

INFLUENCE OF NEUROTICISM ON ATTITUDE TOWARDS CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION AMONG DETAINED LEARNERS IN CUSTODIAL FACILITIES OF KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

¹ASHURA, SADISU ABDUSSAMAD & ²PROF. MA'ARUF NUHU BATAGARAWA

¹Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling
Federal University, Dutsin-Ma Katsina state

²Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling
Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina state
sadeashura@gmail.com
maaruf.nuhu@umyu.edu.ng

Abstract

This study investigated the influence of neuroticism on attitude towards correctional education among detained learners of the custodial facilities in Katsina state, Nigeria. The study was guided by three research objectives with the corresponding two research questions and one null hypothesis. The study adopted correlational design to determine the influences between the variable of neuroticism and attitude towards correctional education. The population of the study was 680; and the sample size was 234 sampled across twelve custodial facilities of Katsina state. Also adapted instruments of Detained Learner Neuroticism Assessment Scale (DLNAS), and Detained Learners Correctional Education Attitude Assessment Scale (DLCEAAS) were used for data collection, and both descriptive and inferential statistics (linear regression analysis) were used to interpret data at 0.05 level of significance. The finding revealed that neuroticism has significant negative influence on attitude towards correctional education among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria, ($\beta = -.685$, $p = .000$). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and consequently, the alternate hypothesis was accepted. Based on the findings, it was concluded that the majority of the detained learners have severe level of neuroticism and negative level of attitude towards correctional education; and also neuroticism negatively influenced attitude towards correctional education in the twelve (12) custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria. The researcher recommended that, modalities such as consistent psychological check-up, counselling and psychotherapeutic services as well behaviour modification services shall be applied by the concerned professionals in order to cope and reduce the prevalence of neuroticism for better and positive attitude towards correctional education in order to achieve the goals for which the correctional service act 2019 was established for in Nigeria.

Key words: Neuroticism and correctional education Attitude.

Introduction

The change of nomenclature from prison services to correctional services in Nigeria was aimed at reducing general challenges devastating inmates' lives in the prison's physical and social environment. The change of the name, prison structures and prison policies were meant to provide adequate and effective correctional, educational, counselling rehabilitative services in all 256 custodial facilities of Nigeria. This reflects and denotes the idea that, the detained learners' challenges and the problems like psychological and personality disorders, behavioural adjustment challenges may be reduced; and hoped to promote self-reliance and quality of life among them through educational programmes and other correctional services. It has been noticed by the researcher that, the questioning rate of recidivism in

Katsina state custodial facilities has increased to 36% in 2025 according to records of Katsina state correctional facilities office.

In 2019, the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria approved and signed the bill for the transformation of prison services to correctional services considering the rate of recidivism and the violation of human rights, and that follows the amendment of laws, policies and services being rendered in the prison activities, and the transformation was aided by the advocates of human rights and other various governmental and non-governmental organisations in the Nigeria (Emmanuel, Zita & Destiny, 2019).

Neuroticism a fundamental personality trait characterised by a tendency to experience negative emotional states such as anxiety, anger, and emotional instability (Mosaku, Mapayi & Makanjuola, 2017), they also opined that personality traits play a crucial role in how individuals adapt to stressful environments. They further opined and disclosed that, there is a high level of neuroticism among inmates, and there was significant relationship/correlation between neuroticism and psychological distress. Neuroticism was predicted by younger age, low educational level, longer prison sentence and history of substance abuse. Individuals high in neuroticism are more prone to perceive situations as threatening, experience heightened stress, and employ maladaptive coping strategies (Lahey, 2019). Within the high-stress, low-control context of a correctional facility, inmates with high levels of neuroticism may struggle significantly with poorer engagement with rehabilitative offerings such as vocational training (Tapp & Fellowes, 2016).

Correctional education is widely recognised as a pivotal component of offender rehabilitation and successful reintegration into society (Bozick, Davis, Steele, Saunders & Miles, 2018). Educational programmes within prison settings aim to reduce recidivism, improve post-release employment outcomes, and foster pro-social behavioral change (Bozick et al., 2018). In Nigeria, the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019 emphasises reformation, rehabilitation, and reintegration, with education as a core pillar. However, the efficacy of these programmes is contingent upon inmates' active participation and positive attitude towards learning in the custodial facilities, which may be significantly mediated by psychological factors such as mental health like depression and personality structure such as neuroticism (Eze, Obioha & Eze, 2020).

