

Personality and Development of Crime in Nigeria

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Abstract: The research was undertaken to investigate the differences in the personality traits of prison inmates and non-inmates and development of crime. The study was carried out in Nigerian Prisons located in five states in southwestern Nigeria. The sample comprised of 200 subjects made up of 121 inmates and 79 non-inmates. The non-inmates were the students of University of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria, public servants and nurses in Ekiti State, Nigeria, aged 17 to 45 years. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Eysenck Personality Questionnaire was used to collect information from the respondents. The result of the investigation showed that the inmates scored significantly high than the non-inmates in extroversion, neuroticism and psychoticism dimensions.

Key words: Extroversion, inmates, neuroticism and psychoticism, non-inmates, personality traits

INTRODUCTION

Crime is an act that violates the law of the society or serious offence against the law of the society for which there is a severe punishment by law. In other words, crime is any culpable action or omission prohibited by law and punished by the state. Crime is defined as deviant behaviour that violates prevailing norms, which may be cultural, social, political, psychological and economic conditions.

Criminal behaviour is a common phenomenon in every society, but certain societies have recorded higher percentages of criminal activities than others. According to Ajibola (1990) the problem of crime and criminal activity is constantly growing in asporadic dimension. Referring to 1990 reports in International Cooperation in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice for the twenty-first century. In the same vein, in his opening address presented at the Eight United Nations Congress on the Prevention of crime and Treatment of Offenders held at Havana Cuba in 1990, Ajibola highlighted the upsurge in traditional crimes, corruption, terrorist criminal activities, the tragedy of drug and narcotics abuse and trafficking, wanton environmental destruction, dumping of radioactive and toxic substances in the territories of others in Nigeria.

According to crime statistics by the Nigeria Police (2005) crime has shown an upward trend in the past years in Nigeria. According to the Police Headquarters report in Lagos from October 1995 to October 2005, the risk has continued to increase yearly in arithmetic progression (Crime Statistics Nigeria Police Headquarters Lagos). The increase in the rate of crime in this country has created a lot of problems to the Police Force and the Law Courts.

Apart from the law enforcement agencies, the individuals are living in fear and with their hearts in the mouths every time. The youths in some areas have taken over oil industries with frequent human kidnapping by terrorist. The males and females are involved in the high rate of crimes in Nigeria. Tenibiaje and Owuamanam (2005) opined that the upward trend in crime rate in Nigeria was not limited to male criminality but also including female criminality. These criminal behaviours or criminal tendencies have some undertones and which may be noted personality traits. Personality is the unique and variable patterns of human behaviour, focusing on sensing, thinking and feeling. The personality of the individual is the settled framework of references within which a person addresses the current situation and decides how to behave. Also, personality is described as the unique pattern of psychological and behavioural characteristics by which a person can be distinguished from other people. The personality of the individual has a significant influence on the person's thoughts and actions. It is a generalized term to describe many different characteristics or traits that make up person's personality. Eysenck (1977), argued that personality influences behaviour. Eysenck and Eysenck (1968) highlighted three basic elements of personality: as Extroversion (E), Neuroticism (N), and Psychoticism (P). Each of these dimensions runs from a high to a low scale, the extroversion scale runs from high to low, Neuroticism runs from high (neuroticism) to low (stable) and similarly with psychoticism. Eysenck (1986) claimed that most people would fall in the middle of this scale.

