



A solution to reduce re-offending through entrepreneurship 'A case study of Punjab province of Pakistan'

Muhammad Kamran

Lecturer, University of Sunderland in London

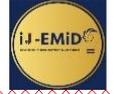
Muhammad.kamran@sunderland.ac.uk

Abstract

This study explores the effect of entrepreneurship in remedying unemployment among ex-offenders in urban communities, using Punjab province, Pakistan as a case study. This paper focuses on 'Prison Career Entrepreneurship' PCE programme carried out inside the prisons in Punjab province of Pakistan. Based on semi-structured interviews with the participants, the author observed whether such programmes offer a truthful opportunity for reducing reoffending. Offenders are facing huge challenges from over- crowding, exclusion, violence extremism and health issues in prisons. Reducing re-offending among ex-offenders would help to diminish these problems .

Keywords: Entrepreneurship; start-up training; ex- prisoners; recidivism; prison; programmes; Unemployment.

Introduction



Prison is a place in which individuals are detained, restricted or incarcerated. They are places where individuals are incarcerated and lawfully detained of a range of particular freedoms while undecided legal trails and cases. These legal-institutions are a pivotal part of the legal judicial legal system of any kingdom, state or country (Martinez & Christian 2013).The high cost of imprisonment in these times of financial and economic crises suggests that existing judicial systems in Pakistan cannot be maintained indefinitely and that modern practices of ex-offenders rehabilitation and reintegration should be revisited. A major challenge to reducing current levels of imprisonment is that ex-offenders face enormous challenges in securing employment challenges upon release from prison. Ex-offenders are frequently ostracized by society members for their previous shady background (Robie, Brown, & Bly, 2008).

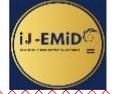
Attempts made by individuals to change the existing provision of support services are frequently met with resistance and with the question/s ‘Why should we spend money and resources on ex-offenders when there are more worthy individuals suffering around?’. In Pakistan, the ex-prisoner commonly lacks a vocal group of support members who are willing to champion their cause in the face of adverse reactions. Interestingly, when one examines entrepreneurship literature, there is a considerable dearth of academic research observed on the topic of offender’s reintegration through entrepreneurship (Loucks et al 1998).

The primary focus of this research study is to explore the importance of entrepreneurship programmes inside prison-walls as a method of increasing the prospects of offenders identifying income-generating opportunities upon their release from imprisonment. With this aim, there are also a number of secondary aims and objectives:-

Objective of the Study

- To find the intentions of offenders for entrepreneurship education in prison.
- To find out the entrepreneurship educational facilities already available in the prisons.

Research Question



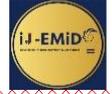
- To understand the current rates of reoffending at Punjab province, Pakistan.
- To examine the reasons of reoffending.
- To examine the relationship between entrepreneurship, criminality and recidivism.

To attain these aims and objectives, this research paper first considers the existing literature review that has already been published on reoffending and their link toward entrepreneurship, criminality and recidivism. It then observes a pilot ‘Prison Career Entrepreneurship’ PCE programme that was run within the ‘punjab province of Pakistan’s prisons, a programme which incorporated 12 modules including business plans, group work, coaching, and an individual presentation to an evaluation panel members.

The primary research data was collected through semi-structured interviews and the results and outcomes of this study was carefully generated through critical findings that would identify the key understanding of the benefits and challenges of delivering such programmes. While the discussion offers many interesting insights, however, it is recognised that this research study is significantly limited in terms of overall key findings. As this study is based on only one small programme and interviews with 15 participants in different prisons of Punjab province of Pakistan. However, given that so little research is available within the entrepreneurship domain regarding this particular group of people, the paper does offer toward basic understanding and contribution upon which other researchers can develop further in the future.

