers, and the broader community is to help each of us acquire the tools required to make our own way in the world.

Rehabilitation endeavors should therefore equip offenders with the knowledge, skills, opportunities, and resources necessary to satisfy their life values in ways that don't harm others. Inherent in its focus on an offender's life values, the GLM places a strong emphasis on offender agency. That is, offenders, like the rest of us, actively seek to satisfy their life values through whatever means available to them. The GLM's dual attention to an offender's internal values and life priorities and external factors such as resources and opportunities give it practical utility in desistance-oriented interventions.

The social learning theory proposed by Bandura (1977) has become perhaps the most influential theory of learning and development. While rooted in many of the basic concepts of traditional learning theory, Bandura believed that direct reinforcement could not account for all types of learning. While the behavioral theories of learning suggested that all learning was the result of associations formed by conditioning, reinforcement, and punishment, Bandura's social learning theory proposed that learning can also occur simply by observing the actions of others. This theory adds that a social element, arguing that people can learn new information and behaviors by watching other people. Known as observational learning (or modeling), this type of

learning can be used to explain a wide variety of behaviors. Bandura explained that most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action.

The wages theory of profit proposed by Clark (1979) postulates that the services of the entrepreneur are also classified as labour though of a superior type. These entrepreneurs do a lot of work in organizing the business unit as well. The entrepreneurs in the shape of profit pay to themselves for service just as managers are paid for their services. It means that profit is a wage for the entrepreneur for the services rendered by them. According to Clark, profit is the result of an adjustment, which is brought about by the entrepreneurs themselves. They may find new techniques of production by inventing new machines. Their use reduces the cost of production and reduces the course of time as well and gives the entrepreneur higher profits. But when the use of machinery and production becomes common and used by the other entrepreneur operating in the economy. The supply of goods then increase and the prices fall hence the profit margin also goes down. Under this situation the profit is determined by the demand and supply of enterprise at a point where they are equal.

Skills theory states that learned knowledge and acquired skills/abilities are significant factors in the practice of effective leadership. Skills theory by no means renounces the connection between inherited traits and the capacity to be an effective leader - it simply argues that

learned skills, a developed style, and acquired knowledge, are the real keys to leadership performance. It is of course the belief that skills theory is true that warrants all the effort and resources devoted to leadership training and development, (John et al, 1990).

The Cantillon's theory(1755)does not view the entrepreneur as a production factor as such, but an agent that takes on risk and thereby equilibrates supply and demand in the economy. In a neo-classical framework, this function resembles that of the optimizing residual claimant for instance the business owner who rents labor and capital from workers and land owners in a world of uncertain demand or production.

According to Knight approach (1971), the main function of the entrepreneur is to assume the uncertainty related to these events, thereby shielding all other stakeholders against the entrepreneur. Knight views an entrepreneur in terms of risk, uncertainty and profit. He recognized the distinction between risk and uncertainty. According to Knight, the main function of the entrepreneur is to assume the uncertainty related to these events, thereby shielding all other stakeholders against it. In that regard, the entrepreneur exercises judgment over these unique situations, the uncertainty in the economy, and functions as an insurance agent. Knight explicitly argues that entrepreneurs are owners of companies, i.e., residual claimants, and thus receive profits. In order to earn a positive profit, the entrepreneur carries out three tasks: he initiates useful changes or innovations; he adapts to changes in the economic environment; and he assumes the

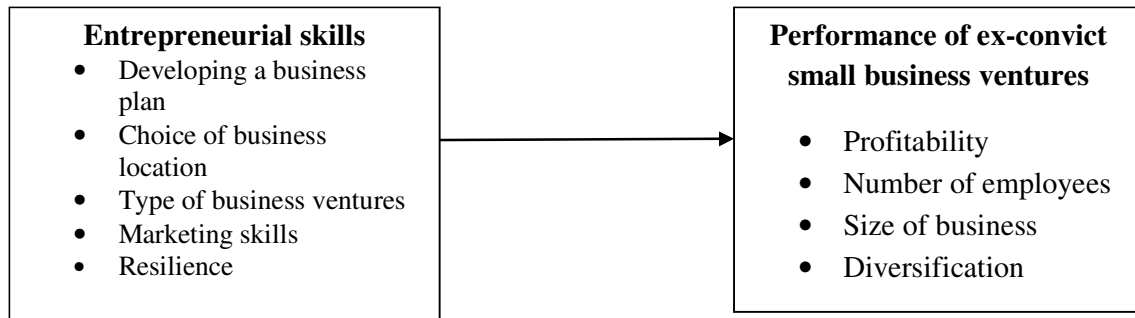
consequences of uncertainty related to the company.

