

## **A Comparative Study of the Self-Concept of Inmates and the Normals (Non-Inmates) In Nigeria.**

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**Abstract:** This study examines the comparative study of self- concept of the inmates and normal in Ado Ekiti, Southwest Nigeria as a way of understanding how the duo perceived themselves, and what the society perceived of them. Symbolic interactionism theory was adopted as theoretical framework. Data were collected using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Among the inmates quantitative method was adopted, while among the normal qualitative method was used. Among the inmates one hundred and twenty questionnaires were shared among eighty males and forty females which were purposively selected. Also eighteen in-depth (IDIs) were conducted among the normal that cut across various field of operation. The findings revealed a strong perception that the inmates were seen as dejected, rejected, criminals, people with questionable character by the normal in the society. While the inmates sees themselves as unlucky, poor, deviants, criminal and people without freedom in the society. It was also revealed from the study that the inmates sees themselves as a useful, reasonable, accommodated, friendly, and positively accessed in the society before convicted as prisoners. The normal perceived the inmate as someone with adulterated character, questionable character that people should not interact with in society because of their status. The study revealed that stigmatization on the part of the inmates has made the society to reject them and failed to accord them with position of authority, government job, and other relevant consideration in society. The normal believed that inmates should be given another orientation on society immediately they concluded the jailed term in order to understand and conform with the approved behavioural pattern of the society, in which failure may result to recidivists.

**Key words:** inmate, normal, dejected, rejected, criminal, questionable character, deviants, adulterated, stigmatization, orientation, behavioural pattern.

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### **I. BACKGROUND**

Self concept is one of the significant concepts in social psychology. This concept and self analysis such as self-esteem, self-motivation and self-actualization have most time received the attention of social theorists over the years. However, the term self concept may not be defined easily as a result to its interwoven with other selfs earlier mentioned. Bernburg (2009) defined self-concepts as a hypothetical construct which is reflexive, that is the knower and the known are the same person. It is an idea of the self constructed from the beliefs one hold about oneself and the responses of others. A self-concept is largely a reflection of the reactions of others towards the individual. It is also a collective of beliefs about oneself that includes elements such as academic performance, gender identity, sexual identity, and racial identity.

Therefore, under the general notion self-concept is the map which each person consults in order to understand self and other through a particular behavioural pattern. It is therefore apparent from the various conceptual definitions of the term self-concept that; it is a characteristic inherent in the personality of every individual. Significantly to be noted too is the fact that different individuals have self-concept in varying qualities as suggested by the notion of low self-concept.

Since self- concept is perceived as how individual conceived themselves in their social milieu, This research work tends to observe that the way by which inmates are stigmatized may lead to depression and resulted into conceiving a low self-concept for themselves while that of normal (non-inmates) who are conformists to the societal norms and values, law and order may tend to be higher due to their level of anxiety.

The general conception of prison is that, prison is an abnormal situation which is not designed for the conformists, but for the law breaker who most of the times refer to as deviants or criminal. In fact this ideological connotation of prison as both odd and abnormal condition that prisoners were subjected to is likely

result in low morale on the part of prisoners. The psychological effect of prisionalization on victims (prisoners) may not allow them to be courageous as they were before their imprisonment.

Furthermore, the social hierarchy among the prison inmates constitute to the effect of prisionalization on victim. According to William (2008), the behaviour of criminals becomes a standpoint for understanding respectable people, the theatre's stage hence become a model for understanding life. In examining the social structure within the prison the inmate code of conduct (a sub-culture) within the prison is an important factor to be considered in analyzing the effect of prisionalization.

It is important to understand that with the above few approaches the studies attempt to examine inmates and non-inmates relationships in the area of their self-concepts. Hence it is based on this fact that attempt would be made in this research work to know when and how prisoners self-concept differ or at least could be measured relatively with that of the non-inmates. In nut-shell, the attention of the research work would be aiming to do a comparative study of prisoners and the normal (non inmates) in the area of their self-concept, so that we would be able to know the level at which both prisoners and the conformists are affected on the basis of their self-perception.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this research work include the followings:

- i. To know the significant differences in the self-concept of prisoners and the conformists.
- ii. To understand whether there is a change in the self concept of prisoner before and after imprisonment.

