THE STATUS OF E-LEARNING IN KUJE CORRECTIONAL CENTER ABUJA

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ABSTRACT

There is recharged hopefulness by the Nigerian correctional Help to advance Far off Learning in Custodial focuses through the Public Open College. This is in accordance with the Unified Countries objective of Basic liberties act, by which learning ought to be open for all paying little heed to social prohibition reasons, like detainment. Moreover, to the choice of E - learning, these proposition chances of consistent learning ways at auxiliary and Tertiary level. In spite of this large number of advantages, it has demonstrated testing to find spaces upgraded for training in Nigerian correctional facilities, substantially less intended to help their instructive requirements. This examination is pointed toward looking for further developed approaches to arranging and planning correctional facilities so as to give very much planned spaces to E-learning. This can be accomplished by distinguishing existing plan issues related with E-learning and looking for approaches to settling them. As well as survey of existing writing to comprehend exercises related with training through E-learning. Notwithstanding, contextual investigations of existing correctional facilities that have put forth attempt in giving spaces to E-learning will be done and fitting them to suite our nearby setting. The discoveries of the review uncover that schooling in restorative habitats emphatically affects recidivism. Overview research was embraced for the review and an organized poll was utilized as the instrument for gathering information.

INTRODUCTION

The spaces created for correcting offenders are not usually associated with learning spaces, because correctional centres are design with the aim to teach the offender hard lessons and to give them time to reflect on the crimes they have committed in order to be a better version of themselves. Hence, the traditional means for a prisoner to learn is through an unorganized scheme based on requests. That would be the part were E-learning plays a great role, although pyrrhonists insist that it would aid the tyrants to become more sophisticated in conducting crime (Biliamin, 2019). Nevertheless, E-learning has given the world a gift, that anywhere in the world as long as the facility and equipment are provided you can learn. This has been seen even in Nigeria, where The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) exist as an institution that facilitates distant learning. Furthermore, Biliamin, 2019 insists that there are more cases where E-learning has helped prisoners become a better managers of there time, as they become relevant and even qualified to be employed. In any case there are still some gaps that this paper hopes to fill and contribute to the literature mapping of the conditions, opportunities, and tensions in offering online learning in prison contexts and adult education as a whole. The boundaries of this paper is correctional facilities within Abuja. NOUN is poised with the task of making sure that education is flexible, open and can be accessed anywhere in Nigeria. Prior to the establishment of the NOUN special training centres at six different prisons in Nigeria in 2016, prison education in Nigeria was based on providing informal education in the form of apprenticeships in the trades needed to keep the prison running. They are the largest open and distance learning in West Africa (NOUN, 2023). Godwin, 2020 states that 9ija kids, Class Notes, ULesson, Unicaf, Easy prep., and StudyLab360 are the best e-learning platforms in

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Nigeria for individual learners, students, instructors, schools and businesses. The Nigerian Correctional Service is entrusted with the responsibility of educating and equipping prisoners in order to make them more productive and facilitate their successful reintegration into society upon the completion of their sentences. This task can only be accomplished through comprehensive and organized programs that focus on the reform and rehabilitation of the prison population.

The implementation of Prison Education and E-Learning program in Nigeria is not without its shortcomings and difficulties, as is the case with traditional education program. However, the implementation of educational programs in prisons is subject to a variety of obstacles, barriers, and limitations, which are rooted in the fact that, as a correctional facility, security is of paramount and importance, overriding all other objectives, including educational objectives. This has limited the scope of the Prison Educational Program (Johnson L. R., 2017). The aim of this paper is to define the current state of the learning process in a correctional center and seek to reduce the gap as well as to shade more light on the advantages of E-learning.

Research conducted over the past two decades has demonstrated that prison education is a viable approach to reduce recidivism. This program is designed to provide rehabilitation, treatment, and reform of prisoners in order to enable them to re-integrate into society as responsible citizens. According to the majority of studies, the program reduces recidivism, leads to a decrease in crime, is cost-effective for taxpayers, and provides long-term benefits to the communities to which ex-prisoners return.