The foregoing literature review suggest the following conceptual framework(modeled in figure1)

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable



3.0 Methodology

The study used survey approach, which is a non-probability technique. Surveys are appropriate for research questions because they integrate various components involved in a study, such as behaviour, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, characteristics, expectations, and knowledge (Neuman, 2000). Neuman explains that written questionnaires and formal interviews are usually used to gather the information. The method of survey research is ideal when the researcher does not manipulate a situation or condition to see how people react (Neuman, 2006).

The descriptive cross sectional survey enhances the credence of results by providing conclusions on data as at a given point in time. It involves collecting and comparing data from phenomena as at the time of study. This allows patterns of convergence to develop and corroborate the overall interpretation of the relationships. The descriptive cross-sectional design is considered to be robust for effects of relationship studies and suitable for studies that aim to analyze a

phenomenon, situation, problem attitude or issue by considering a cross-section of the population at one point in time, Cooper and Schindler (2003).

The study focused on a total of 300 ex-convicts in Taita Taveta County that hosts four penal institutions namely; Voi prison, Taveta prison, Wundanyi and Manyani Maximum Security prison. From the four penal institutions, the data base for release (those completely served sentence, paid fine, power of mercy and appeal on the sentence) for three years (2010- 2014) indicates 1,800 out of which 300 are from the Taita Taveta locality, The researcher also targeted 80 prison technical instructors who are tasked in training the inmates stationed in four penal institutions in Taita Taveta County, (Taita Taveta County Commander, 2014).

The researcher used snowballing method to reach the ex-convicts. Snowballing is synonymous with chain referral sampling (Bailey, 1994). Neuman (2006) defines snowball sampling as non-random sampling where the researcher begins with

one case, and based on information about relationships or networks-inter-relationships from that case, identifies other cases, and repeats the process continuously to find more subjects. Various key ex-convicts from the various Out of 60 questionnaires distributed to ex-convicts in Taita Taveta County, 47 questionnaires were returned. This is 78.33% return rate. The reason for unreturned questionnaire was because the respondents were occupied and did not get time to fill the questionnaire and most of the time they were out on business commitments and had not been back by the time of data analysis. The 16 prison instructors sampled from the four penal institutions were all available and interviewed, this represented a 100% response.

small scale businesses visited (interviewees) referred the researcher to others, and those in turn further referred the researcher to other ex-convicts they knew.

4.0. Findings

The demographic questions were designed to obtain information from the participants in some seven general areas: The variables used in this study in social demographic characteristics of the respondents/business ventures are ; age, location, category of business, number of years the business has been in existence and the number of years imprisoned. The variables are proportional to the type of respondent in this study.

Table 4.1 Respondents Background Information

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Age		
18-25	3	6.4
26-35	11	23.4
36-45	19	40.4
Over 46	14	29.8
Total	47	100
2.Business existence in years		
Below 5	15	31.9
6-10	11	23.4
11-15	9	19.2
16-25	7	14.9
Over 26	5	10.6
Total	47	100
3.Years Imprisoned		
Below 3	7	14.9
3-5	21	44.7
6-10	10	21.3
11-15	7	14.9

Over 15	2	4.3
Total	47	100

4. Category of Business

Sole trader	35	74.5
Partnerships	10	21.3
Others	2	4.3
Total	47	100

Most of the businesses are located in Taita Taveta county although 15% of the respondents said that they have opened branches/outlets in other towns and cited Mombasa and Malindi and Machakos as the preferred business locations. The 47 respondents age were categorized in different age brackets. Minority of the respondents at 6.4% were aged between 18-25 while over 23% were in the age bracket of 26-35. Majority of the respondents constituted over 40% lies in the age bracket of 36- 45 years and those over 46 years of age made 14% of the response.