Extroversion refers to a personality factor expressed in traits such as warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness and excitement seeking. Extroverts tend to be energetic when surrounded by people and depressive when not

surrounded by people. Extroverts tend to be enthusiastic, talkative, and assertive. Extroverts enjoy doing activities that involve other people such as taking part in community activities. Neuroticism refers to the tendency to experience unpleasant emotions such as anger, anxiety, depression, or vulnerability. Those who score high on neuroticism may experience primarily one specific negative feeling. They respond emotionally to events that would not affect most people and their reactions tend to be more intense than normal. Their negative emotional reactions tend to persist for unusually long period of time, which means that they are often in bad mood (Wikipedia Foundation, 2006). Psychoticism is one of the traits used by the Eysenck in his P-E-N model (psychoticism, extroversion and neuroticism) model of personality. Psychoticism refers to an underlining personality trait, which presents in varying degree and may predispose a person to development of psychiatric abnormalities. A high scorer may be described as being neither solitary, nor caring for people, troublesome, cruel and inhumane, lacking in feeling and empathy. He is hostile to others, even his own kith and kin and aggressive even to loved ones.

The importance of studies into an individual's traits, which make him or her unique individual, cannot be over-emphasized. Although, the question of personality could be studied and evaluated from various dimensions, however a common point of agreement from various studies is that no two individuals are absolutely identical. A number of studies have tried to determine if some personality traits are common to criminals than the general population, Conklin (1981) showed that the personality traits of offenders did differ from the general population, although, the differences were usually small. Zimbardo (1972) said that, there were some evidences that delinquents and criminals might be more emotionally disturbed than the general populations. Adegoke (1990) found that prisoners scored significantly higher on neuroticism and psychoticism scales than extroversion while the score on extroversion was significantly lower the neuroticism and psychoticism.

In the same vein Tenibaje (1995) observed that the personality characteristics of juvenile delinquents and criminals were not similar, in terms of extroversion, neuroticism and psychoticism. Persons prone to amoral behavior are the extroverts and have high position on dimensions of neuroticism and psychoticism (Zivanovic, 2002).

Objective of the study: The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of personality traits on the criminal tendencies of inmates in Nigerian prisons and non-inmates. Thus, the personality traits: extroversion, neuroticism and psychotism dimensions were investigated to determine their influence on criminal activities or development of crime.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research questions: Based on the statement of the problems discussed earlier in this paper, the following research questions were generated for this study.

- Is there any difference between extroversion of Prison inmates and non-inmates?
- Is there any difference between neuroticism of Prison inmates and non-inmates?
- Is there any difference between psychotism of Prison inmates and non-inmates?

Research hypotheses: The following hypotheses were stated and tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

- There is no significant difference between the extroversion of prison inmates and non-inmates
- There is no significant difference between the neuroticism of prison inmates and non-inmates
- There is no significant difference between the psychotism of prison inmates and non-inmates

Design: The study adopted a descriptive design of survey type. The descriptive survey design helps in measuring the variables and aiming at ascertaining the difference in personality traits of inmates in Nigeria Prison and non-inmates.

Population: The population for the study was made up of all the inmates that were currently serving jail terms in all the 147 prisons in Nigeria as well as nurses, students of University of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria, and civil servants in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The population embraced male and female prison inmates and non-inmates. The research work was conducted in Nigeria Prisons on inmates in 2003 in seven prisons in southwest Nigeria, while research work on non-inmates was conducted in 2004 in Ekiti State of Nigeria.

Sample and sampling techniques: The sample for the study was drawn from those in prison on account of criminal offences ($n = 121$) and non-prisons ($n = 79$). Their age ranges from 17 to 45 years, with the mean age of 20.7. The inmates were serving their sentence for criminal offences in prisons. The type of crimes committed by the inmates varies from assault, burglary, house breaking, forgery, bribery and other crimes against property to, murder, armed robbery or being accomplice in crime. Altogether, seven prisons were covered in southwest Nigeria. The prisons are located in Ibadan, Ilesa, Ife, Akure, Ado-Ekiti, and the Maximum Prison in Kirikiri in Lagos. The prisons are located in five states of the federation. Stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the subjects since the population consisted of a number of sub-groups of male and female

inmates and non-inmates. The inmates and non-inmates cut across the major ethnic groups of Hausa, Ibo, and Yoruba in Nigeria.