### **Research questions**

Below questions are prepared to show more light to the objectives of the research work.

- i. what are the major differences in self actualization of a prisoners and non inmates?
- ii. What do you conceived about a non inmate, and what is your perception during and after imprisonment?

## **II. REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURES**

It is apparent from various conceptualization that self-concept is the characteristics inherent in the personality of every individual. But different individuals have self-concept in varying qualities as suggested by the terms negative and positive self-concept and in varying quantities as implied by the term low and high self-concepts. This observation about different degrees of self concept denotes that self-concept exists on a continuum. The focus of this research work is therefore aiming toward determining he points along the continuum of which the self-concept of prisoners differ from that of the conformists.

Pertinent to note, Sigmund (1922), described self-concept as "the appraisal of self by the individuals themselves" To give a more comprehensive description, William (2008) viewed self-concept as "the image or mental and physical capabilities, ones social stimulus value (that is the image one think one's appearance present to others) and one's ideologies and values". Dorothy (2007) further adds that self-concept is the extent to which an individual believes himself to be capable significant, successful and worthy.

Hence, it is evident from the above assertion that self-concept develops from two sources. The first comprises an individual's self-perceptions while the later consists of the perception and evaluation of the individual by other persons. In the course of social interaction therefore, the individual's self-concept is modified by the perception of others through the feedback the individual get from others.

In essence, the self is a product of social interaction. For instance, the infant does not distinguish between the self and the non-self. Only as he interacts with objects and persons in interpersonal behaviour events does he come to perceive himself as an object separate and distinct from other subject and other persons. This is just in the dimension of superiority/inferiority that exists between the normal (non inmate) subject and the prisoners (inmates) in the course of their social interaction.

However, Stryker (1996), in his description of the process involved in the development of the self, explained that "the self arises in conduct, when the individual becomes a social object in experience to himself. This takes place when the individual assumes the attitude or uses the gesture which another individual would use and respond to it himself or tend to so respond. The child gradually becomes a social being in his own experience, and he acts towards himself in manner analogues to that in which he acts towards others".

According to Chambliss (1994), individual evaluation of himself is primarily determined by the perception of his relative position or standing into different kinds of reference groups. These groups include the membership group i.e those groups to which he actually belong, and, the group of which he is not a member but in which he aspire to be.

Therefore the critical assessment of the "self" like other evaluation, requires a comparison with "something else" consists of comparative reference individual and reference groups considering the concept of Stryker (1996), the social reference takes the form of a somewhat definite imagination of how one's self appears

in a particular mind, and the kind of self feeling one has is determined by the attitude toward this attribute to the other mind. He explained that a social self of this sort might be called the reflected or looking glasses self. Each to each a looking glass, reflects the other that doth pass".

The looking glass self in other words, is the person's self image which is formed on the basis of perceiving how others react towards him. But the self of a high status person is reflected from a magnifying looking glass that of a low status person is from a reducing looking glass.

"Each to each a looking glass reflects the other that doth pass but in terms of social class" This enumeration of self-appraisal by the individual, the importance of his accurate perception and interpretation of the reactions of other persons to him. This implied that the set of perceptions we hold of ourselves. If we imagine a special mirror that not only reflected our physical features, but also allowed us to view other aspect of ourselves i.e emotional states, talents, like, dislikes, values, and roles, then the reflection we shall see looking back at us in that mirror would be self-concept (perception).

### **III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

It needs to be asserted that human techniques of communication play a vital role in the process of human daily interaction. However, the assumption that verbal language as a mechanism for communication conceived as the dominant and the most ideal type in the course of human communication in the society is far from the truth. Basically, communication refers to the process of transmitting information from one end to another in which there is a giver and recipient. Moreover, the significant of gesture and symbols that are meaningful as mechanisms of communication prominent in the process of social interaction in the society can never be under mind. It is on this premises that symbolic interactionism both as an approach and perspective for study was adopted for the research work.