31.9% businesses had been existing in the last 5 years, 23.4% existed between 6-10 years. 19.2% had been surviving between 11-15 years whereas over 14% have been in operation for not more than 25 years and a small percentage of 10.6% are existing for over 26 years since they started. The respondents who served a jail term of less than 3 years comprised 14.9%, with a majority of 44.7% having imprisoned for 3-5 years. 21.3% and 14.9 % served a jail term of 6-10 and 11-15 respectively while 4.3% had not known freedom for over 15 years of their adult life.

Majority of the respondents who stood at 74.5% run their business ventures as sole traders with only 21.3% operating in

partnerships. 4.3% of the respondents expressed that they were taking their business to a higher level and at the time of this study, they were registering their business ventures as private limited companies

While 87.2% of the respondents had their business as start-ups 12.8% had some backup and they had some existing business venture to build on. Over 60% of the respondents had confidence that they can develop a sound business plan, with 12.8% not sure if they can develop one whereas 17% felt they were not competent enough to develop a simple business plan. Other than the basic entrepreneurial skills learnt in prison, 25% of the respondents said that they had prior entrepreneurial skills while 75% acquired them while in prison. 60% of the respondents also reported that there are no other business people in their family whom they depend on. 45.5% strongly believed that they are focused in their plans while 30.7% agreed that they are focused, with 12.3% remaining indifferent about the question and only 11.5% said that they have not been focused in their plans for both short term and long term.

When asked if their business had sound marketing strategies to beat competition 51% agreed, 21.3% were not sure while a large group 27.6% said they did not have sound marketing strategies to level their competitors. 74.4% reported having been faced with a challenge of business failure and raising above the challenge, 10.6%

preferring not to talk about the issue while 15% had no issues of a failing business venture. 17% of the ex-convicts had not considered effective communication as a priority to their business venture, 12.8% remained neutral while the majority 70.2% prioritize effective communication.

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev	Variance
Entrepreneurial skills	47	4	1	5	3.9	1.02	1.143

Descriptive statistics comparing the mean of the five independent variables found out that entrepreneurial skills had a mean of 3.9 highly influencing business growth. Over 76% of the ex-convicts were in agreement the finance/funding has been the major barrier to their business venture, a common factor to many business owners while a good number cited marketing strategy and decision making as another barrier to growth of their small scale business venture and competition from more established businesses. 10.6% thought that financing is not their major worry.

A good number of ex-convicts 23.4% can barely contain their emotions when provoked. This exposes them to more possibility of repeated crimes and they feel they are a vulnerable group. Reasonable number of them 38.3% are to the perception that the society view them and their business undertakings as unfit and they are not readily integrated in the community hence some of them leads an isolated life. 27.7% of the ex-convicts do not believe in themselves and were not confidence in whatever they do and lacks

basic personal judgment , this is attributed by the way the community perceives them.

Changing trend in technology is perceived to pose challenge to the enterprise by 80.9% of the ex-convicts. Most of the ex-convicts do not possess basic skills to operate a computer and they reported that they have never had an opportunity to interact with computer and related gadgets however, only a negligible number of them can make an online transaction.

4.1 Discussion of the Findings

While 87.2% of the respondents had their business as start-ups 12.8% had some backup and they had some existing business venture to build on. Those with backups said they either had started their business before they were imprisoned and after release they continued with it while others joined an existing business as partners. This was also inline with the trainers/instructors sentiments who said that they encouraged and equipped the prisoners with sufficient skills to enable them start income generating ventures either as individuals or to join groups. Over 60% of the respondents had

confidence that they can develop a sound business plan.

Other than the basic entrepreneurial skills learnt in prison, 25% of the respondents said that they had prior entrepreneurial skills while 75% acquired them while in prison. 60% of the respondents also reported that there are no other business people in their family whom they depend on. Over 76% strongly believed that they are focused in their plans. 51% agreed that sound marketing strategies to beat competition, and have sound marketing strategies to level their competitors. 74.4% reported having been faced with a challenge of business failure and raising above the challenge, the ex-convicts had not considered effective communication as a priority to their business venture. 70.2% have the ability to process customer orders as per their request.

CONCLUSION

The study has revealed that entrepreneurial skills do have influence in ex inmate small scale venture. This seems to confirm the findings from other previous studies. Which have argued for the role of entrepreneurial skills policies that provide opportunity for prisoners to be trained in entrepreneurial skills. The worthy of investment since they can lead to significant impact on growth of ex inmate small scale venture.

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