Instrument: Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ), which was constructed by Eysenck and Eysenck (1975), was used to collect information from inmates and non-inmates. The EPQ was adopted to measure extroversion, neuroticism and psychoticism. A self-constructed instrument was used to collect information on age, type of work (student/worker), sex, and type of crime committed. The validity of the EPQ was ascertained through the criterion related validity and concurrent validity (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1975). The reliability of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire was determined by the use of two methods of reliability. The first method was through test-re-test reliability and the second method was the internal consistency reliability. These reliability coefficients are adequate and not inferior to those observed for other tests measuring similar factors. The reliability of EPQ mostly lies between 0.78 and 0.90. The validity of the instrument constructed by the researcher was found by using content validity and face validity by some experts in the area of Measurement and Evaluation, Guidance and Counselling, and Psychology, of the University of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. The experts scrutinized the items and affirmed that the instrument covered the intended content. The self-constructed instrument was trial-tested on inmates and non-inmates different from the sample selected, the exercise was repeated after two weeks on the sample for test-re-test so as to establish the reliability. Pearson Movement Correlation analysis was used and 0.70 was obtained.

The extroversion of the inmates was measured using a 21-item instrument developed by Eysenck and Eysenck (1985), which has been used extensively, and its validity and reliability, as well as its link to specific brain activities are well established. Neuroticism of the inmates was measured using Eysenck and Eysenck (1985) 22-items test of the neuroticism. These items indicated neurotic tendencies, which have also demonstrated good reliability and validity and linkage with specific brain activity in previous research (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1985). Psychoticism of inmates was measured using, 24-item developed by (Eysenck and Eysenck 1985). This Eysenck's psychoticism measure has shown acceptable reliability and validity and also linkage to specific brain activity.

Administration of the instrument: A letter of permission was obtained from the Controller General of Prisons in Nigeria to carry out the research work in the seven Prisons visited. Letters were sent to different Deputy Controllers of Prison of the states sampled to

allow the researcher to administer the questionnaire. The researcher and assistant researcher distributed the questionnaire to two hundred (200) inmates and non-inmates. All the two hundred copies of the questionnaire were retrieved. Enough time was given to the subjects for the completion of the questionnaire and care was taken to check that the subjects answered all items in the questionnaire. Eysenck Personality Questionnaire was translated into the major languages in Nigeria and Pidgin English for inmates that could not read English properly. The questionnaire was scored using appropriate scoring sheets. There is a specific sheet for each personality dimension, which has to be placed over each page of the questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study are presented so as to answer the research questions and tests of the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Table 1 was used to answer research question 1 as well as test hypothesis 1 which was stated respectively as follows:

Research question 1: Is there any difference between extroversion dimension of prison inmates and non-inmates.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the extroversion dimension of prison inmates and non-inmates.

Table 1 shows data with df = 198 and N = 200 with mean scores for inmates was 13.98 and non-inmate 13.03 while standard deviation for inmates was 7.249 and non-inmates was 3.162. The means scores of 13.36, 12.64 and 13.07 and standard deviations of 7.249, 3.177, 2.819 and 2.963 for public servants, students and nurses, respectively. The Table shows the calculated t-value of 1.096, which was less than critical-t value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The result shows that there was no difference significantly in the mean score of Prison inmates when compared with the public servants, student and nurses on the extroversion dimension, though the mean scores of prison inmates is significantly higher than non-inmates (public servants, students and nurses). The answer to research question 1 is that there is no difference in the extroversion dimension of prison inmates and non-inmates. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between the extroversion dimension of prison inmates and non-inmates was confirmed.