Inmates and reoffending

Van Dijk et al (2005) note that sentence (punishment) for a criminal actives does not necessarily end with the completion of the imprisonment: the stigma of a shady background may follow people for years after they have ‘paid’ for their crime (minor or major). This challenge of endeavoring to build a new social life following one’s release from imprisonment is something that an increasing percentage of individuals living in America have been experiencing over the past four decades, as evidenced by the fact that in 2010, over 7.1 million people were either on probation trial, in prison or on bail at the year-end – a figure which amounted to 3.3% of all US adult male residents, or one in every 34 adults (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011). While the total correctional population decreased (down 0.8%, or 47,790 offenders) during 2010, it was the first decline observed since the Bureau of Justice Statistics began reporting this population in 1981. But this trend is not exclusive to the USA, since between June 1998 and Sep 2010, the number of offenders in Australia increased by 37% (from 20,938 to 28,406) as reported by the Productivity Commission (SCRGSP, 2007). Over the same period, the number of male inmates increased by 36% (from 20,281 to



26,991) and the number of female prisoners increased by 56% (from 1,297 to 2,014). Meanwhile, a report by Wartna's (2009) on criminal activities in Europe stated that, although criminalities such as robberies, burglaries, mobile snatching, thefts, and assaults in the European Countries had dropped significantly over the previous 15 years, however the levels of serious crimes had increased.

Whatever the generators of such increased prison rates and criminal activity might be, Wartna's (2009) suggests that the financial and economic cost to society and to those directly affected by criminal activity is certainly growing.

While the rate of criminal activities remains an area of major challenge for law enforcement agencies domestically as well as internationally. An additional concern for judicial system has been the rates of re-offending by those convicted of criminal offences in the past (Gottschalk 2009).

In the USA, statistics show that within three years of release, 64% of prisoners are returning back to prison (Caird 1988). Whereas in Australia, around 38% of prisoners return to prison within two years upon their release, but this number increases to 45% when other corrective service sanctions are included in the measure (SCRGS, 2006).

In Europe, (Langan and Levin, 2002) have examination that the recidivism rates across many countries found that the rates of recidivism varied by country, as shown in Table 1.

Langan and Levin (2002) highlighted the fact that there are a number of substantial challenges in attempting to undertake comparative analysis across different countries, including: differences in criminal judicial systems; differences in punishment practices; difference in offenders registration; differences in methods and measures being used; differences in offender groups; and differences in periods of observation.

For example, (Wartna, 2009) highlights that while reconviction rates in United Kingdom are highest (with almost half of criminals being reconvicted within three years), the reason for this is still not very clear.

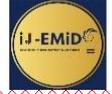


Table 1. European rates of reoffending.

Country	Offender group	Selection period	Age Number	Definition of recidivism	Percentage of recidivists after...				
					1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years
Austria	Adults sentenced	1984	15+ 69,167	New charges	–	–	–	–	39.0
Germany	People convicted or released from prison	1995	15+ 957,182	New charges	–	–	–	36.7	–
Netherlands	People sanctioned for a crime	1998	13+ 163,934	New charges	19.7	28.7	32.5	36.4	41.6
Sweden	People convicted for offences	1998	14+ 77,819	New charges	21.0	–	37.1	–	–
Norway	People charged	1997	14+ 74,097	New crimes	18.7	31.5	36.3	44.3	44.6
Scotland	People convicted or released from prison	1998	15+ 54,156	New charges	42.0	43.0	48.1	54.1	–
England/Wales	People released from imprisonment or sentenced to a community penalty	1998 Quarter 1	09+ 4,427	New charges	–	47.0	–	–	–

Source: Wartna, 2009.

Payne’s (2007) highlighted that reoffending rate in Australia found that an offender’s lifestyle and drug use were significantly linked to rate of reoffending, with unemployment, poor residential