This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by investigating whether there is influence of neuroticism on attitude towards correctional education among detained learners in the twelve (12) custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria. By elucidating this relationship, the findings will provide evidence-based insights that can inform the development of more psychologically informed, tailored educational and intervention strategies within the Nigerian correctional system, ultimately enhancing its rehabilitative mandate.

Neuroticism Defined

Different scholars and psychologists have the same view on the definition of the general concept of neuroticism. For example, Allport (1961) and Eysenck (1960) opined that, Neuroticism refers to a personality trait characterised by emotional instability, anxiety, moodiness, and vulnerability to stress. Also Adamu and Adamu (2023) compiled that, a persons' level of neurosis is mainly determined by the reactivity of the Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS). They further posited that, a stable persons' nervous system generally responds less to stressful situation and stays calm and cool. On the other hand, people who are more neurotic are much more erratic, tend to overact to stimuli and tend to worry, get angry and fear. They are overly emotional and find it difficult to calm down once upset. A neurotic person has his/her Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) that responds quickly to stress. It's important to note that not all inmates exhibit high levels of neuroticism, as personality traits vary widely among individuals.

However, Barlow (1988) proposed the theory of neuroticism from poor and negative emotional processing including excessive negative emotions and avoidance of negative behaviour. So, the emotional process of the detained learners may affect their general personality traits particularly neuroticism. Lack of emotional intelligence among inmates may cause their state of neuroticism. He also proposed that neuroticism arises from difficulties in processing and managing emotions. The key component in this theory includes: emotional sensitivity, emotional processing. The emotional sensitivity leads to emotional reactivity and ineffective emotional processing and regulation strategies contribute escalation of negative emotions, development of anxiety and other neurotic symptoms. So, the detained learners' inability to regulate emotion can lead to poor emotional processing which may eventually lead to neuroticism in them in the custodial facilities. He proposes the theory of neuroticism as increase in vulnerability to stressors, leading to greater susceptibility to psychological distress and mental health problems. Neurotic individuals may experience heightened reactivity to stress and difficulty in coping with adversity. Stressors in custodial facilities such as hard labour, delay in food services may cause detained learners feel stressed which in-turn causes neuroticism in them. This model suggests that, neuroticism is as a result of an individual's inability to cope effectively with stress. Barlow (1988) opined that stress is characterised by external and external stimuli that disrupt an individual's homeostasis; strategies used to manage stress, such as problem-solving, avoidance or emotional regulation; and individual differences in susceptibility to stress influenced by genetic, environmental, and psychological factors. He further stated that stress triggers a response in the individual; and individual attempts to cope with stress using various mechanisms. If coping mechanisms are ineffective, stress accumulates, leading to increased anxiety, tension, and emotional reactivity. Also the development of neurotic symptoms such as anxiety, depression, and obsessive-compulsive behaviours are more frequent among inmates. Repeated exposures to stress and ineffective coping reinforces neurotic pattern, solidifying neuroticism as a personality trait. Therefore, detained learners may be influenced by both internal and external factors that may triggers stress if they fail to cope and which eventually leads to neuroticism in the custodial facilities of Katsina state.

Correctional Education Attitude Defined

Attitude refers to a predisposition or evaluation of a person, group, idea or situation. It can also operationally means a mental state that influences behaviour, emotional feelings and perception. Therefore, correctional education is aimed to make an individual human beings (detained learners) be aware of himself/herself and to be able to comply, cope, adjust and adapt to new situations and overcome life challenges for the betterments and development of himself/herself custodial facilities and general society. Also, Walker, Shaw, Turpin, Reid and Abel (2017) opined that, the correctional education for general inmates and offenders is aimed to reduce unacceptable behaviours and also reduce the increase in the rate of recidivism through effective policy implementation to support self-reliance. He further said that, correctional institutions with effective correctional programmes through correctional education, correctional counselling and other life skill acquisition yield positive results for achieving the goals for which the correctional service Act was established for in Nigerian custodial facilities and other correctional centres in the global societies. Correctional education among detained learners entails how detained learners vary in-term of enrollments particularly vocational training and educational experiences or skill acquisition experiences they may have acquired during their custody tenure in any given correctional centres/facilities.

So, the correctional education (vocational training) among detained learners of Katsina state may be one of the key to the successful reformation and rehabilitation of detained learners after release and so long as they have interest and high level of engagement, commitment and participation as well as positive attitude towards the educational programmes particularly vocational trainings in the custodial

facilities of Katsina state. So the detained learners' state of emotional feelings, perception, commitment, engagement, interest and participation over educational programmes particularly vocational training is referred to as correctional education attitude.