It is in the light of the above assertion that Heidensohn (1985) contended that, in the course of symbolic interactionism, a major bias in social perception is the tendency to see persons not situations, as the cause of the action. He further observed that too much importance is attached to the behaviour and its effects and too little to its situational context; therefore, events that are really controlled come to be seen as under the person's control.

Again, in every social interaction it seems a given act is generally perceived as having been caused by some social agents' i.e an 'actor' or a 'victim'. It is in this climate of opinion that Cohen (1955) examined the conditions that Jostler's attribution of responsibility and personal causation to a given social agent which assist or at least motivate individuals to act in a particular behavioural patterns towards symbolic objects that are communicating in a non-verbal version.

Importantly, to note Burns (1966) conceives Cooley's looking glass self to have arisen from symbolic interaction between the individual and his various primary groups such a group could be characterized by a high degree of intimacy between a small number of members producing an integration of individuality and group. Hence, the face to face relationships within the group serve to evaluate and relate to own person. Therefore, the self-concept is formed by a trial and error learning process by which values, attitudes and roles and perhaps identities are learned by invariably stigmatized. Burn summed it up with the assumption that "individual acts and social pressures mutually modify other".

However, Connell (2005) has rightly observed that self-feeling is developed in relation to the individual's interpretation of physical and social reality. He stressed further that the objects within this reality include the physical body opinions, purposes, possessions, ambitions, conception of self and others, in fact any idea or system of ideas drawn from the communication life that the mind cherishes as its own. However, the account neglects these aspects of a person felt to be an integral part, but not likely to be appropriated by self feelings as social in terms of language and symbols in the face of our societal cultural values.

Human are constantly acting in relation to each other and towards themselves, communicating symbolically in almost everything they do. This interaction has meaning to both the giver and receiver of the actions. Individuals according to Blummer (1969) "are caught up in a vast process of interaction in which they have to fit their developing actions to one another. This process of interaction consists in making indications to others what to do and in interpreting the indications as made by others".

Thus, with the above elucidation we can infer that symbolic interaction as a means of communicating and cross fertilizing ideas in our society involves interpretation, or ascertaining the meaning of the actions or remarks of the other person, and definition, or conveying indication to another person as to how is to act. For instance, the effect of 'prisonalization' on the inmates and the relative odd conditions that they are subjected to, are indeed a sort of direct communication to the normal (non-inmates) which eventually enables them or at least prompted them to develop a feeling of superiority over the prison inmates. As a result of this, the inmates may be physically depressed.

Hence, symbolic interactionism could say to be a perspective that sees humans actively defining their situations and acting according to their definitions. Human being also attempt to define situations for others in interaction but to do this effectively is to help determines the direction the interaction takes.

Furthermore, the symbolic aspect of our daily routine typify that we come to see ourselves as objects, owing to our interaction with others. Indeed, we interact with significant others and reference groups, developed selfhood, and with selfhood we are able to do a number of things in relation to our self, including directing, communicating analyzing and judging. What we say to ourselves including the judgment we make of ourselves depends in large part on interaction. Thus, self interaction influences our acts with others. Judgment of self, identity of self, analysis of self in the course of symbolic interaction are all important in determining the direction of social interaction between the normals (non inmates) and the inmates.

In addition, in the realm of social behaviour, an individual is existing in a cultural society always carry in our mind a highly complex symbolic representation of our social environment which enable us to know what is normal and what is abnormal in specific circumstances in the face of the societal culture, values, beliefs, and aspirations.

