# IMPACT OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMMES FOR INMATES IN NIGERIA CORRECTIONAL CENTRES IN SOUTH-WEST GEO-POLITICAL ZONE

**By**

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**Abstract**

*This study evaluates the transformative learning programmes for inmates in Nigeria Correctional Centres within the South-West Geo-Political Zone, to provide baseline data on transformative learning activities in the region. The study sought to determine the applicability and influence of transformative learning since it acknowledged the vital role that education and rehabilitation play in the reformation and successful reintegration of prisoners on inmates' social well-being, emotional stability, and chances of success after release. A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was employed, involving a quantitative phase followed by a qualitative phase. The study sampled 300 inmates across correctional centres in Oyo, Osun, and Ondo States through a multi-stage sampling techniques. Structured questionnaires were used for data collection, with validity ensured through content and face validity and reliability confirmed via Cronbach's alpha. Descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations were used toanswer research questions. Findings revealed that transformative learning programmes significantly improved inmates' emotional resilience, social skills, behaviour, and personal responsibility. The study underscores the need for supportive learning environments, qualified facilitators, adequate facilities, and administrative commitment for programme success. Recommendations include expanding transformative learning initiatives, securing sustainable funding, integrating peer-support systems, implementing robust monitoring and evaluation processes, and strengthening partnerships with NGOs and educational institutions.*

**Keywords:** Transformative, Learning, Inmates, Correctional Centres, Impact

## Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right that should be accessible to all citizens without discrimination, irrespective of their social, economic, physical, or legal status. It remains one of the most powerful means of promoting equality and inclusion, ensuring that every individual—whether privileged, disadvantaged, or incarcerated—has the opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute meaningfully to society. True education recognises no barriers of class, gender, age, disability, or circumstance; rather, it serves as a unifying force that upholds human dignity and fosters social justice. Beyond its moral and social dimensions, education nurtures emotional balance and personal renewal. According to Pathaneni (2020), one of the main goals

of education is to liberate individuals from negative emotions such as despair, gloom, and greed, thereby enabling them to attain holistic development and positive transformation.

In Nigeria, inmates in correctional centres constitute a segment of society that is deprived of several basic needs, including the opportunity for educational and personal development. Educational programmes for inmates not only raise literacy levels but also transform their lives. The prolonged confinement of inmates without functional and transformative learning opportunities may hinder their reintegration into society after their release. Therefore, equipping inmates with transformative skills is crucial to breaking the cycle of reoffending and fostering meaningful social reintegration.

Correctional centres—formerly called prisons—are institutions designed to securely house individuals convicted of crimes or awaiting trial. These inmates are kept in custody for varying durations depending on their offences. Within this environment, opportunities for reflection, self-evaluation, and repentance are vital for rehabilitation. Omorogiuwa (2014) emphasizes that incarceration should provide a unique opportunity for individuals to rethink their previous lifestyles. However, without a structured transformative learning programme, incarceration can become detrimental to both the individual and society. Rehabilitation programmes are therefore essential to the transformation and restoration of inmates in Nigerian correctional facilities (Tanimu, 2010).

In recent years, the contribution of correctional services to inmates' reformation has become a central issue in public discourse (Tanimu, 2010). Professionals such as adult educators, social workers, counsellors, psychologists, and medical practitioners agree that transformative programmes can help inmates acquire vocational and social skills, reshape attitudes and behaviours, and develop the capacity to contribute positively to society upon release. Nigeria's correctional services are designed to help inmates reach their maximum potential in physical, mental, psychological, social, vocational, and economic domains (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1989). Among their objectives are the effective management of inmate welfare, the reduction of dependency through skill acquisition, and the provision of recreational and educational facilities. Correctional services must therefore identify the causes of inmates'

antisocial behaviour and guide them toward transformation through self-rediscovery and behavioural change.