location and limited or low level of education, , a history of mental health problems, family instability and serious, prolonged drug use being the key factors identified. In attempting to understand the profile of reoffenders. Loucks et al (1998) tracked recidivist who left Irish penitentiaries over a five-year period and found that 28.3% of released inmates were serving a new prison sentence within two year. This figure rose to 38.9% after two years, 46.2% after three years and 48.3% after five years. Additionally, they found that more than half (51%) of those who re-convicted had been unemployed prior to their current prison term. The research by O'Donnell et al observed 19,876 convicts released from prison-cells between Feb 2001 and November 2004. The majority of the released offenders were male (94%) and unmarried (81%), with an average age of just under 28 years. The research also suggested that reoffending was higher among adult males, teenagers, the unemployed and those with previous imprisonment experience. These findings closely interlink with (Wartna, 2009) research studies, which highlights the features that help classify those convicts who are most at risk of re-offending: gender (adult males represent higher risks); age at first conviction (the younger the person, the higher the risk rate is); country of birth (ethnic minorities display more reoffending); crime (risks highest after violence and property offences); and previous criminal record (the more convictions, the higher the risk).

Research by O'Donnell et al (2008) shows that employability can help to decrease the risk of recidivism by between a third and a half, as two- thirds of prisoners arrive in Britain jails due to unemployment, and three-quarters leave with no employment offer. The data from these research studies clearly identify that those convicts who are most at risk of recidivism are young and teenagers who are categorised as an unemployed.

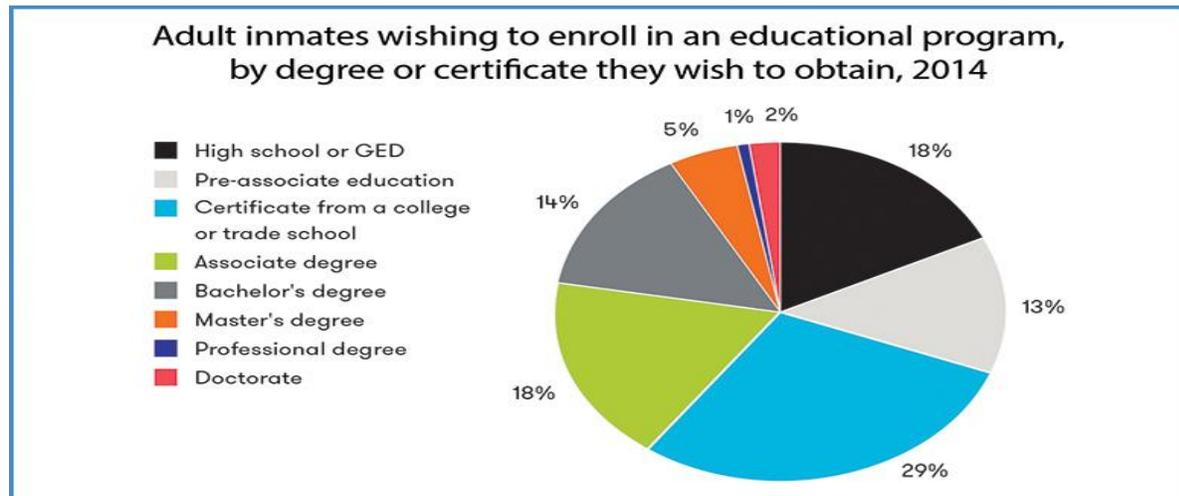
Upon their release, there are many reasons why ex-offenders find it difficult to become law abiding citizens in community and, as previously mentioned, unemployment is one of the biggest challenges that they face.

Although it is broadly agreed that reducing reoffending is an impediment toward the society, there is less agreement on how this might be achieved.

Zamble and Quinsey (2001) discuss that reoffending is affected not only by the factors that caused an individual to commit the initial crime (prisoners individual characteristics), but, as well as how prisoners are trained in prison to lead their life after imprisonment, for example how vocational skills, literacy and other educational programmes in prisons can help them to become a law abiding citizen upon their release.

Fletcher (2004) suggests that, although the effect of education on reoffending varied across participating cities in the United Kingdom, all cities showed a decrease in reoffending for offenders

participating in education sector. Their study also found that the post-release earnings of education members were higher than those achieved by non-participant members.