One of the key points to the idea of symbolic interactionism as a perspective is the fact asserted in Blummer (1969), that central to the growth of symbolic interactionism is the notion of symbol and communication. Most often, the action of the individual is considered in relation to the symbols that are meaningful to him and the way they are conveyed to him. The symbolic interaction theory is at best a relation to the limitation perspectives of Gabriel Tarde. The ideas are related to the behavioural patterns which are instinctly determined. The notion of 'self' is the subjective perception while the 'me' is the objective person. The self is our own image and thus determines what we do. The 'me' emerges when others react to the actions. Therefore, this notion 'self' or 'me' could be termed as functional interactional concepts for social action.

Conclusively, symbolic interactionism is anchored on the idea of self, communication, individuality in action, self-attitude and self-change. The symbolic interaction as perspective emphasizes the theoretical picture of man, society, and man-society relation.

#### **IV. METHODOLOGY**

##### **Study Area.**

This study was conducted among the prison inmates, and non-inmates which include Artisans, Bankers, Civil servants, and Public servant of numerous statuses in Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State South -West Nigeria. The design of the study was on two independent groups, which means a comparative study among the two group of the study was examined. The study was centered on two independent variables of self concepts of inmates and normal (non inmates).

##### **Study Population**

The study population comprises of the inmates in Ado Ekiti prison and the Civil Servants, Artisans, and Public Servants from the study location.

##### **Sample Population**

Among inmates one hundred and twenty (120) respondents in which eighty (80) were male and female were forty (40). Among the Normal (non - inmate), eighty (80) in-depth interview were conducted as follows twenty (20) Civil Servants, twenty (20) Artisans, and forty (40) Public Servants.

##### **Sampling Technique**

Purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study in the selection of the respondents both among the Normal, and the inmates. Among the inmates, only one hundred and twenty were ready to offer required information for the study. The Normal (Non - inmates) respondents were located at different time and location according to their status and working condition until the specific number for the study was met.

##### **Method of data Collection**

The two major methods of data collection which include; the qualitative, and quantitative methods was adopted in gathering relevant information from the respondents. From the inmates quantitative method was used, while among the normal (non-inmates) qualitative method was adopted.

##### **Instrument of data collection**

For the quantitative method, the data for this study was collected by survey method. A structured questionnaire was used to gather information from the inmates to address the research question concerning how the inmates see and feel about themselves. Also, the quantitative method witnesses the adoption of question guide for individual interview (IDI). The respondents were allowed to judge themselves against a series of descriptive self - concept. This enables respondents to make their judgments on the basis of their perception and feelings towards themselves.

The questionnaire and the interview guide comprise of both English, and Yoruba versions. The administration depends on the status of a particular respondent. The questionnaire and the guide for the study contained 25 questions of adjectival words describing 'self', each of these best described them in the process of responding to the questions.

## V. FINDINGS

The quantitative data collected from the inmates was coded and processed, using a variety of statistical techniques like frequency tables showing the percentage distribution of respondents. The qualitative data collected from the normal (non-inmates) was reviewed as well as an inclusion in this paper. Through the assistance of the prison workers (warders) the entire one hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires distributed amongst the inmates were returned. Among the normal (non-inmates) sixty (60) IDI was conducted in which the response of the participants was analyzed

### Respondents' Bio-data

The gender distribution of respondents show that 86 (71.6 %) were males, while 42 (35 %) were females. About 26 (21.6 %) of the respondents were within the ages of 28 - 35 years old, 64 (53.3 %) within the ages of 36 - 44 years old, 12 (10 %) aged between 45 - 50 years, while 18 (15 %) ranged 51 years and above. Among the participants 45% were within the age limit of 28 - 35 years old, while 12% aged between 36 - 48 years old, and 43% of the participants captured within the age limit of 49 - 65 years old. The mean age of the respondents stood at 42.6 years, while that of the participants stood at 41.8 years.

The marital status reflected that 41 (34.1 %) of the inmates in which 3 (2.5 %) females, 38 (31.6 %) males were not married. Among the IDI participants 21 (17.5 %) were single. The data on educational status of the respondents shown that only 9 (7.5 %) had primary school leaving certificate, 29 (24.1 %) were secondary school dropped out (incomplete), 66 (55%) had WASC/NECO/SSCE, 16 (13.3%) had B.Sc and HND certificate. The level of education attainment for the study location is quite high, this is a reflection that majority of the inmates could interpret the law as a result of their educational level.