Table 2 was used to answer research question 2 as well as to test hypothesis 2 which was stated respectively as follows:

Tables 1: T-test Analysis on the mean scores, standard deviation for prison inmates and non-inmates

Groups	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-Crit
Prison inmates	121	13.98	7.249			
Non-inmates	79	13.03	3.162			
Public servants	14	13.36	3.177	198	1.096	1.96
Students	50	12.64	2.819			
Nurses	15	13.07	2.963			

*: Not-significant

Table 2: T-test Analysis on the mean Scores standard deviation for Prison Inmates and non- inmates on neuroticism dimension

Groups	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-Crit
Prison inmates	121	13.60	6.027			
Non-inmates	79	11.91	4.161			
Public Servants	14	11.93	3.626	1.98	4.179	1.96
Students	50	12.08	3.056			
Nurses	15	8.80	2.513			

Table 3: T-test Analysis on the mean scores standard deviation for prison inmates and non-inmates on Psychoticism Dimension

Groups	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-Crit
Prison inmates	121	11.06	12.840			
Non-inmates	79	5.12	2.511			
Public Servants	14	4.64	1.985	1.98	2.985	1.96
Students	50	5.42	2.771			
Nurses	15	5.13	1.506			

Research question 2: Is there any difference between neuroticism dimension of prison inmates and non-inmates?

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the neuroticism dimension of prison inmates and non-inmates.

The data on Table 2 shows that the Prison inmates had a mean of 13.60 on neuroticism, while the non-inmates had a mean of 11.91 and 11.93, 12.08, 8.80 for public servants, students and nurses, respectively. The standard deviation for prison inmates was 6.027 and that of non inmates was 4.161 while 3.626, 3.056 and 2.513 for public servants, students and nurses, respectively. The data were further subjected to t-test analysis in order to find out whether any significant difference exists in the ratings of the two groups. The result of the analysis showed that, significant difference was found, as t-calculated was 4.179 while the critical t-value was 1.96. Since the calculated-t 4.179 is greater than the critical t-value, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means that there is significant difference between the neuroticism dimension of Prison inmates and non-inmates.

Table 3 was used to answer research question 3 as well as to test hypothesis 3, which was stated, respectively as follows:

Research question 3: Is there any difference between psychoticism dimensions of prison inmates?

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the psychoticism dimension of prison inmates and non-inmates.

Data in Table 3 shows that there is significant difference in the psychoticism dimension of prison inmates and non-inmates. The mean of prison inmates was 11.06 while the means of the non-inmates was 5.12 but 4.64, 5.42 and 5.13 for public servants, students and nurses, respectively. The standard deviation for prison inmates was 12.840 and that of non inmates scored 2.511 though public 87 servant students and nurses scored 1.985, 2.771 and 1.506, respectively. The calculated t-value of 2.985 is greater than t-critical 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the answer to research hypothesis 3 is that there is significant difference in the psychoticism dimension of prison inmates and non-inmates. The null hypothesis 3 was proved to be the case.

The results of the three-tested hypotheses revealed a lot of facts about development of crime in Nigeria.

The first hypothesis that, there is no significant difference between the extroversion dimension of prison inmates and non-inmate was confirmed by the findings.

The t-test analysis gave the calculated value of 1.096, which is less than the critical value 1.96.

The results summarized in Table 1 show that there is no significant in the extroversion dimension of prison inmates and non- inmates.

These findings concur with the findings of the study of Adegoke (1990) that prisoners and non-prisoners scores on psychoticism and neuroticism are similar. According to him, prisoners did not score high in extraversion scale. The typical extroverts are sociable, like parties, need people to talk to, they are tend to be energetic, enthusiastic and assertive. As a result of this, the prison inmates may not score significantly higher than non-inmates on extroversion dimension due to restriction placed on prison inmates.

The second hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the neuroticism dimension of prison inmates and non-inmates.

The result as indicated in Table 2 gives the t-test analysis of prison inmates and non-inmates on neuroticism dimension.

The t-calculated was 4.179, which is greater than the critical value of 1.96. Therefore there is significant difference in the score of prison inmates and non-inmates. These results nullify the hypothesis 2 that states there is no significant difference between the neuroticism dimension of inmates and non-inmates. Prison inmates scored higher than non-inmates in neuroticism dimension. The prison inmates are neurotic and tend to experience unpleasant emotions such as depression, anxiety and vulnerability.