Vocational education like tailoring, carpentry, shoe making, shop making and poultry help detained learners to become acquitted with skills and that may promote entrepreneurial zeal in them after release if proper and enriched arrangements are made for the trainings. By doing so, the detained learners are hoped to be independent and self-reliant, which in-turn criminal acts like theft and political thuggery crime in a society would reduce because more jobs and skilled would be established through vocational trainings in the custodial facilities of Katsina state. The following are some outlined benefits and advantages of the correctional services that are related to correctional and general education programmes to the detained learners. **Educational programmes particularly vocational training** provides the detained learners with access to skill acquisition and also it may enhance their employability chances upon release.

Statement of the Problem

Correctional education is a cornerstone of the modern rehabilitative mandate of prisons, designed to reduce recidivism and facilitate the successful reintegration of offenders into society (Bozick et al., 2018). So, poor engagement and participation in correctional education programmes by the detained learner is a serious problem that may lead to poor outcome in the entire correctional services and this poor engagement to correctional education programme may be affected also by depression and neuroticism in the custodial facilities of Katsina state. In Nigeria, this mandate is enshrined in the Nigerian Correctional Service Act (2019), which prioritises reformation and rehabilitation. However, the effectiveness of educational programmes in custodial facilities is not guaranteed by their mere availability; it is critically dependent on the active participation and positive attitude to the engagement of the detained learners themselves in the educational programmes (Gonclaves & Rossegger, 2019). And the selective "aftercare material awards" to ex-offenders is another factor observed by the researcher that may lead to the challenges in attitude towards educational programmes among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina state.

Consequently, correctional administrators and educators in Katsina State may be designing and implementing educational programmes based on a deficit model that overlooks the internal, psychological and personality barriers faced by detained learners. So, without evidence-based insight into how depression and neuroticism erode, influence behavioural compliance and correctional education attitudes among detained learners, there shall be interventions risks and the process to corrections may be misdirected and ineffective. These gaps may likely impede the operationalisation of the Correctional Service's rehabilitative goals, potentially resulting in wasted resources, unmet recidivism-reduction targets, and the continued marginalisation of a vulnerable population.

Therefore, the problem this study addresses the unknown extent and proportions and also whether if neuroticism has negative influence on attitudes towards correctional education among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina State, Nigeria. So, without investigating this relationship, efforts to enhance the efficacy of correctional education and to reform detained learners' general situations and conditions remain incomplete and may fail to address the core psychological and personality impediments to rehabilitation and general correctional services particularly educational programmes (vocational trainings) in the twelve (12) custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria.

Therefore, this study aims to synthesise and develop a comprehensive knowledge and evidence-based findings that may explain the complex influential interactions between independent variables of neuroticism, and dependent variables of attitude towards correctional education among detained learners in the twelve (12) custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

- 1) To determine the distributions of various levels of neuroticism among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria.
- 2) To determine the distributions of various levels of attitude towards correctional education among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria.
- 3) To find out the influence of neuroticism on attitude towards correctional education among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria.

Research Questions

- 1) What are the distributions of various levels of neuroticism among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria?
- 2) What are the distributions of various levels of attitude towards correctional education among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

Ho1. Neuroticism has no significant influence on attitude towards correctional education among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria.

Methodology

This study employed correlational research design, and the population of this research work comprised enrolled convicted detained learners from the twelve (12) custodial facilities of Katsina state. So, the total number of convicted detained learners is 680. Also, the population of the study was drawn from all Medium Security Custodial Centres (MSCC) of both four (4) Katsina new and old custodial facilities and Daura old and new stations, and the other seven (7) Medium Security Custodial Facility (MSCF) of Malumfashi, Dutsin-Ma, Jibia, Mani, Kankia, Musawa, and one (1) Ingawa Agric Project Custodial Facility of Katsina state command.

Multistage sampling procedure was used in the whole of twelve (12) custodial facilities of Katsina state. Purposive sampling technique was first used to select the five (5) programmes. Also the proportionate sampling technique using proportionate sampling formula ($n \div N \times \text{sample size}$) according to their five (5) correctional education enrollment in carpentry training, tailoring training, soap making training, poultry training and shoe making training programmes across each twelve (12) custodial facilities of Katsina state was used for selecting of 234 enrolled detained learners per each five (5) programmes and thus, a simple random sampling technique was used for selecting detained learners per each proportion in correctional education programmes as suggested Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018). The sample size for this study comprised two hundred and thirty four (234) sampled detained learners drawn from the main population of six hundred and eighty (680) enrolled convicted detained learners out of which 234 were sampled as recommended by the research advisor's sample size table (2006).