An effective transformative learning approach in Nigerian correctional centres can enable inmates to acquire relevant skills, foster attitudinal and behavioural change, and promote overall development. Transformative learning encourages inmates to engage in reflective and experiential learning processes that challenge existing assumptions and inspire positive change. This approach involves critical reflection on past experiences, the re-evaluation of personal beliefs and values, and the conscious adoption of new perspectives that enhance social well-being. By participating in transformative learning activities, inmates can develop self-reliance, gain employable skills, and build confidence for successful reintegration into society.

Learning within correctional environments must, however, be carefully managed to avoid monotony or mental strain. When learning approaches fail to incorporate learners' experiences, they risk alienating rather than empowering participants. Berner, Lobo, and Silva (2013) describe transformative learning as an umbrella term encompassing lifelong, active, experiential, problem-based, collaborative, and dialogue-driven education. Similarly, Khabanyene, Maimane, and Ramabenyane (2014) conceptualize transformative learning as an existential process that engages learners dynamically and personally. Ajayi and Olatumile (2018) argue that transformative learning connects past experiences with present realities, enhancing human capacity through critical and rational thinking.

Through transformative learning, inmates are encouraged to become active participants in shaping their learning journeys, fostering responsibility and self-direction. Berner et al. (2013) further note that transformative learning reshapes learners' values and perceptions, allowing them to adopt social well-being as a new paradigm for interpreting and engaging with the world. It involves constructing revised interpretations of experiences and forming new understandings that support positive behavioural change.

According to Mezirow's ten-stage model (as cited in Merten, 2014), transformative learning begins with a disorienting dilemma that challenges existing coping mechanisms, followed by self-examination, critical assessment of assumptions, recognition of shared

experiences, exploration of new roles, planning and implementing change, acquiring necessary skills, and integrating new perspectives into one's life. This structured process illustrates how transformation unfolds through reflection, dialogue, and action.

Empirical studies also support the value of transformative learning in rehabilitation contexts. For instance, Moedzakir and Mappiare (2015) examined non-formal and informal education programmes in Indonesia—such as elderly rehabilitation and women's Islamic learning groups—and found that transformative learning fostered renewed self-concept, problem-solving abilities, and community reintegration. Similarly, interventions led by social workers for older adults demonstrated that individual and group approaches—such as counselling, physical training, and spiritual guidance—enhanced psychological adjustment and personal transformation.

In sum, transformative learning offers a promising framework for rehabilitative education in Nigerian correctional centres. By promoting reflection, skill acquisition, and behavioural change, it empowers inmates to rebuild their lives and contribute productively to society. Hence, implementing transformative learning programmes within correctional institutions is not merely a pedagogical concern but a social imperative for sustainable reformation and national development.

**Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of correctional institutions extends far beyond the confinement of offenders; they are expected to serve as centres of transformation, rehabilitation, and reformation. In practice, however, the correctional system in Nigeria often falls short of this objective. Many inmates enter correctional centres already disadvantaged by poverty, limited education, unemployment, and social exclusion. Instead of serving as an opportunity for personal growth and redirection, incarceration for many becomes a cycle of stagnation and repeated offences. The absence of structured and effective transformative learning programmes within correctional centres makes it difficult for inmates to acquire the skills, knowledge, and mindset necessary to rebuild their lives after release.

In the Nigerian context, and particularly in the South-Western region, this problem is more pronounced due to overcrowded facilities, insufficient educational resources, and the lack of specialized personnel to facilitate transformative learning. Although some correctional centres provide basic literacy and vocational training, these initiatives are often fragmented, poorly funded, and not guided by a clear transformative learning framework that addresses the emotional, psychological, and cognitive dimensions of inmates' rehabilitation. Consequently, many inmates are released back into society without meaningful personal change or employable skills, making them vulnerable to social rejection, unemployment, and reoffending.

The challenge is therefore not only about providing education or vocational skills but ensuring that such programmes are transformative in nature programmes that encourage critical reflection, behavioural change, and the development of self-worth and purpose. Transformative learning helps inmates to question previous beliefs, understand the consequences of their actions, and develop new perspectives that support responsible citizenship and productive living. Unfortunately, such an approach is not systematically implemented in most correctional centres across the South-Western states of Nigeria.

