

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Correctional Education Teachers' Teaching Competence and Use of Adult Learning Principles: Inmates and Teachers' Views in Selected Correctional Institutions

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### Abstract

*This study aimed at investigating teachers', inmate' and administrators' views on the practices of correctional education. It investigates teachers' competence and practice of adult learning principles and challenges faced by correctional institutions and inmates. The study involved one hundred thirteen respondents comprising of 24 teachers, 87 inmates and 2 administrators. The respondents were selected from two purposely selected correctional institutions. Systematic random sampling and comprehensive sampling techniques were used to select inmates, teachers and administrators respectively. Data were collected using questionnaire and interview. Descriptive methods and t-test were employed for analysis. Results showed actual means for six principles of adult learning and two dimensions of competence were below the expected means and were found statistically significant. Interview results also demonstrated teachers' failure to use the principles in their instructional practice. Teachers reported lack of competence in general pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge as major reasons for not using the instructional principles. The study concludes that teachers lack required competencies and fail to support their instructional practices with core principles of adult learning. Major challenges facing correctional institutions in their efforts to educate inmates identified were lack of textbooks and teaching materials, lack of training for teachers, failure to make the literacy training functional and inmates' psychological problems. Based on the findings, actions for intervention are suggested.*

### INTRODUCTION

In today's world, a literate citizen is a necessity for nations to become competitive in the present global economy (Ministry of Education, 2010). From this

premise, it is argued that all citizens should get an opportunity to education. In this regard, the campaign on Education for All (EFA) stresses the need for universal access to primary or basic education.

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This campaign underscores any individual in whatever background and situation should be given equal access to educational opportunities. Particularly, in the Ethiopian context, where a significant number of adult population cannot read and write, it is believed that “without a significant increase in the adult literacy rate, Ethiopia will not be able to achieve a middle-level income status within a foreseeable time” (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 12). It is also common to find on contemporary literature that education is a human right that must be accessed by all people. Cognizant of this, Kotchon (2010) argues that education should be provided for everybody, especially for people who are incarcerated. In line with this, among a number of fundamental rights conferred upon citizens, the Constitution of Ethiopia (1995) ensures this right. In addition, Ethiopia is a signatory to various international laws of human rights of which one is provision of education to all citizens. Therefore, under both national and international human rights law, Ethiopia is obliged to uphold and ensure whether all citizens are getting access to education including inmates. The Ethiopian constitution (1995) in its article 21(1) ensures all persons held in custody and imprisoned upon conviction and sentenced have the right to get treatments respecting their human dignity. Article 41(3 and 4) further asserts Ethiopian nationals would get equal access to publicly funded social services of which one is education. Hence, citizens who are incarcerated also have the right to education, commonly called as prison education.

Prison education or correctional education [correctional education, henceforth] is vocational training or academic instruction provided to inmates while they are incarcerated. It can be offered from within correctional institutions, or by other sources such as vocational schools, colleges or universities (Kotchon, 2010).

Correctional education may have diverse missions often different from other education services as it is supposed to address the peculiar nature of its environment and students (Reagen & Stoughton, 1976 as cited in Stevens, 2000). For instance, among these varieties of missions some include: lessen boredom of dead-head prison time, give student-inmates a better understanding of society, give noncustody professionals an opportunity to monitor correctional operations, keep offenders busy with positive pursuits, offer inmates a chance to experience values of a law abiding individual; and alter behavior preventing costly re-incarceration (Stevens, 2000).

In general, the rationale for correctional education is geared towards augmenting inmates’ academic and occupational skills to improve the likelihood of their employability, enable them to continue their education when they are released and reduce recidivism rates (Roder, 2009). Studies have also shown that correctional education can benefit society as a whole in addition to helping inmates as individuals. In other words, in addition to providing inmates with meaningful activities during imprisonment, correctional education is imperative for preparing them for their life after prison (Duguid & Pawson, 1988; Vacca, 2004). Research shows that inmates who attend educational programs while they are in correctional institutions rarely return to prisons committing another crime once they are released. For instance, Ripley (1993, cited in Kotchon, 2010) believes that correctional education leads to reduced recidivism rates when education programs are designed to help inmates with their social skills, artistic development, and techniques and strategies to help them deal with their emotions. In addition, Tootoonchi (1993) asserts that correctional education plays a great role in changing inmates’ attitudes towards life as it leads them to improved self-esteem, confidence

and self-awareness. Available studies showed the indisputable importance of correctional education. For instance, John Howard Society of Alberta (2002) in its study states:

...some regard [correctional] education as a privilege that inmates do not deserve. However, through the evaluation of available research, it is obvious that education programs in correctional institutions are beneficial for all parties involved, including all members of society, government, and individual inmates (p. 12).