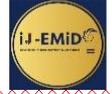


Source: Jacobs, 2017

Lockwood (2006) argue, while some vocational training program are provided within certain prisons, a specially tailored programme would have to be cognizant of the hindrances that offenders face in attempting self-employment upon their post-release and of the distinctive challenges that they would meet in establishing their own business entrepreneur. On the other side, Hughes (2008), highlights, the lack of self-employment programme is a surprising omission, given the difficulty that prisoners experience in securing employment once their sentence has been completed, and the resultant increased possibility of recidivism. Indeed, it is feasible to say that giving offenders an alternative career option through self-employment would be good for the offenders, for the prison service and for the community as a whole. After an intensive search for such courses in other countries, it became witnessed that in reality few countries offer such entrepreneurship programmes for offenders.

Entrepreneurship and delinquency

Why some people might choose delinquency above other forms of income generation has been a subject of discussion for many centuries.



Bridge and McGowan (2007) highlights that the general population can be broadly divided into two groups. The first group consists of those people 'addicted to the temptations of criminal activities', the second group is 'active criminals'. Whereas, (Maruna 2009) claims that people can switch from one group to another, primarily due to colleagues and friends pressure: the higher the relative ratio of each group in a population, the more likely it is that others will join the same group. Campbell and Ormerod (1998) argue that people can fund their living style through a wide variety of actions and events, which include: state support, begging, employment, farming, self-employment, sponsorship, hunter-gatherer activities, inheritance, pensions, gambling, marriage and crime. However, in real terms, not all of these choices are open to everyone and so individual generally choose from a much narrower set of alternatives, which conventionally would either be employment, self-employment, state support or crime.

Teasley and Carland (2006), urge that for those who choose criminal activities as an option for earning money, there may be a significant trouble in later returning to a more ethical and legal form of income generation. When considering the activities of wrongdoing as a career or profession option, it has occasionally been highlighted that criminals keep one of the key major characteristics required of all entrepreneurs – a willingness to take risks.

Lockwood et al (2006) research found that inmates achieved higher scores on entrepreneurial personality characteristics than both civil servants and nurses, but lower than entrepreneurs when compared with research formerly undertaken. Similarly, Rieple (1998) used tests that measured four motivational factors linked with entrepreneurial success (preference for avoiding unnecessary risks, aspiration for personal motivation, need for self-achievement and desire for feedback on results) and they remarked that, with the exception of entrepreneurs in high-growth firms, offenders attained the highest scores. However, Sonfield (2001) states that while the entrepreneurial features displayed by ex-offenders and entrepreneurs may have a number of striking connections, the challenges and obstacles that they come-across when establishing a new business venture can be quite different due to their differing interactions with legal challenges and the training options available to them. Because of the scarcity of research that has been undertaken on the distinctive challenges faced by former prisoners when looking to start their own business upon release from imprisonment, very little is known about their specific training requirements in terms of entrepreneurship or business ideas.

Fletcher's (2004) cite four main reasons why ex-prisoners wish to go into business-ventures for themselves. The authors also found that the risk associated with self-employment was lower for ex-prisoners than the general population because their marginal position in the labour market

meant that they had less to lose. However, despite having greater motivation and lower risk, prisoners were found to need more assistance and support from external stakeholders.

To address this gap, Jansyn *et al* (1969) analysis of recent entrepreneurial support programmes in the UK highlights three key aspects of good key practices with regard to custom-made entrepreneurial programmes for inmates. The first aspect is that teachers and instructors need to build good working relationships with participants and develop an element of trust with them with positive feedback and non-confrontational approaches during training and development sessions. The second aspect is that teachers and instructors should have experience of running their entrepreneurial businesses or business background, or that the programme should include individuals with the background of successful business stories. The third aspect is effective partnership and working relationship with ex-offenders can benefit from different expertise and experiences.

The outcomes drawn from these studies are quite basic in terms of findings that have been published from the limited research previously undertaken on this challenging topic, and they coherently demonstrated the distinctive nature of the unique entrepreneurship challenges that ex-offenders need to address, (Burgess 1984).



Source: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 2018.



The research shows that self-employment represents a very practical way for some prisoners to re-enter the labour market.