The need for this study arises from the urgent demand to reposition correctional education from a routine or punitive exercise to a truly rehabilitative and transformative process. If inmates in South-Western Nigeria are to reintegrate successfully into their communities, correctional institutions must embrace learning models that go beyond mere skill acquisition to encompass emotional healing, social awareness, and personal transformation. Understanding how transformative learning can be effectively adopted and implemented in these centres is therefore critical to reducing recidivism, enhancing social stability, and promoting national development.

**Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives are to:

i. identify the relevance of transformative learning activities on the well-being of inmates.
ii. ascertain the specific impact that the transformative learning approach has on the social well-being of inmates;

iii. determine the aspects of the transformative learning approach that improve social well-being

iv. Investigate the conditions of available resources for transformative teaching/learning activities and;

v. Examine if there is a difference between those who were exposed to transformational learning and those who were not exposed to it.

**Research Questions**

1. What is the relevance of transformative learning activities on the well-being of inmates?
2. Does transformative learning approach has impact on the social well-being of inmates?
3. What are the aspects of the transformative learning approach that improve social well-being?
4. What are the conditions of available resources for transformative teaching/learning activities for inmates in the Nigerian Correctional Services?

**Hypothesis**

**Ho1** There is no significant difference between those who were exposed to transformative learning and those who were not exposed to it.

**Methodology**

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed research design involving a quantitative phase, then a qualitative phase. This was adopted for the opportunity to provide supplemental data to enrich and clarify the core question for this study. The population for the study comprises all inmates in all 22 Nigerian Correctional Centres in the South-West Geo-Political Zone. Three states out of six in Southwestern Nigeria were chosen using a multi-stage selection approach, and three correctional facilities were located in the chosen states of Oyo, Osun, and Ondo. A sample size of 300 was chosen at random. Structured questionnaires were used for data collection. The validity of the items was assessed using face validity and content validity. To ensure the reliability of the instrument pilot test was conducted at the Federal Correctional Service Centre, Ilesa, Osun State. The instrument's reliability was determined by measuring the internal consistency through Cronbach’s alpha. The researcher personally visited all correctional services centres sampled for the study. The survey data was analyzed using

descriptive statistics. For the descriptive analysis, the mean and standard deviation were computed. Furthermore, a mean score of 2.50 was adopted as decision criterion. Therefore, items with a mean scores of 2.50 and above were accepted as representing the major opinion on any issue examined. While inferential statistics of t-test was used to test all the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

**Results**

The result of the study was based on the research questions answered and hypothesis tested.

**Research Question One:** What is the relevance of transformative learning activities on the well-being of inmates?

**Table 1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation Ratings of Relevance Transformative Learning Activities on the Well-being of Inmates**

| Variables | x | SD | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| Transformative learning activities help inmates develop a more positive outlook on life. | 2.86 | 1.12 | Agreed |
| Participation in educational programmes reduces stress and anxiety among inmates. | 3.09 | 1.03 | Agreed |
| Learning activities in correctional centers promote self-reflection and personal growth. | 3.03 | 1.02 | Agreed |
| Inmates who engage in transformative learning are better prepared for reintegration into society. | 3.17 | 0.93 | Agreed |
| Transformative learning helps improve the emotional well-being of inmates | 3.06 | 0.97 | Agreed |
| Participation in such programmes reduces feelings of isolation among inmates. | 2.81 | 1.10 | Agreed |
| Learning new skills boosts inmates' self-confidence and sense of purpose. | 2.83 | 1.14 | Agreed |
| Transformative learning encourages better behavior and cooperation among inmates. | 3.21 | 0.93 | Agreed |
| Inmates feel more hopeful about their future after engaging in learning activities. | 2.95 | 0.91 | Agreed |
| These programmes provide a sense of achievement and motivation for inmates. | 2.89 | 1.14 | Agreed |
| **Weighted Mean** | **2.99** | | |