These findings of this study concur with the study of Ruisel (1976) carried out in Czechoslovakia. According to Ruisel prisoners (male and female) scored significantly higher than control group (workers). Similarly, the findings support Adegoke (1990) that prisoners scored higher on neuroticism than non-prisoners. These findings are also in line with the study of Heaven *et al.* (2004) that there were notable differences across the two group studies on neuroticism. Eysenck (1973) found that high scores characterize prisoners. The finding was in agreement with Franks (1960) that recidivists would be found to be high in neuroticism. The result may be due to negative feeling, emotionally and bad mood of prison inmates.

The third hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the psychoticism dimension of prison inmates and non-inmates. The results summarized in Table 3 shows t-calculated of 2.985 while t-critical was 1.96. The t-calculated is greater than t-critical, therefore the hypothesis was nullified. There is significant difference between psychoticism dimension of prison inmates and non-inmates. The findings are consistent with evidence in literature that high degree of anxiety or neuroticism tended to act as a drive strongly reinforcing high tendency and favoring antisocial conduct. High scorers may be described as being solitary, cruel, inhumane and hostile to others.

The findings of this study concur with the findings of previous studies conducted on this topic. For instance, Passingham (1967), Ruisel (1976), Franks (1960), Eysenck (1973) and Adegoke (1990) found that criminals scored significantly higher in psychoticism dimension. Other studies conducted by Eysenck (1970, 1975) also revealed that criminals scored significantly higher in psychoticism and neuroticism dimensions than non-criminals. The personality traits such as extroversion, neuroticism and psychoticism are significant in predicting criminality. High score in extroversion dimension, neuroticism dimension and psychoticism dimension predispose criminality. These personality characteristics

(psychoticism, neuroticism and extroversion) are characterized by high psychoticism, neuroticism and extroversion scores and they are present in inmates in some Nigerian prisons. They may predispose individuals to the development of criminal activities. The personality characteristics or traits are related and contributed to development of crime and the escalation of crime in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that there was high score on extroversion, neuroticism and psychoticism dimensions of inmates in Nigeria prisons. This indicates that criminality depends on certain personality traits such as extroversion, neuroticism and psychoticism. Personality traits are important factors for criminal tendencies. Considering the result of these findings, the school counsellors and practicing counsellors have vital roles to perform in modeling the personality traits of individuals. The result revealed that the non-inmates also recorded high scores on personality traits though not as high as that of prison inmates. The knowledge of personality traits would be an advantage to counsellors. Although, the non-inmates are not criminals but they may belong to the typical psychopaths who display antisocial personality and may lead to criminality because of the presence of neuroticism and psychoticism. The presence of these traits may predispose a person to the development of criminality. Psychoticism and neuroticism dimensions are important factors to be considered in intervention for the treatment of inmates. These traits or dimensions are also present in non-inmates; therefore monitoring of the students, nurses and civil servants' personality traits is recommended through the use of psychometrics by the counselling professions. Psychological tests can be used in detecting those with high psychoticism or high neuroticism among the students, nurses or civil servants.

RECOMMENDATION

- Psychoticism and Neuroticism are indicators of criminal tendencies. High scores in psychoticism and neuroticism in clients show traces of criminal behaviour. The clients need to be counselled by counsellors, psychologists and behavioural modifiers.
- Personality traits of individuals need to be monitored so as to control personality disorders.
- It is recommended that schools should purchase and use psychological tests that may help to detect the traits early enough in the secondary schools.
- Psychometric services should be rendered in schools, offices, companies and prisons by professional counsellors to modify certain behaviour that are anti-social.

- The knowledge of individual's personality traits would help in prisons in planning treatment, rehabilitation and intervention for the prison inmates.

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