In view of this, a number of researchers recommended that in order to achieve the aforementioned intentions of correctional education, expanding access to education for inmates is by far better than investing on expanding correctional institutions (Harer, 1995; Piehl, 1995 cited in Spangenberg, 2004; Lawrence, Mears, Dubin & Travis, 2002). With regard to the kinds of educational programs provided, studies of correctional education have included Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Education Development (GED) preparation and certification, college coursework, various forms of vocational training and some combination of one or more of these programs (Gaes, 2008). Similar educational programs are organized and provided to inmates in Ethiopia. From the observations and informal discussions we have had with correctional institutions administrators (who monitor the teaching learning process), we understood that all of these types of programs are delivered with mixed objectives. Whatever types of educational programs are delivered, in order for correctional education to bring the intended benefits to inmates, teachers play a pivotal role in educating inmates and improving quality of correctional education. To do so, teachers should

possess the required competence such as adult learning principles, general pedagogy, and subject matter knowledge to teach inmates.

Albeit widely held consensus among correctional educators on the importance of correctional education, as mentioned above, correctional educators and administrators contend multiple problems in delivering educational programs to inmates (Kerka, 1995). This is largely because correctional education needs to consider diverse needs of inmates. For instance, acquainting inmates with socially acceptable skills to enable them function successfully in today's society, recognizing different learning styles and cultural backgrounds, and inclusion of varieties of educational programs are among the issues that need to be addressed (Blue-James, Witte & Tal-Mason, 1996; Kerka, 1995). Underscoring this, Blue-James, Witte and Tal-Mason (1996) state that "the crux of the issue is not whether inmates will learn but rather what they will learn" (p. 46). Relevance of contents, learning experiences and methods employed in teaching prisoners are major concerns of correctional educators. Recognizing the impact and influence of correctional institutions' culture on inmates' participation in and receptivity to education is also mandatory. Other factors that affect the overall success of educational programs are staff resources and availability of supplies, level of crowding, and overall correctional institution environment (Vacca, 2004). Notwithstanding these challenges, research findings show that inmates enrolled in correctional educational program reported improved behavior, and less often go back to correctional institutions compared to those who did not participate in the program (Bazos & Hausman, 2004; Tootoonchi, 1993; Duguid & Pawson, 1988; Vacca, 2004). On the other hand, those released from such institutions are often unable to find

employment, partly due to a lack of job and/or literacy skills, and are often re-incarcerated (Paul, 1991 cited in Kerka, 1995) despite mastery of literacy skills that may be a preventive and proactive way to address the problem (Kerka, 1995). Hence, correctional education and the efforts made to address the problems facing it should be encouraged as the problems have negative effect on educational quality (Diseth, Eikeland, Terje, & Hetland, 2008). In view of the increasing emphasis on correctional education in many countries (Enuku, 2001), this research attempts to investigate the practices of correctional education by raising issues of teachers' teaching competence, their use of adult learning principles and challenges faced by correctional institutions and inmates.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Discussion made so far and other findings demonstrate that programs based on current thinking about correctional education and sound adult education practices can be made effective by recognizing learner centered methods, different learning styles, cultural backgrounds, and multiple literacy (Kerka, 1995; Newman, Lewis, & Beverstocket, 1993 cited in Kerka, 1995). Yet, the presence of sound adult education practice that demonstrates current thinking and that ultimately benefits adult inmates relies on the presence of competent teachers who are equipped well with adult learning principles and other required competencies in teaching adult inmates.