The inmate agreed with the following that transformative learning activities help them to develop a more positive outlook on life (.**x** =2.86)**; p**articipation in educational programmes

reduces their stress and anxiety (**x =** 3.09); better prepared for reintegration into society (x=3.17); improve the emotional well-being (x=3.06); reduces feelings of isolation (x=2.81); boosts self-confidence and sense of purpose (x=2.83); encourages better behavior and cooperation among inmates (x=3.21); feel more hopeful about their future (x=2.95) and provide a sense of achievement and motivation for inmates (x=2.89). Analysis from Table one shows that transformative learning activities for inmates in correctional centers in Southwest has relevance to their well-being

**Research Question 2:** Does transformative learning approach has impact on the social well-being of inmates?

**Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation Ratings of Impact of Transformative Learning Approach on the Social Well-being of Inmates**

| | Variables | X | SD | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Transformative learning helps inmates build stronger relationships with others. | 2.95 | 0.91 | Agreed |
| | Inmates who participate in transformative learning are more respectful in their interactions. | 2.89 | 1.14 | Agreed |
| | The programmes promotes empathy and understanding among inmates. | 2.90 | 0.93 | Agreed |
| | Transformative learning reduces conflicts and improves cooperation in the correctional centers environment. | 2.95 | 0.98 | Agreed |
| | Inmates become more socially responsible after engaging in transformative learning activities. | 2.86 | 1.12 | Agreed |
| | The programme encourages inmates to support and encourage one another. | 2.67 | 1.12 | Agreed |
| | Inmates show improved communication and interpersonal skills after participation. | 2.56 | 1.12 | Agreed |
| | Transformative learning contributes to a more peaceful and connected correctional center community. | 2.81 | 1.04 | Agreed |
| | **Weighted Mean** | **2.82** | | **Agreed** |

Table 2 shows the impact of the transformative learning approach on the social well-being of the inmates. The analysis revealed that transformative learning helps inmates to build stronger relationship with others (x=2.95); promotes empathy and understanding (x=2.89); promotes empathy and understanding among inmates (x=2.90); reduces conflicts and improve cooperation in the correctional centers environment (x=2.86), makes them more socially

responsible (2.86); encourage inmates to support and encourage one another (x=2.67); improved communication and interpersonal skills (x=2.56) and contribute to a more peaceful and connected correctional centers community (x=2.81). This, therefore, indicate that transformative learning has positive impact on the social well-being of inmates in correctional centers South-West Geo-Political Zone

**Research Question 3:** What are the aspects of the transformative learning approach that improve social well-being?

**Table 3: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation Ratings of the Aspects of the Transformative Learning Approach Improve Social Well-Being of Inmates**

| Variables | X | SD | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reflective journaling helps inmates understand and manage social relationships better. | 2.92 | 0.95 | Agreed |
| Peer learning encourages inmates to support one another socially and emotionally. | 2.75 | 1.09 | Agreed |
| Real-life problem-solving activities improve inmates' teamwork and collaboration skills. | 2.58 | 1.11 | Agreed |
| Storytelling and sharing personal experiences build empathy and social connection. | 2.92 | 0.95 | Agreed |
| Facilitated dialogues during sessions reduce prejudice and promote inclusivity. | 2.83 | 1.14 | Agreed |
| Critical thinking exercises help inmates navigate social challenges more effectively. | 2.67 | 1.18 | Agreed |
| The involvement of mentors and facilitators strengthens social learning and trust. | 2.75 | 1.09 | Agreed |
| Transformative learning activities promote a sense of community among participants. | 2.77 | 1.10 | Agreed |
| **Weighted Mean** | **2.77** | | **Agreed** |

Table 3 revealed the aspects of the transformative learning approach improve social well-being. The analysis shows that reflective journaling helps inmates understand and manage social relationships better; peer learning encourages inmates to support one another socially and emotionally; real-life problem-solving activities improve inmates teamwork and collaboration skills; facilitated dialogues during sessions reduce prejudice and promote inclusivity; critical thinking exercises help inmates navigate social challenges more effectively; the involvement of mentors and facilitators strengthens social learning and trust and transformative learning activities promote a sense of community among participants with a mean score of 2.92, 2.75, 2.58, 2.92, 2.83, 2.67, 2.75 and 2.77, respectively. It can be deduced from the table that the

aspect of transformative learning approach improve social well-being of inmates in correctional centers