Indeed, Jansyn *et al* (1969) identifies a Prisoner Entrepreneurship Program in Washington DC that has achieved a reoffending rate as low as 9% and an employment rate that is more than 70% within 35 days of release. However, what is not clear from this study (or any other study) is the percentage of inmates that might realistically benefit from entrepreneurial support, although anecdotal signs would intimate that it is just a modest proportion of the prison population. Such programmes are not a remedy for the removal of reoffending as not every inmate wishes to follow such a path (as with the overall population). However, (Hideg 2005) finds that what is known is that some inmates' response positively to such a programme, and this paper discusses the approach taken to a 'Prisoner Entrepreneurship Program' programme that was delivered in a prison and examines the results that were achieved. Through these discussions, the paper supports to existing literature on enterprise support programmes for inmates as it extends the limited body of knowledge that currently exists on this specific subject.

Research Methodology

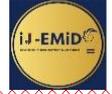
This research study is mainly focused upon a pilot 'Prison Career Entrepreneurship' that was carried out within a prison of Punjab province Pakistan. The programme was initially designed and primarily delivered by one of pronoun educational institutions; it was managed by a programme manager and received the full cooperation from prison officers and staff members. The key feature of this programme was to introduce key considerations in setting up and running a small business entrepreneurs, deliver relevant information on sources of assistance, highlight the obstacles that a participant members might come-across and how these could be overcome, and promote a career/life option of self-employment. The programme was primarily taught through a series of 12 modules, which included group activities, training, business plans and presentation skills to an evaluation panel members. The modules syllabus included the delivery of key concepts and learning exercises relevant to the topic of the specific workshop activities. The module was designed traditional in many aspects, but the content was tailored to the specific set of audience. There were no conditions to enter into the programme and all inmates were invited to participate freely into the programme.

The programme included 15 participant members who came from a variety of background and cultures, had different levels of educational and vocational skills (ranging from degree programmes to illiteracy or vocational background) and were at various stages of their imprisonment sentences. Due to the small group of people involved and the exploratory nature of

the research, the research methodology approach employed was qualitative research through semi structured interviews (personal) with the 15 programme participants. Because inmates were uncomfortable with a formal style of Q and A sessions and with recorded interview methods, the interviews were of an informal nature, which Curran and Blackburn (2001) refers to as ‘discussions with a purpose’. Once these discussions were completed, the researcher would make an initial key notes that covered the main highlights of the discussion, later writing up a more detailed set of notes. These brief notes were then assessed and analysed for findings of the research data. Any formal methodological approach would have created barriers with the respondent members, but this approach enabled them to speak openly about their current and previous experiences and offer constructive feedback and comments about how the current programme could help them to improve their knowledge, skills and working abilities upon release. Such an approach also gave respondent members the opportunity to share whether they viewed self-employment and current learning as a realistic opportunity once they left from custody.

Age Groups of the Participants: Punjab Province of Pakistan

Years	No	Prisons (Punjab province of Pakistan)	%
16-25	4	Central Jail Lahore	27
26-35	3	Central Jail Multan	20
36-45	4	Central Jail Rawalpindi	27
46-55	2	Central Jail Lahore	15
56-56	2	Central Jail Rawalpindi	15
Total	15		100



Research Analysis

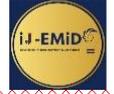
Content analysis was chosen as the method of data analysis. This is a method intended to provide objective, systematic and quantitative description of the overt content of communication of written or verbal expression and the subsequent interpretation of it (Landsheere, 1979).

The qualitative method used in this research to collect data, as it constitutes an invaluable technique to understand in depth the social and cultural actuality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The feedback and outcome of the primary research data provided interesting insights into the successes and failures of the programme. The first interesting statistic was that, of the 15 participants who started the course, all of them fully completed it. This statistical data was possibly the key outcome, as subjective evidence locally suggested that such an outcome was generally specific within the prison system. This conclusion would propose that the members liked the programme and received huge benefit out of it. Similarly, the programme key contents were generally viewed as a sign of optimism by the majority of the respondents, and the support material i.e, slides and case studies provided were regarded as tremendously helpful for retaining the skills and knowledge delivered during the training sessions, while there was also plenty of opportunities to ask questions at any time. The use of guest speakers and video material was also found very helpful to support the key-content.