The State of the Correctional Facilities

The development of prison education and correctional education in Nigeria is hindered by a variety of factors. These include insufficient financial resources, inadequate infrastructure, a lack of facilitators and teachers, a lack of instructional material, inadequate support from religious and non-organizational institutions, and inadequate implementation of educational policies (Halima, S., and Adamu, G., 2023).

The cost of a NOUN program is one-third lower than that of a conventional university, eliminating the need for unplanned expenses such as the purchase of lecturers' hand-outs and other irregular dues. Furthermore, NOUN students are able to pay for courses and examinations, which is not possible in conventional universities. This makes the university more affordable and convenient for students. The average fees for a year in any federally-recognized institution in Nigeria are approximately N150 000, while state universities charge N200 000 and private universities charge around N400 per student. This figure does not include textbooks, which are typically paid for by NOUN students at a rate of N70 000 per session.

A significant proportion of federal defendants (more than 30%) have no criminal history prior to their current offense, and a large proportion (more than 90%) of these defendants pose a low risk to the public. Despite this, more than 9 out of 10 federal defendants serve time in a federal correctional facility. Due to the excessive incarceration of low-risk defendants, the exorbitant cost of imprisonment, and the ever-evolving evidence, federal jurisdictions are increasingly seeking alternatives to imprisonment for low-risk defendants (Onyekachi, 2016).

The lack of infrastructure facilities in Nigeria is a major challenge for most correctional centres. According to Ogunode 2020, infrastructure refers to the facilities that facilitate the provision of educational and non-educational services. These facilities include, but are not limited to, libraries and laboratories, halls and classrooms, offices and administrative buildings, hostels and roads, water and electricity, internet, etc. The availability of these facilities in sufficient quantities will enable the administration of educational institutions to be effective, while the inadequacies in these facilities will impede the efficient administration of educational institutions. As a result, many correctional centres across Nigeria are in a state of lack of facilities in their centres. According to

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Guardian (2020), an interviewee interviewed on the challenges facing education in correctional centres, stated that there is no school or library structures in the centres.

Prison education should be funded by the federal, state, and municipal governments through budgetary allocations. This will support the advancement of jail education. If we want to properly correct the inmates, we need to allocate enough funds for their education. Donor organizations shouldn't be in charge of funding prisoner education; instead, the government should make a deliberate effort to ensure that offenders are effectively reformed. Systematic approaches should be used in conjunction with this to guarantee that prisoners who are allowed to pursue education while incarcerated are effectively utilized (Adelowo, 2023).

Nobody can really understand a country until they have visited its prisons. According to Nelson Mandela, who served 27 years in prison, "a country should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but by how it treats its lowest ones." Mandela claimed that a glance at Nigeria's prison system would inevitably lead one to see the nation negatively (James, 2019).

The importance of e-learning in correctional facilities has grown in recent years, as it offers prisoners the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills that can assist them in reintegrating into society after release. However, the design of e-learning spaces within correctional facilities presents distinct challenges and opportunities. Johnson (2017) conducted a study, the study examines the conditions, possibilities, and tensions associated with online education in prison settings, highlighting the need to ensure access while also addressing security concerns. The results of the study suggest that e-learning may be an effective method of providing education to prisoners, however, it necessitates careful planning and implementation in order to address security concerns. This study provides an overview of the challenges and opportunities that e-learning can bring to the prison education landscape in Nigeria. It highlights the advantages and disadvantages of e-education in prison education, and draws attention to the potential and challenges associated with it (Johnson, 2017). There is the need for appropriate infrastructure and resources in correctional facilities to facilitate e-learning, and to provide training and support to both prisoners and staff. Despite the presence of a few universities with e-learning facilities, the total number of such universities is still low when compared to other regions in the world. Therefore, it is evident that there is an urgent need for more e-learning investment in Nigeria, especially in correctional facilities.