Part of being an effective correctional education teacher involves understanding how adults learn best. Compared with children and teens, adults have special needs and requirements as learners (Biech, 2004). In line with this, the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (2006) in its Professional Standards for Teachers in

Adult Education Framework states that teachers are the primary facilitators of student learning and must have the requisite skills and content knowledge to guide the instructional process. According to this framework, competencies for such standard emphasize development of a core knowledge base related to adult learning as well as content matter and instruction, including language acquisition, reading and numeracy development. In addition to knowing principles of good teaching which every teacher is supposed to know, the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (2009) stresses teachers of adults need particular skills that are different from those required for teaching in a formal school. Such teachers should be particularly well versed to characteristics of adults and principles on how adults should learn. Knowing these principles helps adult learners overcome barriers of their learning (De Vito, 2009). In this regard, the core principles of adult learning would enable those designing and conducting adult learning to build more effective learning processes for adults (Knowles, 1984).

According to the researchers' observations and informal discussions with administrators, however, delivery of correctional education does not seem effective. This is consequently one of the reasons that initiated this study to examine the practice of prison education in the Ethiopian context. In addition, examining whether the teachers' methods are appropriate to the needs of inmates helps to design appropriate interventions in improving the relevance of correctional education. Secondly, research on the status of correctional education programs seems overlooked in the Ethiopian context. In fact, such scarcity of research evidence on the practice of correctional education is also true globally. Supporting this lack of evidence on how educational programs are delivered in correctional institutions, Foley and Gao (2004) state:

Correctional educational programs for incarcerated adults have been an object of much discussion. While such programs appear to be readily available to incarcerated individuals, little information is known about the instructional characteristics of such programs....few data are available describing the educational practices of correctional education programs for incarcerated adults (p. 8).

Hence, absence of evidence on this issue is also another major reason that initiated this study. Cognizant of these rationales, the following research questions were forwarded:

- To what extent do teachers' instructional practices in correctional education correspond with adult learning principles?
- How competent are teachers of adult inmates in the selected correctional institutions?
- What challenges do correctional institutions face in their effort to provide correctional education?

### **Purposes of the Study**

This study is intended to investigate the practice of correctional education. Accordingly, the purposes of the study are to:

- Investigate whether teachers teaching adult inmates align their instructional practices with adult learning principles;
- Investigate whether teachers teaching adult inmates have the required teaching competencies;
- Understand the challenges facing correctional institutions in educating inmates and;

- Suggest mechanisms to improve delivery of correctional education.

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of the research could have various significances to concerned bodies. First, it may assist teachers to question their practice in providing quality correctional education. Second, the study may contribute in identifying problems that correctional institutions face. Third, it may also give evidence for educational offices and funding agencies interested in correctional education to take informed actions to improve its delivery.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Research Approach**

This research is aimed to give a descriptive analysis of correctional educators' practices in correctional education programs. Thus, the study was guided by both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This research employed qualitative method because; first, it is assumed that it would allow in-depth investigation of the issue; secondly, it is an important method to understand the people and the social and cultural context within which they live (Flick, 2002). In addition, to see whether teachers are employing adult learning principles to the required level and whether they are demonstrating required teaching competence, quantitative approach was employed.

#### **Research Setting, Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The setting for this study is situated in selected prisons of Awi Zone (Dangila) and Bahir Dar Town in Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia. As the issue under study demands closer scrutiny to explore the practices, selection was made basically for logistical reason and purpose (where correctional education is being provided in an organized manner). Hence, those correctional institutions were taken as

settings for the research. Systematic random sampling was employed to select 87 inmates out of the total 261 attending non-formal education in both institutions. In addition, 24 teachers and 2 administrators (who are actively involved in monitoring provision of correctional education) of both institutions were selected using comprehensive sampling. From the distributed questionnaires, 14(8 from inmates and 6 from teachers) were incomplete and were excluded from analysis. In addition, 7 questionnaires of inmates were not returned. Questionnaires from 72 inmates and 18 teachers were found complete for analysis.