There were three trainers delivering sessions on the programme, and the group noted that they had very different teaching and knowledge approach. One had a 'story-telling' technique of delivery, while the other trainer was more 'professional with contemporary knowledge and approach' style. The third one was too 'traditional teaching' style, which caused some disquiet amongst the group members as it generated fears that they were being returned to the old teaching learning system that many felt had unsuccessful them again.

However, when group was asked which style they preferred more, the group members were evenly divided with different opinions. But overall participants were greatly satisfied with the knowledge and skills that the three trainers generated.

The original framework of the programme included a number of group activities exercises during the workshops. The researcher experienced that the participants were uncomfortable to discuss about their past or crime in front of other peers. As initially, the original programme was designed where participants were required to present their entrepreneurial plans in public, but this was later amended due to participant's feedback and their lack of motivation. With amended version of programme, participants were asked to present in front of their three trainers on an individual basis.



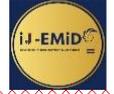
The researcher also observed that the group-participants went through a positive change in attitude as the programme proceeded, and prison staff members gave constructive feedback upon the increasingly positive way in which the members interacted with the staff members themselves and with other inmates.

The participants offered many ideas and experiences into lessons learned from this programme that could be applied in any upcoming programmes. They highlighted that there would be a need to implement pre-programme interviews with each of the members so as to identify their business knowledge and ideas, to set expectations on both sides and to begin the process of building confidence and level of trust.

Finally, the respondents shared their overall feedback that this type of programme is certainly suitable for specific number of inmates as it merely focused on self-employment and also suitable for people who want to become employee/worker upon release. However, they acknowledged that such a programme can offer a positive change in their critical thinking, decision making and career progression for a small percentage of the prison population and, if applied regularly, could potentially be helpful to decrease the current rates of reoffending.

Limitations

There are a number of drawbacks and limitation to this type of research methodology. These drawbacks include the usual challenges linked with using semi structured interviews, as highlighted by Sauers (2009), such as the ability to avoid using leading questions or offering suggestive answers; repeating a question in a manner that is different from the original question; maintaining neutrality; raising several subjects simultaneously; the ability to avoid becoming involved in a discussion and debate; and drawing conclusions from such a small sample group. But the informal nature of this research methodological approach caused some additional-concerns, which comprised the possibility of limitations to the findings generated by this research as one cannot draw any wide assumptions or understandings from one small sample from just one programme. The best contribution that the paper can make is that it delivers an introduction to the topic and it offers the opportunity for a wider research study (possibly longitudinal nature of research) that could lead to a comprehensive understanding of how reoffending might be decreased through entrepreneurship programmes being carried out inside the prison walls.



Recommendations

It is recommended for government and non-government organisation (NGO's) to extend the entrepreneurial educational facilities in prisons by allocating grants and fundings for entrepreneurial education for the offenders so that the imprisonment can play the role of correction centers.

To improve capacity to measure reoffending using administrative databases by improving the comparability of and linkage between criminal justice data collection sources and access by researchers to those data.

To develop a national research program in order to provide relevant and updated information to the criminal judicial system.

To increase the value of reoffending research for policy development by ensuring that data, methodology and limitations are clearly identified and, where possible, standardised – this will simplify more precise interpretation and application to programme and policy development.

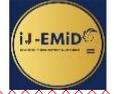
Conclusions

Prison Career Entrepreneurship Programme in prisons can change the inmates' fundamental attitude, not just towards self-employment and entrepreneurship, but also towards important aspects of their social life that go far beyond what is taught in the programs.



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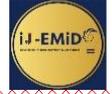
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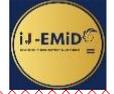
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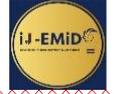
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