Detained Learners Neuroticism Assessment Scale (DLNAS) was adapted and modified from Eysenck personality inventory by Eysenck (1975). And also Detained Learners Correctional Educational Attitude Assessment Scale (DLCEAAS) was adapted and modified from training evaluation scale for participant in Iowa Midwestern America, for ESL regional training.

Results of the Findings

Answering Research Questions

Research Question One: What are the distributions of various levels of neuroticism among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria?

Table 1: Frequencies, Proportions and Percentages of Neuroticism among Detained Learners in the Custodial Facilities of Katsina State, Nigeria.

Neuroticism	Boundaries	Frequencies	Proportions	Percentage
Normal	1-20	38	0.16	16.23%
Mild	21-40	54	0.23	23.0%
Moderate	41-40	25	0.10	10.68
Severe	61-80	117	0.50	50%
Total		234	1.00	100%

From table 1, it can be seen that 38 number of the sampled detained learners with the proportion of 0.16, constituting 16.23% have identified themselves as normal detained learners (thus, without any symptoms of neuroticism). Also 54 number of the sampled detained learners with the proportion of 0.23, constituting 23.07% reported to have mild symptoms of neuroticism, while 25 number of sampled detained learners with the proportion of 0.10 constituting 10.68% have moderate symptoms of neuroticism and 117 number of the sampled detained learners with the proportion of 0.50, constituting 50% have severe symptoms of neuroticism. Hence, this is the answer to the research question one.

Research Question Two: What are the distributions of various levels of attitude towards correctional education among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria?

Table 2: Frequencies, Proportions and Percentages of Correctional Education Attitude among Detained Learners in the Custodial Facilities of Katsina State, Nigeria.

Correct Att	Edu Boundaries	Frequencies	Proportions	Percentage
Very Negative	1-15	73	0.31	31.19%
Negative	16-30	132	0.56	56.41%
Positive	31-45	21	0.08	8.97%
Very Negative	46-60	8	0.03	3.41%
Total		234	1.00	100%

From table 2, it can be seen that 73 number of the sampled detained learners with the proportion of 0.31, constituting 31.19% reported to have very negative level of correctional education attitude. Also 132 number of the sampled detained learners with the proportion of 0.56, constituting 56.41% reported to have negative level of correctional education attitude; while 21 number of sampled detained learners with the proportion of 0.08 constituting 8.97% have positive level of correctional education attitude and 8 number of the sampled detained learners with the proportion of 0.03, constituting 3.41% have very positive level of correctional education attitude. Hence, this is the answer to the research question two.

Testing Hypothesis

Ho1. Neuroticism has no significant influence on attitude towards correctional education among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria.

Table 3: Model Summary for the Influence of Neuroticism on Correctional Education Attitude among Detained Learners in the Custodial Facilities of Katsina State, Nigeria.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	df1
1	.652 ^a	.425	.423	7.539	1

a. Predictors: (Constant), Neuroticism

b. Dependent Variable: Correctional Education Attitude

Note from the model summary table (Table 3), $R = .652^a$ and $R^2 = .425$. This coefficient of determination indicates that independent variable (neuroticism) has significant influence on dependent

variable (correctional education attitude), with standard error estimate of 7.539. This percentage was used in the determining the goodness of fit for the model (regression equation). The adjusted R^2 yielded 42.5% variation which is significant in this analysis.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance for the Whole Model (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9765.309	1	9765.309	171.793	.000 ^b
	Residual	13187.687	232	56.843		
	Total	22952.996	233			

a. Dependent Variable: Correctional Education Attitude

b. Predictors: (Constant), Neuroticism

From the analysis of variance (Table 4), the overall regression model significant $F(1,232) = 171.793$ $P = .000$. Now since the p-value (.000) was less than the alpha value (.05), the null hypothesis was rejected. This simple means that the independent variable (neuroticism) predicts the dependent variable (correctional education attitude) significantly. This implies that neuroticism has significant influence on attitude towards correctional education among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria.

Table 5: Table of Standardised and Unstandardised Coefficients ^a

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardised Coefficients Beta	Sig.
1	(Constant)	41.734	1.352		.000
	Neuroticism	-.306	.023	-.652	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Correctional Education Attitude

Note that the table of coefficients (Table 5) seeks to explain the amount of unique variance contributed by the predictor (Neuroticism) in to the model. Based on the table, the p-value of the predictor was significant (.000). So, the amount of unique variance explained by the predictor in predicting the attitude towards correctional education among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria, was also statistical and negatively significant, as the Beta value ($\beta = -.652$) indicating strong negative correlation and strong negative influence of independent variable (neuroticism) and dependent variable (correctional education attitude).