### **Data Collection Tools**

A questionnaire and an interview were used to collect data. The questionnaire has two parts. The first part of the questionnaire was adapted from the Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS) which was developed to measure the degree of practitioners' use of the principles of teaching adults (Conti, 1978, 1982). The items contain actions adult educators' are expected to demonstrate in classrooms. Respondents are asked to rate how frequently they practice the actions (Conti, 2004 cited in Foster, 2006). The questionnaire has 44 items, and was initially prepared for teachers to analyze their own practice. However, the researchers have adapted to inmate adult learners to evaluate their teachers' instructional practice. In addition, four other items which the researchers felt are relevant were added. Some of the items in the questionnaire were also modified to fit the context. The second part of the questionnaire was about teachers' teaching competence. The items for subject matter and general pedagogical knowledge were adapted from Haftu (2008), and Genet and Haftu (2013) who earlier adapted the items from Ambissa (2001). The questionnaire asks teachers to rate themselves on a list of

teaching competence items. Items that measure Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) were adapted separately from Shulman (1987). The questionnaire has a five points rating scale. The questionnaire items were translated in to Amharic by the researchers and checked by two English language instructors who can speak both languages. Reliability of the questionnaire as estimated by Cronbach's Alpha was 0.783. In addition, in order to make the findings of the research trustworthy and credible, strategies recommended by Spindler and Spindler (1987 cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 217) and Creswell (2003) were employed. The questionnaire was modified after pilot testing and experts' comments.

The other data gathering instrument was semi structured interview. The interview items were designed to allow correctional education teachers and administrators to reflect on their experiences. Interview was conducted in Amharic and all parts were tape-recorded.

Ethical issues were well considered to make the research findings trustworthy. Particularly, we maintained informed consent by making the research objectives clear to the participants and correctional institutions' administrators before collecting data. Moreover, as the cultures of correctional institutions are somewhat different those of other settings, we tried to make ourselves acquainted with the rules and regulations prior to data collection.

### **Data Analysis**

Quantitative data was analyzed using means and one-sample t-test. One sample t-test was used to compare the mean values. In so doing, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 16) was employed. On the other hand, qualitative data were analyzed thematically in line with the research questions. Interpretation

of the data included detailed descriptions supported with quotes from participants.

quantitative data analyses are presented first and the qualitative data are used to support the quantitative results in the discussion part.

**Results and Discussions**

Under this section, findings and discussions of results are presented. In so doing,

**Results**

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviation and One-Sample t-test Results of Inmates' Views on Teachers' Practice of Principles of Adult Learning

Principles of adult learning	Actual Mean	Expected mean	Std. Dev.	t	df	Sig.(two tailed)
Learner centered activities	17.79	30	8.96	-11.57	71	.000
Personalizing instruction	22.12	22.5	3.66	-.89		.379
Relating to inmates' experience	20.87	15	5.25	9.49		.000
Assessing inmates' needs	13.98	15	2.97	11.35		.000
Building positive classroom climate	12.73	10	2.44	9.51		.000
Flexibility for personal development	6.17	12.5	3.87	-13.90		.000
Participation in learning process	14.50	15	2.58	14.81		.000

P<0.05

As can be observed from table 1, actual means of all principles were found below the expected mean except for building positive classroom climate. All differences of means were also proved to be statistically significant in a two tailed

except for personalizing instruction. This shows that teachers, in the views of inmates, were not practicing principles of adult learning in their instruction as expected.

Table 2: Teachers' Views of their Competence in Teaching Skills

Items	Mean
Planning instruction	2.30
Proper use of time	3.11
Meaningfulness of learning activities	2.23
Maintaining clarity of lesson structure	2.41
Applying good questioning skills	2.20
Enhancing learner self-concept	2.28
Reinforcing learning	2.13
Close supervision of learning activities	2.66
Maintaining learner accountability	2.44
Providing opportunities for individual difference	2.07
Evaluating students by integrating with learning	2.10

As shown in table 2, teachers were asked to rate their competence in teaching skills and all eleven items were rated below the

expected mean value (3.00) except one item (proper use of time where its mean value is 3.11).

Table 3: *Teachers' View of their Competence in Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)*

Items	Mean
Structuring academic content for teaching inmates	2.20
Representing academic content for teaching inmates	2.10
Knowledge of common conceptions inmates encounter when learning particular content	2.12
Knowledge of common misconceptions inmates encounter while learning a content	2.21
Identifying difficulties that inmates encounter while learning a content	2.13
Knowledge of specific teaching strategies that can be used to address inmates' learning needs in classrooms	1.73

As shown in table 3, all the items are rated below the expected mean value (3.00).