Abuja Correctional Facility (ACF) Design Guidelines for e-Learning Space in Nigeria should reflect the specific challenges and opportunities associated with the design of e-learning facilities in correctional settings (Adekunle, 2019). These guidelines should address topics such as security measures, infrastructural solutions, training and support measures for both prisoners and staff, in order to facilitate the implementation of e-learning in ACF and other correctional settings in Nigeria. By following these guidelines, it is possible to guarantee the effectiveness of e-learning as an educational and training tool for prisoners in ACF.

In a study on the challenges and prospects of e-learning in National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), the results of the study indicate that the majority of students who participate in remedial education programs have expressed a positive opinion of the effect of electronic learning on their ability to use computer-assisted materials as a form of study. Additionally, the students have indicated that e-learning encourages them to become self-sufficient. In conclusion, the results of the study suggest that e-learning offers a future-proofing solution to the issue of a lack of educational resources (Badar *et al.*, 2018).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The essence of the correctional system in any country is not to completely condemn the offender but to caution them. Hence it would be an added advantage for the prisoner to have an avenue to improve his mental wellbeing and become a useful asset to the society. To further expand on the educational system in the correctional centers, a fusion of quantitation and qualitative research methods is used. This research focuses on the development of an Electronic Learning Centre (ELLC) in Kuje Correctional Centre that integrates e-learning capabilities. The ELLC will feature smart and intelligent spaces that are optimised for teaching and learning, as well as for the development of vocational skill-acquiring programs for prisoners. The dismantling of the E-

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learning centre will be carefully integrated with the feedback and real-life experiences of participants who have completed training at the correctional facility. The qualitative research results are obtained by physical interviews to interested parties, particularly those in correctional facilities, as well as to the prisoners themselves, to determine the level of satisfaction they experience with the current implementation of e-learning programs. In addition to the interviews, a visit was carried to the Kuje correctional center where case study was carried out on the facility to determine the state of the centre. Theyatic analysis will be used to analyze the qualitative data collected through interviews, open ended survey responses and observational notes. The thematic analysis will identify common themes, trends and recurring insights in the data. These themes will be used to gain a deeper understanding of participants' experiences and how they perceive the correctional facility.

Purposive sampling will be the sampling methodology for this study. Purposive sampling means that participants are chosen based on criteria that are not probabilistic. For example, participants will be chosen based on their involvement in the design of the correctional centre, their experience and knowledge of the e-learning activities, and their knowledge of correctional centre staff.

Nigerian correctional service (NCS) statistical data (5th June 2023) brings the total number of convicted and awaiting trial prisoners to 77,221. Therefore, the sample size for this study will be 150 prisoners who meet the specific inclusion criteria as defined by Krejcie and morgan (1970). The study will include 15 prisoners who have completed an educational program at the Kuje correctional center (Abuja, Nigeria). The sample size is sufficient to ensure the population is representative and the research objectives are met.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of the interviews taken at the Kuje correctional center includes images taken by the authors to get a clearer view on the state of the E-learning in the center.

Figure 1 Showing the map of Kuje Correctional center

Kuje Prisons opened its doors in 1989. Federal Government construction, 1989. This jail, which is among the most well-known in Nigeria, features both a Medium Security area and a Maximum-Security sector. It is well-known for being the prison where well-known Nigerians wind up, and it serves as the legal detention facility for criminals. Some of the notable Nigerians who have been

imprisoned here include Olisa Metuh, Raymond Dokpesi, Nnamdi Kanu, and Comrade ABBA Moro. During the 1990s, the prison had a bad reputation as a dumping ground for pro-democracy protesters and opponents of the military regime. The prison also houses a prison mosque, church and library.