**Research Question 4:** What are the conditions of available resources for transformative teaching/learning activities for inmates in the Nigerian Correctional Services

**Table 4: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation Ratings of Conditions of Available Resources for Transformative Teaching/Learning Activities for Inmates in the Nigerian Correctional Services**

| Variables | x | SD | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| Regular access to qualified educators or facilitators | 3.09 | 1.03 | Agreed |
| Adequate learning spaces | 2.83 | 1.14 | Agreed |
| Environment supports uninterrupted learning sessions. | 3.21 | 0.93 | Agreed |
| Enough funding | 2.58 | 1.19 | Agreed |
| Well organized learning schedules | 2.95 | 0.91 | Agreed |
| Reliable evaluation/tracking system | 2.89 | 1.13 | Agreed |
| Support services available | 2.90 | 0.93 | Agreed |
| Authorities committed to improving resources | 3.09 | 1.03 | Agreed |
| **Weighted Mean** | **2.89** | | |

Table 4 revealed the conditions of available resources for transformative teaching/learning activities for inmates in the Nigerian Correctional Services. The results shows that there is regular access of qualified educators/facilitators (x=3.09); adequate learning spaces (x=2.83); environment supports uninterrupted learning sessions (x=3.21); enough funding (x=2.58); well-organised learning schedules (x=2.95); reliable evaluation/tracking system (x=2.89); support services available (x=2.90) and authorities committed to improving resources (x=3.09). It therefore shows that the respondents were generally in agreement that there are available resources for transformative teaching/learning activities for inmates in the Nigerian Correctional Services in South-West geo-political zone.

**Hypothesis Testing**

Ho1 There is no significant difference between those who were exposed to transformative learning and those who were not exposed to it.

**Table 5: Summary of t-test of the Significant Difference Between the Inmates who Exposed to Transformative Learning and those who were not Exposed to it**

| Variables | Mean | Std.Div | df | T | sig | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inmates Exposed to Transformative Learning | 3.17 | .789 | | | | |
| | | | 289 | 7.032 | .001 | Significant |
| Inmates not Exposed to Transformative Learning | 1.79 | .870 | | | | |

**α=.05**

Table 5 showed a t value of 7.032 and a P value of .001, testing at an alpha level of .05, the P value is less than alpha level, so the null hypothesis which that there is no significant difference between those who were exposed to transformative learning and those who were not exposed to it is hereby rejected. Consequently, there is significant difference between those who were exposed to transformative learning and those who were not exposed to it.

**Discussion of Findings**

This study reveals the impacts of transformative learning programmes for inmates in Nigerian Correctional Centers in the South-West Geo-Political Zone. The study revealed that transformative learning activities have relevance to the well-being of inmates, as indicated by the respondents. The study shows that transformative learning activities help inmates develop a more positive outlook on life. Respondents agreed that participation in transformative educational programmmes reduces stress and anxiety among inmates and learning activities in correctional centers promote self-reflection and personal growth. The analysis further revealed that inmates who engage in transformative learning are better prepared for reintegration into society, learning activities help to improve the emotional well-being of inmates, and also reduce feelings of isolation among inmates. Transformative learning activities enable inmates to learn a new skill that boosts their self-confidence and sense of purpose, it encourages better behavior and cooperation among inmates, feel more hopeful about their future after engaging in learning activities, and the learning programmes provide a sense of achievement and motivation for inmates. This study is in line with the study of Asokhia and Agbonluae (2013). Their study found that the skills acquired through rehabilitation programmes often help inmates to live a law-abiding and meaningful life in society.