Table 4: *Teachers' View of their Competence in Subject Matter Knowledge*

Items	Mean
Acquaintance in the relevant concepts and principles of the subject	3.10
Knowledge of related content areas related to the subject	3.09
Level of detailed knowledge of the subject matter	3.17
Understanding of the contents of the subject demands	3.26
General knowledge directly or indirectly related to the subjects taught	2.66
Knowledge of addressing issues raised by inmates in the subject	3.33

As shown in table 4, all items except general knowledge of subject were rated higher than expected mean value (3.00).

Table 5: *Means, standard deviation and one-sample t-test results of teachers' view of their competence in teaching skills, PCK and subject matter knowledge*

Dimension	Actual Mean	Expected Mean	Std. Dev.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Teaching skills	2.357	3	0.67835	-11.809	17	.000
PCK	2.082	3	2.57835	-13.809		.000
Subject Matter Knowledge	3.102	3	2.57835	17.809		.000

P<0.05

As it can be seen in table 5, actual mean values of teaching skills and pedagogical content knowledge were found below the expected mean value and were proved to be significant ( $t=-11.809$ ,  $df=17$ ,  $P<0.05$  and  $t=-13.809$ ,  $df=17$ ,  $P<0.05$ , respectively).

Actual mean value of subject matter knowledge on the other hand was found above the expected mean value. The difference was also statistically significant ( $t=17.809$ ,  $df=17$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

## DISCUSSION

### **Students Views of Teachers' Practices of Principles of Adult Learning**

It has been discussed in the aforementioned parts of the paper that inmates as adult learners have unique demands where an adult teacher is supposed to address. In this regard, contemporary literature shows that there are various principles that should guide the adult classroom practices to bring effective learning on the part of adults. Prison literacy needs to be learner centered, recognize different learning styles, cultural backgrounds and multiple literacies (Newman, Lewis, & Beverstocket, 1993 cited in Kerka, 1995). Similarly, many educators (Knowles, 1984; Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005; Conti, 1978, 1982) have proposed various adult learning principles or assumptions for effective learning.

In this study, however, teachers' practice of principles of adult learning was found below the expected level. When we see the first principle, teachers' use of learner centered activities was not to the required level (see Table 1). In addition, all actual mean values of each items were found considerably below the expected mean.

Many educators agree that adults learn throughout their lives with or without the initiation of teachers. In fact, it is also said that adult learning is an active and self-directed process where adults are supposed to take responsibility for their own learning (Knowles, 1984; De Vito, 2009). However, neither teachers' practice nor inmates' initiation was observed to be positive. In addition to inmates' views, teachers teaching at the non-formal education were interviewed to reflect whether they employ learner centered activities or not and the results of the interview are in line with the quantitative results. For instance, a teacher

asked on whether he employs learner centered methods or not states:

I employ both teacher and student centered methods of teaching. Most of the time, however, I use teacher centered methods. As inmates do not know what is being taught, I am forced to lecture them. So, first, I teach them using lecture method and then I sometimes let them teach their peers.

A similar response was given from another teacher. Same question was posed to him and he states:

Most of the time, I use teacher centered methods because I feel that there is no other best way to teach them. This is because I am teaching inmates who have no prior exposure to many of the contents. Once they understood the contents, it may be possible to use student centered. Yet, I feel it is difficult to use learner centered approach.

It is clearly reflected in the teachers' views that they are using teacher centered methods. In addition, teachers have reported misconceptions on their use of learner centered methods as well. For instance, teachers in their reflection claim that they are not using learner centered methods because inmates have no prior subject knowledge (such as writing numbers or letters). Yet, though inmates might be new to some of the contents and dependent on teachers for direction to get an idea on the new content (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgrtner, 2007), there are diverse ways where teachers could use learner centred activities in such situations; for instance, by integrating the contents with their prior experience. On the other hand, teachers failed relating teaching to experience of inmates and making their

