

## Effects of Scamper Creativity Training in the Prevention of Social Problems among Selected Inmates in Nigeria Prisons

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### Abstract

The fact that many prisoners were re-arrested and detained no sooner than they were released from prison is no longer news in Nigeria. The reason could be traced to the fact that only punitive measure has been the order of the day in Nigeria prisons, whereas prison supposes to serve as a reformatory centre, where inmates are trained on how to be a better person after incarceration. The research therefore focuses on training prisoners in certain creativity techniques that could lead to prevention of crime in the society. The study examined the effect of SCAMPER creativity training technique in the prevention of social problems among selected inmates in Nigeria Prisons. A total of 71 prison inmates were randomly selected from Zone 'F' of Prison formation in Nigeria, using Oyo, Ondo, Osun and Ekiti states. The participants whose age range was between 18 and 68 years ( $x = 43.0$ ) were assigned to intervention condition and control group, with twelve sessions spanning six weeks. The participants responded to test 1 of the Crime Behavior Factor-Battery (CBFB). One way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was utilized to analyse gleaned field data at 0.05 alpha level. The result showed that the crime behavior scores of the experimental group decreased compared with the control group ( $P < .05$ ). On the basis of the findings it was recommended that Nigerian Prisoners should be exposed to regular creativity training to reduce criminal tendencies in people. It was also suggested that similar Scamper training opportunities should be extended to those individuals who might intermittently manifest social difficulties and challenges in other remand homes for a better future in social adjustment. This would lead to individuals better living, growth and development as well as general societal peace.

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**Keywords:** scamper, creativity training technique, social problems, inmates, Nigeria prisons.

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### INTRODUCTION

Social problems are continually on the astronomical increase despite constant efforts to devise a lasting solution for its prevention. Unfortunately, adolescents and young adults form the bulk of the perpetrators of social problems in the society. Animasahun (2000) reported that the emergence and incessant rampaging of certain militant Nigerian Youths such as the Oodua Peoples' Congress (OPC), Arewa Peoples' Congress, Egbesu Youths, Bakassi Boys, MEND (Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta) was the result of poor education, poor academic achievement, lack of gainful employment, irresponsibility and youthful exuberance. Prisons all over the country are over-congested with the unlucky and unfortunate few that are caught, convicted and incarcerated for social vices, for which adolescents constitute about 80% (Animashaun 2002).

The effect of social problems ranges from the fact that most society would not be able to move forward, as insecurity becomes the order of the day when mortality rate increases. Suffice to say that the menace has defied all previously proposed and utilized measures. Application of Creativity and Innovative techniques in the remediation of the societal problems is perhaps the long awaited desired solution to the problem (Akinboye, 2000; 2003).

Necessity for creativity in our day to day activities cannot be over emphasized. People of all ages are confronted with problems and situations that require decisions to improve the human condition. However, many problems remain unsolved because people tend to cope with modern challenges using their current repertoire of knowledge and skills. Creativity has been found to be the bed-rock of success of developed societies through which they, even, successfully handled crime and social vices (Bucket Boys 2001, Positive Action, 2001; Tribes, 2002; Animasahun, 2002).

Creativity describes the ability to produce new ideas, new concept, new design and alternative ways of doing things (Akinboye, 2000). Animasahun (2002) conceptualized creativity as conscious cognitive processes stimulated by problematic situation, guided by interest that results in the generation of statistically infrequent, valuable and appropriate ideas useful in turning challenges of life into fruitful, beneficial and profitable outcomes. The latter definition is more relevant in this situation of reducing and preventing social vices in our society. To benefit from creativity therefore, an individual must be aware of his problem, consciously interested in getting out of it, give room for alternative ideas which would now liberate him from the problem

whereby he becomes useful to himself and the entire society.

Those who take pleasure in perpetrating social vices have already incorporated negative life skills into their systems. Creativity training would help to open up new possibilities, escape from old and negative ideas, improve on the present ones and generate new alternative ideas, concepts, percepts etc. to cope with life (Akinboye, 2000; Animasahun, 2002).

Many of the perpetrators of social vices got into their present predicaments through ignorance, idleness, frustration, peer group influence, poor decision making, unemployment, drug-addiction and so on. Creative thinking could, perhaps, liberate them from the bondage by deliberately stimulating their positive life skills that could make them self-sustaining citizens, getting disinterested in the negative ways of life and thereby reducing their criminal tendencies. The preconceived negative ideas are weakened through the generation of new positive and useful ideas; hence, creativity becomes a character-reformatory strategy and method of fostering peaceful co-existence.