Table 5 also revealed that, the null hypothesis which state that neuroticism has no significant influence on attitudes towards correctional education among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria, was rejected and consequently, the alternate hypothesis was accepted and it says: neuroticism has significant influence of on attitudes towards correctional education among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria. Therefore, it concludes that neuroticism negatively influences and predicts negative attitudes towards correctional education among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria. It was indicated from the evidence of the finding that if neuroticism increases towards the direction of severe proportion, the behavioural adjustment decreases towards the direction of very negative proportion due to negative correlation between them.

Discussion

Hypothesis revealed that neuroticism has significant influence on attitude towards correctional education among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria. This finding agrees with the findings of Hancock and Rhodes (2020), where they found out that neuroticism was

negatively correlated with self-efficacy and educational engagement. So, the neuroticism was one of the significant negative predictor of self-efficacy and the indirect effect of neuroticism on the educational engagement through self-efficacy was so much significant confirming full mediation. And also, this study agrees with findings of Smith and O'Donnell (2020) where they found out that global neuroticism negatively correlated with educational engagement among incarcerated individuals.

Conclusion

Based on the research objectives, answered researcher questions and the tested hypotheses, the findings concluded that, the majority of the detained learners have severe level of neuroticism, very poor level of negative attitude level towards correctional education. Similarly, this study has concluded that, due to negative correlation between independent and the dependent variables in this study; the increase of neuroticism levels leads to the decrease in the attitude towards correctional education among detained learners in the custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria. Therefore, it concludes that, neuroticism is one of the major influencing factors responsible for negative attitude towards correctional education among detained learners in the twelve (12) custodial facilities of Katsina state, Nigeria.

Recommendations

It is recommended that, modalities such as consistent psychological check-up, counselling and psychotherapeutic services as well behaviour modification services shall be applied by the concerned professionals in order to cope and reduce the prevalence of neuroticism as personality disorder for better and positive attitude towards correctional education in order to achieve the goals for which the correctional service act 2019 was established for in Nigeria.

References:

- Adam, B.A., & Adamu, M.S. (2023). *Perspective on personality adjustment*. Ahmadu University Press Limited.
- Allport, G.W. (1961). *Pattern and growth in personality*. New York.
- Barlow, D.H. (1988). *Anxiety and its disorders: The nature and treatment of anxiety and panic* (2nd ed). Guilford Press.
- Bozick, R., Steele, J., Davis, L., & Turner, S. (2018). Does providing inmates with education improve post-release outcomes? A meta-analysis of correctional education programs in the United States. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 14(3), 389–428. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-018-9334-6>
- Emmanuel, O.O., Zita, O., & Destiny, N. (2018). Use of psychotherapeutic intervention in managing psychopathological issues affecting the psychological wellbeing of prison inmates in south-east Nigeria. *Official publication the Nigerian Societies for Educational Psychologists NISEP*, Chapter 4, p 34.
- Eysenck, H.J. (1960). *Behaviour therapy and the neurosis*. Pergamon.
- Eze, J. E., Obioha, C. U., & Eze, C. B. (2020). Correctional education and inmate rehabilitation in South-East Nigeria: Challenges and prospects. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, 44(4), 321–336. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01924036.2019.1680682>
- Gonclaves, L.C., & Rosseger, G. (2019). Assessing prison adjustment among young adult offenders: Changes, correlates, and outcomes. *European journal of criminology*, doi: 10.1177/1477370819850944.
- Lahey, B. B. (2019). Public health significance of neuroticism. *American Psychologist*, 64(4), 241–256. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015309>
- Mosaku, C., Mapayi, N., & Mekanjuola, D. (2017). *Prevalence and determinants of inmates partner violence among adult women, Ile-Ife, Nigeria*. Ife publishers.
- Nigerian Correctional Service Act. (2019). Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette, 106 (79).

- Tapp, J., & Fellowes, E. (2016). The relationship between personality, reconviction and prison-based behaviour for offenders serving sentences of less than 12 months. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 27(2), 270–285. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14789949.2015.1134624>
- Walker, T., Shaw J., Turpin, C., Reid, C., and Abel, K. (2017). The Worship // study: a pilot of psychodynamic interpersonal therapy with women offenders who self-harm. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 28(2), 158-171.