instruction personalized to inmates' needs. In this regard, when we see teachers' conception of relating experiences to inmates life, teachers were found to conclude that the contents they teach are related to inmates' experience merely because they are related to their prior related experiences. The other principle that student inmates were asked to rate and teachers failed to practice to the required level was whether teachers assess inmates' learning needs. It is argued that correctional programs should be tailored to specific needs of inmates and should have immediacy of application (Jovanic, 2011). Yet, as can be seen in table 1, teachers have failed to use the principle to the required level. A similar finding indicates lack of teachers with relevant skills and experiences in correctional settings who are able to respond to educational needs of inmates as a major problem (Jovanic, 2011). Being flexible for personal development of inmates on the side of teachers was also found below the expectation. In fact, practicing this principle is partly related with teachers' use of learner centered methods. This principle of adult learning also requires extending one's own philosophy of teaching towards the constructivist approach as it requires the teacher to be a learner and give freedom for student inmates to participate in learning and curriculum development processes. However, as mentioned above, teachers were adhering to implement teacher centered method and many of them were found to assume inmates' lack of prior subject matter knowledge as barrier to their implementation. This finding is also in line with the interview reflected by teachers. Teachers attributed the reason for less participation and their inflexibility to inmates' lack of interest towards the instructional process. This shows that teachers' capability of making students participate in the learning process is very limited. It is because teachers are expected to have knowledge and skills to involve

students in the instructional process. Teachers teaching in correctional institutions, as teachers of adults, have relationships with inmates that are often different, i.e. they are not there for checking up inmates but they need to discover something else; for instance, stimulating inmates' imagination (Maeyer, 1995). Teachers of adults need to possess knowledge and skills that help them go beyond initiating inmates' interest and making them participate in the instructional process.

### **Teachers' Views of their Competencies**

With regard to teachers' views of their competencies, it was revealed that they showed inadequacy in two dimensions (general pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge). In addition, teachers were asked to explain the teaching skills required as an adult teacher during interview and were unable to differentiate the required teaching skills in non-formal and formal settings. For instance, one volunteer inmate teacher mentions:

I do not think there are differences in teaching in the formal and non-formal schooling. What is important is making oneself ready for the subject to be taught.

Nevertheless, teachers of adults need particular skills that are different from those required for teaching in a formal school in addition to knowing the general principles of good teaching where every teacher is supposed to know (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, 2009). The study also shows teachers do not have required competence in pedagogical content knowledge. In this regard, an administrator who is directly responsible to direct and monitor correctional education was asked about teachers' competence.

When we see their competence, since they are trained for formal subjects, they are not good at teaching adults. They focus on teaching, purely, reading and writing, though inmates should be taught the contents in an integrated manner with their experiences.

Those teachers who are teaching in the non-formal education are also volunteer inmates who like above required qualification. In fact, some scholars support the involvement of inmates. Related to this, Maeyer (1995) mentions:

Prison education is often arranged by unpaid volunteers with varying degrees of education. This gives it a less formal character which must be preserved, although it must also be overseen by a professional team in a traditional framework of equivalency, evaluation and courses, etc (p. 184).

Nurturing such culture to make inmates teach their peers might have benefit as inmates understand culture and behavior of their peers, but such practices need closer follow up by professionals to properly address inmates' learning needs. In relation to this, asked about their subject matter knowledge competence, one of the teachers reflects:

I feel I am competent in the subject I am teaching. It is because the contents are easy and did not need much preparation. For instance, the contents include about modern agricultural practice, personal hygiene, environmental protection,

rearing children, use of some modern technologies, etc. So, teaching such contents is not as such demanding.

When asked how they update their subject matter knowledge, participants mentioned that they are limited to reading textbooks prepared for formal schooling. Some of them even said that they have no access to such books whenever needed. In general, correctional education teachers should meet inmates' needs by employing varied teaching methods. Adult inmate teachers need to be equipped with the principles of successful correctional education programs through training and need to apply them in their instructional practices (John Howard Society of Alberta, 2002, p. 12).

### **Challenges Correctional Institutions Face in Providing Education to Inmates**

Though the very purpose of this paper was to investigate inmates' views of teachers' implementation of adult learning principles, and teachers and administrators' views of teachers' teaching competence in the selected institutions, the researchers have, however, come up with another research question as the issue has emerged in every participant's interview. This is the challenge correctional institutions and their inmates are facing.