Kuje Correctional Center is a well-known correctional facility in Nigeria. Located in Abuja, it serves as a detention center for individuals who have been charged or convicted of various offenses. Like other correctional facilities, its primary purpose is to hold individuals accountable for their actions while also aiming for their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. Creating educational opportunities within Kuje Correctional Center, including spaces for learning equipped with computer systems, can greatly benefit inmates. These resources can offer access to educational materials, vocational training, and skill development programs that can empower individuals during their incarceration and assist in their successful reentry into society upon release. Efforts to provide educational support, vocational training, and other programs within Kuje Correctional Center can significantly contribute to reducing recidivism rates and offering inmates a chance to build a better future for themselves post-release.
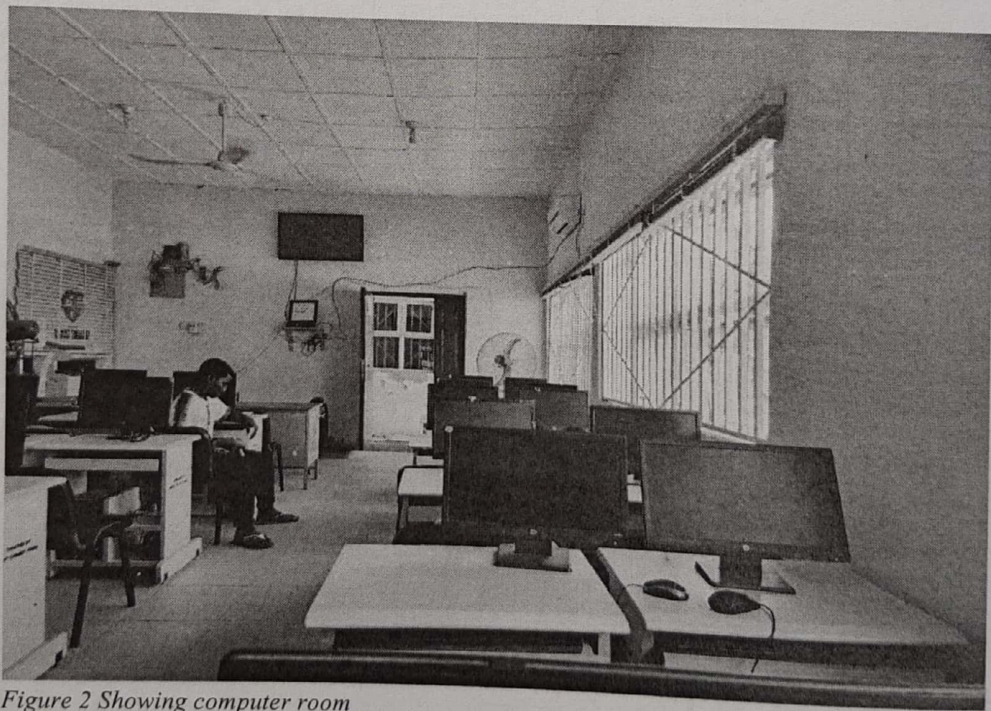

Figure 2 Showing computer room

Figure 2 above shows a space for computer systems used for inmate education within correctional facilities is a fantastic idea. This designated space could be referred to as an "Educational Technology Center" or simply an "Inmate Learning Lab." It should ideally be equipped with computers, educational software, internet access (with restricted browsing), and resources tailored to various educational levels and subjects. Designing the space to be conducive to learning, with comfortable seating, adequate lighting, and a quiet environment, can greatly enhance its effectiveness. Additionally, having trained staff or educators available to assist inmates in utilizing the resources and software can maximize the impact of this learning space. The aim should be to provide inmates with opportunities for self-improvement, skill development, and education that

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could positively impact their lives upon reentry into society. Providing access to educational materials and technology can play a crucial role in rehabilitation and reducing recidivism rates. Respondents were interviewed face-to-face to provide the data for the study. All participants received an invitation letter and a permission form 15 days before the interview date, allowing them to prepare for their research subject. Each participant's interview lasted 40 – 60 minutes. The interview questions were semi-structured. Follow-up interviews provided additional information. Data were transcribed and processed following the data collection process. The main themes found in the research were as follows:

General information on NOUN operations at Kuje prison. Impact of education and training on prisoners and the main advantages of training in correctional centres. Challenges encountered at the study centre

Figure 3 Showing book Store, where all learning books are kept

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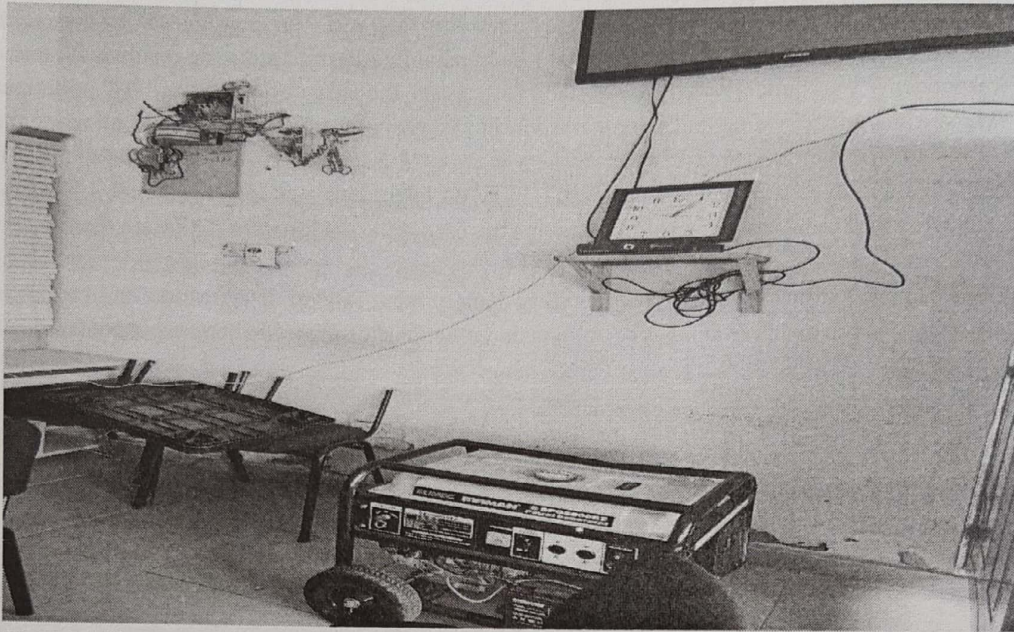
Figure 4 Showing auxiliary facilities

Figure 5 A toilet converted to a storage

There was a broad determination of NOUN activities in the Kuje prison culture during the interview sessions with NCS desk officers. The Nigerian Correctional Service desk officer stated that NOUN began operations at Kuje prison in 2013 and that facility pupgrades were completed in 2018. There

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are presently 234 inmates enrolled in the various courses offered by the facility. Of them, 224 are undergraduates and 10 are postgraduates, including two PhD scholars.

The results demonstrate the center's existing e-learning situation. The Nigerian Correctional Service desk officer claims that the center is a classroom measuring 6.4 x 4.8 m, or 30.72 square meters. The centers are equipped with two copier machines, a contemporary router for the Internet, a generating set, a plasma television, thirty-two seats, a desk, and a server computer. The center still requires further e-learning equipment, including a digital board, a high-end projector, an energy bank for backup power, and a socket floor box, according to the Nigerian correctional service desk officer.

According the students the Major advantages of education in correctional centre includes the following:

1. Released in mates have then opportunity to further their reduction.
2. Vocational skill acquisition programs are more effective in correctional centres.
3. Give inmates the opportunity to be engaged during and after their release.

The following issues were noted as difficulties in the correctional study center during the controller interview sessions: antiquated systems, Insufficient room for storing physical copies worn-out furniture Insufficient staff offices and Internet access According to NOUN employees who participated in the interview, the study centers' biggest problem is still a lack of room and computer equipment. A proper library with a librarian, an antiquated, slow computer system, a lack of energy or power, a lack of server room space, a lack of well-ventilated and cooled areas, a lack of offices for staff, and a lack of water for working toilets are among the other issues noted by NOUN staff. The following difficulties that were found at the correctional study center were noted during the student interview sessions: lack of comforts, lack of prior ICT understanding, and absence of a backup or other power source.