On the religious affiliations, it shows that the three religions; Islamic, Christianity, and Traditional religious were practiced by the inmates, but among them the Christianity religion with 83 (69.1%) had the highest number, Islamic 45 (37.5%), while traditional religion shared 2 (1.6%). Finally, the occupation distribution of respondents before imprisoned shown that 26 (21.6%) were civil servant, 52 (43.3%) artisans, 13 (10.8%) were farmers, 16 (13.3%) were students, while 13 (10.8%) of them were unemployed up till the time of their in castration.

### Analysis of the research questions

For this study, five questions that channel the research towards the realization of the two major objectives are re-stated and analyzed below:

1. Who is an inmate, and a non inmate or normal?

The findings are shown in the table below:

**Table 1:** Percentage distribution of respondents on who an inmate is

Response	NO	Percentage
Who does not have freedom	120	100
Who was incarcerated for an offence	120	100
Who was given a uniform to serve a jail term	120	100
A rejected offender from the society	75	90

From table 1 above, it shown the interpretation given by the respondents on how they described who an inmate is. All the respondents 120 (100%) agreed that an inmate is someone without freedom. Another form of interpretation which all 120 (100%) respondents agreed upon was an inmate is someone who was in castrated purposely for an offence committed, while the same level of respondents agreed that an inmate is that person given a uniform to serve a jail term in a particular prison yard. At the same time, 75 (90%) of the total respondents maintained that an inmate is a rejected offender from society. The above responses show that, the inmate recognized that an inmate must be someone who has committed an offence, tried and found guilty before the pronouncement of jailed term on him/her. The respondents agreed that they were deviant, a rejected personality. It was also claimed that inmate does not have freedom, it was also ascertained that someone become an inmate that very day a prison uniform is given to him/her by the prison officers.

Data from the interviewee corroborated the views from the quantitative data. As some of them stated as follows on who an inmate is:

*An inmate is that person who cannot stay with his/her family during the jailed term. A Rejected person from the society. (Secondary school teacher male 46 years old).*

**Another interviewee attested that:**

*Inmate must have uniform for the period of staying in prison, this will differentiate him/her from the normal (conformists) people in the society. (A commercial driver, 56 years old).*

**One of the interviewee responded that:**

*No one can be in prison without committing an offence, so those who are deviant in the society are found in prison and they were the inmate.(A female trader 56 years old).*

**Quoting another interviewee:**

*Ha God will never allow any of my family to be an inmate. Inmate is a person that people will be afraid to move or interact with in the society, people must reject him/her, and anybody people dissociate or avoid in society must be an harden criminal and this are one time inmate so inmate is that one deserted and put in a place where he/she will not have anything to do with people of the society.  
(Nurse (female) 58 years old.)*

**Question 2: Percentage distribution of respondents on the perception of the Normal (Non-inmate) in society towards them.**

Response	No	Percentage
A deserted person in the society	94	78.3
Someone of high level of criminality	63	52.5
Hooligans / irresponsible person	120	100
A person with questionable character	56	46
Non – conformist	66	55

Table 2 above presents the responses of the respondents on the perceptions of the normal concerning them (inmates). The above table reports that 94 (78.3%) expressed that the normal sees them as a deserted people from the society, while 63 (52.5%) of the respondents agreed that the normal perceived them to be the category of people with high level of criminality. Also, all the respondents 120 (100%) maintained that the normal sees them as hooligans, and set of irresponsible people, 56 (46%) of the respondents agreed that the normal in society beliefs that inmates were people with questionable character, while 66 (55%) of the inmate respondents accepted that the non inmates sees the inmate as the non-conformists in society.