The issue of crime and attendant behaviours call for greater attention now than ever because of the involvement of the adolescents. These are the future of the nation but they constitute the greater percentage of perpetrators of social vices. The period of adolescence has always been a turbulent one. Salami (2000) described this period as that of a considerable confusion and conflicts, problems of adjustment and difficulties in making decisions. When the adolescents cannot meet many of their needs and expectations, conflicts usually arise in form of various psychological disorders manifested such as abnormal, undesirable and anti-social behaviours which cause considerable distress to the person himself, his/her significant persons, and the society in which he lives (Akinboye, 1976; Jarvis, 1990; Osiki, 2000). This kind of a person need to be trained to be creative to give him the necessary psychological support against frustration and conflict that often accompany rapid rate of socio-economic changes in the society.

Several attempts have been made in the past to reduce the criminal tendencies of prisoners. Akinranti (1984) used Cognitive Restructuring and Token Reinforcement strategies to reduce socially undesirable behaviors of some Nigeria prison inmates. Omidoyi (1988) used Transactional Analysis and Self Control Techniques to reduce assault behaviours of prisoners. Other authors who have successfully worked on reduction of psychopathological behaviours and fostered positive life skills include: Hathaway (1999) Peters (1999), Mehrabian (1999), Grinder and Bandler (1999),

Kelsey (1999), Roberts and Rawana (2001), Dane (2001), Tribes (2001), Exceptional Innovations (2001), Citizen for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (2001), Botvin (2002) and Animasahun (2002).

The creativity technique employed in this study for the prevention of social vices is SCAMPER, a major technique in Idea Generation Processes (IGP). This technique was propounded by Edward de-Bono with the aim of assisting an individual who is ready or willing to change his former pattern of behavior to a more desirable one. It is an acronym which stands for questions relating to the following: S = Substitute; C = Combine; A = Adapt; M =Modify; P = Put to other uses; E = Eliminate; R = Rearrange. (De Bono, 1999).

The SCAMPER technique utilizes a set of directed questions which an individual answers to himself in order to come up with new ideas. Each of the acronyms can be used as stages towards the replacement of the old idea with a new one. In an attempt to reduce social vices, the followings were used for instance;

**SUBSTITUTE:** An individual evaluates his present behavior and conclude that the situation is bad. He asks himself- What can I substitute to make an improvement? He now thinks about a replacement or substituting that behavior for a better, desirable and acceptable one.

**COMBINE:** There are diverse new ideas that come to the mind of the individual who is ready to substitute the former behavior. He asks- How many of these ideas can I combine for effectiveness? He should now endeavour to combine some of these ideas so as to come out strong.

**ADAPT:** An individual can now adapt specific aspects of different ideas to make a new combination different from what used to obtain in the society. Typical questions include: What part of this idea can I change and in exchange for what?

**MODIFY:** An individual thinks about changing part or all of the current situation or modifies it in an unusual way to come up with new ways of doing things. He asks- what happens if I exaggerate this aspect? This step leads to the birth of a new idea.

**PUT TO OTHER USES:** An individual thinks and conclude on how to put the current idea into immediate uses as well as for other purposes to solve personal and societal problems. Typical questions can be- What purposes would my idea serve? Who would be the beneficiaries? What other purposes can be advanced from these?

**ELIMINATE:** An individual thinks of what would happen if a particular aspect or various aspects of the packaged idea are eliminated. He considers the consequences and what might be done to address the situation in a different way. Typical questions include: What would happen if I remove a component or part of the idea? How else would I achieve my aim without the normal way of doing it? This often leads to consideration of different ways of actualizing the ideas.

**REARRANGE:** An individual rearranges the idea in the current forms that emanated from the elimination processes. The ideas are also arranged in reverse order to pave way for alternative ideas. This final stage leads to implementation of the idea. It is strongly believed that a prisoner who undergoes the above process would hold something valuable in his head and would no longer be interested in perpetrating social vices in the society after incarceration.

**HYPOTHESIS**

The only hypothesis for the study was tested at the probability level of 0.05.

There will be no significant difference in the social problem test scores of experimental and control group.

**DESIGN**

The study adopted one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) using the pre-test scores as covariates to find if out if post-test difference was significant.

**POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

The population consists the entire prisoners in Zone F of prison formations in Nigeria comprising 4 states of the federation, namely: Oyo, Ondo, Osun and Ekiti states. A sample of 20 participants from each state, making a total of 80 inmates were randomly selected, based on simple balloting, from one prison each from the 4 states. However, only 71 participants completed the exercise. Their ages ranged between 18 and 68 with a mean of 43. While those in Oyo and Ondo were assigned into the treatment group, those in Osun and Ekiti formed the control group. Thirty four

(34) and thirty seven (37) participants in the experimental and control groups respectively finally completed the exercise.

**INSTRUMENTATION**

The Crime behaviour rating scale which is the first scale in the Crime Behavior Factor Battery (Animasahun, 2006) was used to measure the social vices ratings of the participants. It has 33 items constructed on 5- point Likert format. It has a norm of 63 whereby any score above the norm is an indication for incidences of crime behaviours. It has a Cronbach alpha of 0.95 and a Guttman split half reliability of 0.82.