This study also reveals that there are differences between those who were exposed to transformational learning and those who were not exposed to it. It was revealed by the responses from the respondents that inmates exposed to transformational learning show more positive behavior. Those who participate in transformative learning activities are more hopeful about life after prison and tend to struggle more with emotional stability. There is a noticeable difference in communication skills between inmates who underwent transformational learning and those who did not; those who participate are more respectful to staff and fellow inmates; they also exhibit more resilience in handling prison challenges, and there is a stronger sense of personal responsibility among inmates who have undergone transformational learning. The study is in line with Sutton (1993), who noted that educational programs offered in prisons assist to keep convicts occupied, alter their attitudes or behaviors, and provide them with the vocational skills and career opportunities they need for the future.

The study further shows the specific impact that of transformative learning approach has on the social well-being of inmates. Findings proof that transformative learning helps inmates to build stronger relationship with others; promotes empathy and understanding; reduces conflicts and improve cooperation in the correctional centers environment, makes them more socially responsible; encourage inmates to support and encourage one another; improved communication and interpersonal skills and contribute to a more peaceful and connected correctional centers community. This study is in line with Mgbor and Enuku's (2003) findings that jail inmates' participation in leisure activities is essential to their enjoyment, preservation of a healthy lifestyle, and longevity.

Furthermore, the study reveals that the transformative learning approach improves social well-being. The analysis shows that reflective journaling helps inmates understand and manage social relationships better; peer learning encourages inmates to support one another socially and emotionally; real-life problem-solving activities improve inmates teamwork and collaboration skills; facilitated dialogues during sessions reduce prejudice and promote inclusivity; critical thinking exercises help inmates navigate social challenges more effectively; the involvement of mentors and facilitators strengthens social learning and trust and transformative learning activities promote a sense of community among participants. This supports Omorogiuwa's (2014) assertion that prison rehabilitation programs enhance offenders'

potential and subsequently improve their social functioning, thereby advancing their route to reformation. According to Ekpenyong and Dudafa (2016), offering prisoners the fundamental tools of social intervention allows them to target behaviors that may be altered and offers them the opportunity to adopt a different lifestyle from one that is antisocial. Also, Igbinovia and Omorogiuwa (2019), every rehabilitation program offered in Benin City prisons demonstrates the potential for successful inmate reform.

The study revealed the conditions of available resources for transformative teaching/learning activities for inmates in the Nigerian Correctional Services. The results shows that there is regular access of qualified educators/facilitators for transformative learning; adequate learning spaces for learning; environment supports consistent and uninterrupted learning sessions; enough funds to support the expansion of transformative learning; well-organised and allow inmates enough time to participate; reliable system for evaluating and tracking inmates learning progress; support services are available to complement learning and the authorities in correctional service are committed to improve educational resources.

**Conclusion**

This study concludes that transformative learning programmes significantly impact the well-being, emotional stability, and social integration of inmates in Nigerian Correctional Centres within the South-West Geo-Political Zone. The findings indicates that participation in transformative learning activities fosters positive attitudes, enhances emotional resilience, encourages cooperation, and builds self-confidence among inmates. Inmates exposed to these programmes demonstrate stronger social skills, improved behavior, and a greater sense of hope and personal responsibility compared to those who are not. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of a supportive learning environment, availability of qualified facilitators, adequate facilities, and committed administrative backing in ensuring the success of transformative learning initiatives. These outcomes align with prior research, reinforcing the critical role of educational and rehabilitative programmes in preparing inmates for successful reintegration into society.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings, it is recommended that;

- The Nigerian Correctional Services should strengthen and expand transformative learning programmes across all correctional centers.
- Efforts should be made to consistently provide qualified educators, maintain conducive learning environments, and ensure sustainable funding for educational activities.
- Correctional authorities should also integrate structured peer-support and mentoring systems to further enhance inmates' social learning and emotional development.
- Furthermore, a robust monitoring and evaluation system should be implemented to track inmates' progress and refine programmes for better outcomes.
- Government should strengthening partnerships with NGOs, educational institutions, and community organizations to enrich the scope and quality of transformative learning that will equipped inmates for better reintegration into society as law-abiding and productive citizens.

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