**Quoting the interviewees on the above question;**

*We don't need to debate on a prisoner more than necessary, everybody will pray not to be a prisoner, even those who are there once will not like to be there, to me I regarded them as dejected and rejected personality in society. (A meat seller 46 years old)*

**Another interviewee expressed that:**

*I critically looked at the inmates any time i see them in town with uniform being directed by warder that these people were hooligans, irresponsible, and good for nothing, so nothing good can come out of them.  
(Fashion designer 43 years old)*

**A University lecturer expressed that:**

*I perceived an inmate to be a person with a questionable character, a criminal and someone who need to be deserted in society for obvious reasons.  
(Male 53 years old).*

**A trader interviewee submits that:**

*Nothing good can come out from a prisoner, even when he complete the jail term, what he/she learnt from the prison will still remain with him/her so any one close to them could easily be contaminated. Me as a person, I don't like to stay where as ex-convict is. Also people in society cannot give any viable position even after serving the jail term.  
(Female 38 years old).*

**Another interviewee agreed that:**

*I perceived inmate to be a rejected one in society, that if he/she allows to stay in society at that period he/she will commit more evil. I also perceived them as abandoned people, they cannot be allowed to participate actively in the governance of the society and that of a country as stipulated in the constitution of Nigeria.  
(A medical doctor 56 years old).*

**Question 3: Percentage distribution of respondents on how the inmates perceived themselves**

Response	No	Percentage
Condemned People	116	96.6
Criminals	100	83.3
Totally rejected people	61	50.8
Deviants / Non conformists	120	100
Merciless people	18	15.0
Unlucky people	36	30.0
Poor people	72	60.0

Table 3 above shows that all of the respondents 120 (100%) agreed that they were deviants in the various society they belong. Also, majority of the respondents 116 (96.6%) perceived themselves as a condemned people in society, this implies that they have seen themselves as unwanted people in the society, similar to this were the 61 (50.8%) of the respondents who submitted that they were totally rejected by the people around them. 100 (83.3%) of them claimed that inmates were criminals, while 72 (60%) agreed that inmates were poor people who cannot afford to pursue their case in law court, 36 (30%) of the respondents perhaps less than half of the total respondents sees inmates as unlucky people in the sight of law and human beings, while just 18 (15%) the lowest percentage of the inmates claimed that the society failed to have mercy on them.

**One of the in-depth interviewee submits thus;**

*Whenever you are discussing about inmates one have to be careful because they are very wicked, they are not suppose to be living among people, so that is why they were sent there (prison). Any one rejected or condemned in the society is sent to the prison or exile.*

(A farmer (male) 56 years old).

**Another interviewee maintained that;**

*Inmates were criminals and criminals are condemned in the society. They cannot be living among the normals because of their personality.*

(A university Lecturer 42 years old)

**One of the interviewee emphasized that;**

*Well, from the experience i have with one of my friend, it shows that not all inmates were guilty, some were there Innocently, some because no money to pursue their case in court. Notwithstanding, inmate is that person who have been condemned and rejected in society. Only those who are close to the inmate, or their relations will see him/her as human being even a times their family relations need to study him/her very well before any form of interaction.*

(A medical doctor 53 years old)

**Quoting another key informant**

*To me inmates were condemned people.*

*They were criminals, deviants, and rejected people in society as a result of their behaviour.*

(Tailor (female) 32 years old)

**Another interviewee submitted as thus:**

*Not all inmates were really guilty to be in prison, some were so unlucky to have been there.*

*For example, a brother in our street who committed suicide after he completed his jail term. He claimed not to know the reason why he should be jailed. Though, he was a victim of circumstances. He explained that, police came and met him as a visitor in a particular house where his brother was staying before not knowing that he had relocated to another state. He was to explain his business in the house, he told them that he was there to look for his brother who was living in the house before. Without any complain he was taken to the police station from there to court, finally from court to prison. Some inmates were unlucky but prisoner is a prisoner no one will like to interact with them in society. The society frown at them and see them as irresponsible in all manners of life.*