One major challenge is psychological problem inmates are suffering from. With regard to this, one of the administrators expresses:

...many of the inmates have behavioral disorders. They assume that everyone knows their mistake and hates them. Though we have various meetings where reported problems are solved, this is one of the recurrent challenges we are facing.

Challenges correctional institutions are facing was also surveyed by previous studies. The study conducted by John Howard Society of Alberta (2002, p. 1) revealed that “inmate students have often had prior negative education experiences that have resulted in low self-confidence and negative attitudes about learning.” Moreover, this study revealed that effective correctional education programs need to address attitudes of inmates towards learning. On the other hand, inmates face many institutional and situational obstacles imposed by their imprisonment irrespective of the type of education and training offered. For instance, among these, some include challenge of completing an unfinished course after release, and transfers between prisons (Muñoz, 2009). Other challenges include the correctional institutions environment itself as it is compounded by unique culture.

The selected correctional institutions for this research provide two forms of education: formal education which uses formal curriculum and teachers teaching in formal schools and non-formal education where teachers are drawn from volunteer inmates and teachers. Delivering both forms of education have created a challenge. One of the administrators mentions:

Some training areas do not have professionals; specially, the non-formal education is being offered by volunteer inmates who do not have any training on how to teach adults. Due to this, the standards of our training are lower...because of lack of trained professionals.

In addition, both teachers and administrators frequently mentioned the

following challenges: lack of textbooks and teaching materials, lack of training to integrate the training with functional adult literacy, lack of budget, inconvenience of the setting and inmates’ preference to participate in money making activities. In fact, Jovanic (2011) also found that inmates prefer to participate in work activity than in education as the former gives them ten-times more revenue than the later. To this educator, this problem needs to be solved “by ensuring equality between reimbursement from education programs and the earnings from prison work to help inmates complete their education” (Jovanic, 2011, p. 80). Horvath (1982, cited in Ryan, 1987) also surveyed major problems observed in correctional education. The study found problems of staff shortages, inadequate and multiple-source funding, lack of power within the institution and inadequate space. In addition, Vacca (2004) found out that crowdedness, lack of materials and supplies, lack of funding were factors hindering provision of correctional education.

### Conclusion

The study found out that inmate teachers’ instructional practices are not supported by the major principles of adult learning. In addition, teachers teaching adult inmates often lack the required teaching competencies. Teachers were particularly found to be short of general pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. Though many educators contend that teaching in formal schooling should be different from non-formal schooling, the study showed that inmate teachers’ classroom practices deviated much from adult learning principles. This study also revealed that teachers have no appropriate training and rare opportunities to upgrade their professional development. The study also identified the presence of serious challenges in the correctional

institutions that hampered effective delivery of correctional education. Major challenges identified in this study include in ability to textbooks and teaching materials, lack of continuous training for teachers, lack of integrating the training with essences of functional adult literacy, inmates' psychological problems and inmates' preferences to engage in money making activities instead of attending education.

### **Recommendations**

It is highly recommended that teachers teaching adult inmates should get training in all the competencies required. Besides, special package should be designed to continuously train teachers on how to teach adult inmates. Areas of training may include issues such as adult learning principles, assessment, active learning and counselling. In addition, correctional institutions need to have guidance and counseling services for inmates. This may help inmates' value education and prepare them for better future life. On the other hand, correctional institutions need to establish collaboration with stakeholders to fulfill their material and training needs. Moreover, clear understanding and practice of formal and non-formal education should be created. Efforts should also be made to align education of inmates in non-formal education with functional adult literacy.

Past studies on correctional education conclude that correctional education contributes to reduced recidivism rates and improved employment outcomes of inmates. Therefore, current efforts made by government and other stakeholders in Ethiopia to support correctional institutions needs to be strengthened. Efforts to conduct thorough research should also be encouraged to make evidence based decisions. Needless to mention, it is worth remarking that the study of correctional education seems relatively under-

researched in Ethiopia and needs serious engagement among researchers as there are various issues that need the attention of researchers. For instance, issues such as relevance of contents, appropriateness of learning experiences and psychological problems of inmates are worth investigating. Whether the curriculum provided is supporting adult inmates in enhancing their knowledge, skills and attitude to improve their work and life styles (Ministry of Education, 2008) could also be an issue for further research.

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