**PROCEDURE**

There was an initial introduction, rapport building, orientation as well as motivation to participate in creativity training. Then, the Crime behavior rating scale was administered on all participants in their different prisons to collect pretest scores. This was followed by six weeks of twelve sessions of intensive training in SCAMPER creativity technique in Oyo and Ondo prisons. The control group in Osun and Ekiti prisons were not exposed to any treatment but were also taught certain creativity techniques after the whole exercise had been concluded. Finally, the experimental and the control had the Crime rating scale administered on them to collect the post-test scores.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

The one-way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was employed to analyze the data collected for the study. ANCOVA was used because of its versatility, durability and high sensitivity, and specifically to remove from the treatment means of those differences which could be linearly correlated with the covariate, and to adjust the post-test means for differences between the two groups.

**RESULTS**

The only hypothesis for this study stated: There will be no significant difference in the social problems test scores of experimental and control group. The result is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Summary of Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) showing the effect of treatment (SCAMPER) on social problems test scores of experimental and control group

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	29464.387 <sup>a</sup>	2	14732.194	45.235	.000	.571
Intercept	8787.053	1	8787.053	26.981	.000	.284
Prettest	3982.873	1	3982.873	12.229	.001	.152
Group	25256.161	1	25256.161	77.549	.000	.533
Error	22146.345	68	325.682			
Total	825173.000	71				
Corrected Total	51610.732	70				

The result presented in table 1 above shows that there was a significant difference in the social problems post-test scores of participants in the experimental and control groups ( $F_{(1,70)} = 77.549 < 0.05$ ). On this basis, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the social problems post-test scores of experimental and control groups. The table also reveals that the group (treatment and control) performance has large effect on their post-test scores (partial Eta Square = .533) (Cohen, 1988).

The table further reveals that, there was a significant difference in the social problems pre-test scores of participants in the experimental and control groups ( $F_{(1,70)} = 12.229 < 0.05$ ). In order to provide more information on the variation in post-test mean score of participants in treatment and control group, the pair-wise comparison was computed.

Table 2: Summary of pair-wise comparison Analysis showing the effect of treatment on social problems test scores of experimental and control group

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	P
Experimental group	control group	-37.757	4.288	.000
Control group	experimental group	37.757	4.288	.000

\* The mean difference is significant at 0.05

The 2 means reveal that the participants in control group has the highest adjusted mean score ( $X = 122.461$ ), while the participants exposed to treatment obtained the lowest adjusted scores ( $X = 84.704$ ). These values were obtained by adding the respective adjusted deviations with the grand mean. This implies that the tendency for the treatment group to engage in social problems after the intervention was very low compared to the control group; which is evident that the intervention was effective.

**DISCUSSION**

The study has shown that SCAMPER creativity training is effective in the prevention of social problems among Nigerian prisoners. Participants in the intervention condition clearly demonstrated that their criminal tendencies drastically reduced compared with their control counterparts. It is worth noting that the lower the score on Crime behavior rating scale the better the condition of the person. In this study, participants in the experimental group had their Crime behavior rating scores drastically reduced compared with their counterparts in the control group. This means creativity training using SCAMPER can be highly effective in the reduction of social problems in the society. This finding corroborates that of Akinranti (1984) and Omideyi (1988) that undesirable behaviours of prison inmates could be reduced. The finding that creativity techniques help to reduce negative behavior and foster personal growth and productivity confirms the earlier findings of Feldhusen (1995), Sternberg (1995a, 1995b), Animasahun (2002). The study has further shown that reduction in crime behavior is automatically a vital aspect of positive life skill which buttresses the works of Hathaway (1999), Peters (1999), Mehrabium (1999), Grinder and Bandler (1999), Kelsey (1999) Roberts and Rawana (2001), Dane (2001), Tribes (2002), Exceptional Innovations (2001), Citizen for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (2001), Positive Action (2001), Bucket Boys (2001), Botvin (2002) and Animashaun (2002).

**IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Perpetration of social problems is an hindrance to successful health. It prevents the individual from educational, social, economic and organizational smooth attainments. This study would therefore help to nip such negative behaviours in the bud. Reduction in the social problems of prisoners would result in total reformation, and prepares the inmates for a worthy living beneficial to themselves and the society at large. The consequence of this is that prisoners who had used negative means to obtain what they needed in the society would no longer be interested in such ventures but make use of their newly acquired positive life skills to handle different issues of life.

**LIMITATIONS**

A major limitation of this study is in the number of prisons and minimal number of participants used in the study. This could prevent the generalization of the study. Also, only literate prisoners benefited from the study whereas, a larger percentage of prisoners are illiterate. Further studies should address these limitations so that the situation in Nigeria prisons would be greatly improved.

In conclusion, if SCAMPER creativity training could be so useful and successful in reducing the negative behaviours of incarcerated people, we can also apply them to the free individuals in the society; hopefully, within a short time, social problems in the society would be greatly reduced.

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