The challenges and opportunities of e-learning in prison education in Nigeria are discussed in this study, which builds on Adeyeye's (2019). The strengths and weaknesses of prison education are highlighted, as are the prospects and challenges associated with e-learning for prisoners.

The study highlights the need for adequate e-learning infrastructure and resources in correctional facilities. It also highlights the training and support needed for both prisoners and staff. In terms of e-learning infrastructure, the national open university of Nigeria (NOU) and several other universities have e-learning facilities.

CONCLUTION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, the findings of the study on designing guidelines for e-learning spaces at Kuje Correctional Facility in Abuja, Nigeria highlight the importance of specific architectural considerations in correctional environments. The analysis shows that e-learning spaces within correctional settings offer significant opportunities for rehabilitation and skill development for prisoners. The unique challenges of correctional environments require a balanced approach to design, taking into account security, accessibility and the psychological health of prisoners.

If Kuje Correctional Facility is using an older system for e-learning, there might be limitations or challenges in providing the most up-to-date educational resources to inmates. Older systems could have limitations in terms of access to current educational materials, software, or online resources. Updating the e-learning system could bring several benefits. Newer systems often offer:

1. Access to Updated Content: Newer systems may have access to more current and relevant educational materials, courses, and resources across various subjects and skill levels.

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2. Improved User Experience: Upgraded systems often come with better interfaces, making it easier for inmates to navigate and utilize educational tools effectively.

3. Enhanced Interactivity: Newer e-learning systems may offer more interactive elements, such as multimedia content, quizzes, and discussions, fostering a more engaging learning environment.

4. Compatibility and Security: Upgrading can ensure compatibility with newer software and provide improved security features to protect both the system and users' information.

Advocating for an update to the e-learning system at Kuje Correctional Facility could significantly enhance the educational opportunities available to inmates, contributing to their rehabilitation and successful reintegration into society upon release. This might involve exploring grants, partnerships with educational institutions, or government initiatives to support the upgrade of educational technology within the facility.

In light of these findings, the study recommends the following:

1. Understanding the Context: To effectively develop guidelines for designing e-learning spaces in Kuje Correctional Facility, it is imperative to comprehensively understand the unique context of the correctional facility in Abuja, Nigeria. Consideration should be given to the specific needs, constraints, and cultural aspects that may influence the design and implementation of e-learning spaces within the correctional setting.

2. User-Centered Design Approach: adopt a user-centered design approach by actively involving the inmates, staff, and educational professionals in the design process. Conduct thorough needs assessments and engage stakeholders through surveys, interviews, and workshops to gather insights into their preferences, technological proficiency, and educational requirements. This collaborative approach ensures that the guidelines are tailored to the specific needs of the Kuje Correctional Facility.

3. Incorporating Technological Infrastructure: assess and upgrade the existing technological infrastructure within the correctional facility to support the implementation of e-learning spaces. Ensure that the facilities have access to stable internet connections, appropriate hardware, and software tools required for e-learning. Collaboration with technology experts is crucial to identify and address potential challenges related to connectivity and accessibility.

4. Flexible and Adaptable Spaces: design e-learning spaces that are flexible and adaptable to accommodate various educational programs and activities. Consider multifunctional spaces that can be easily reconfigured to support different modes of learning, such as individual study, group discussions, and virtual lectures. This adaptability ensures that the e-learning spaces remain relevant and effective over time.

5. Security and Safety Measures: given the nature of correctional facilities, prioritize security and safety measures in the design of e-learning spaces. Implement robust cybersecurity protocols to protect sensitive information, and design spaces that allow for proper supervision while maintaining the privacy and dignity of the inmates. Additionally, ensure that the technology deployed is secure and tamper-resistant.

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