(A female nurse 38 years old)

**Question 4: Percentage distribution of respondents on how and what they felt about themselves before they were imprisoned**

Responses	No	Percentage
A useful man in society	120	100
Friend to many	98	81.6
Conformists	68	56.6
Secured people in society	109	90.8
Trustworthy	120	100
Employee	94	78.3
Responsible	116	96.6

The responses in table 4 above showed the various ways by which the respondents perceived themselves before they were jailed. The table explained that all the respondents (inmates) agreed that they were seen as one needed in the society which means people recognized them, and their contribution towards the smooth running of the society cannot be over emphasized then. Also the same higher number of respondents 120 (100%) acknowledged that people in the society classified them to be trustworthy but, immediately they were convicted people changed the tone of the music. 98 (81.6%) agreed that they were friend to everyone in the society they belong then, while 68 (56.6%) which means a little above half of the respondents maintained that people or society sees them as a conformist before their conviction. The other submission is the level of security received from the society before they were imprisoned, 109 (90.8%) of the respondents claimed that they were adequately secured then, people and friends care for them, their security them was sure from government and members of the society. 94 (78.3%) of the respondents claimed that they were gainfully employed and their services were required then by government and the people. It was not a problem to find something doing for living because the society was friendly to them. Also, almost all the respondents 116 (96.6%) sees themselves (inmates) as being responsible to the development of society and human kind before convicted. The qualitative data in support of this shows the reports of some interviewee:

**One of the interviewee expressed that;**

*Ha before the inmate were convicted or arrested many people in the society used to respect them and worship them, even proud to associate with them but immediately people see them in that uniform or hear the secrete thingsdone, the interaction ceased.  
(A woman trader 56 years old).*

**Another interviewee submits that;**

*majority of the inmates were so calm, responsible and people trust them with position of authority before they were jailed, may be because their secrete has not been opened to people.  
(Secondary School teacher (female) 41 years old).*

**Key informant interview opined that:**

*These inmates were part of us before jailed, many of them were responsible, trustworthy people that society and government do protect from evil, even allow them to contest for political position, but immediately they were convicted, all the opportunities given to them are taken away from them.  
(A female lawyer 46 years old).*

**Question 5: Percentage distribution of the respondents on the perception of the inmates towards normal (non inmates)**

Response	No	Percentage
Recognized people	120	100
Conformists	82	68.3
Unquestionable character	51	42.5
Trustworthy	92	76.6
Responsible	68	56.6

Table 5 above shows that all the respondents (inmates) 120 (100%) agreed that the normals (non-inmates) were recognized people in every society where they belong. 82 (68.3%) opined that the normals are the conformist in the society, which means that normal were those that upheld the rules and regulations of the society on high esteem. It was also revealed by 51 (42.5%) a little less than half of the total respondents confirmed that the normals were people with unquestionable character, while 92 (76.6%) perceived the normal



as trustworthy people in society, and 68 (56.6%) of the respondents agreed that normals (non-inmates) in society were counted to be responsible in society.

**One of the interviewee submitted that:**

*Good things were allocated to the normals in society because those that are free from any form of crime were recommended for better things in society unlike the criminal, inmate or ex-convict.  
(Motor Mechanic 38 years).*

**Another interviewee opined that:**

*Normals (conformists) in the society are category of people who have freedom and recognised as responsible people in society. I am a responsible and recognised in my immediate constituency because i am a conformist.  
(A female secondary School teacher 44 years).*

**An interviewee submitted that:**

*Conformists are responsible and trustworthy people bestowed with position of authority. Nobody will extend this gesture to a criminal, ex-convict or inmate).  
(A male medical practitioner 51 year*

## **VI. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS**

The study revealed that all the respondents (inmates) understood who an inmate is. They agreed that an inmate is that person who his or her freedom has been ceased for a stated period. Also an inmate was described by the respondents as that man or woman who had been in castrated for one offence or the other. All the respondents also explained an inmate as someone who had been sentenced to serve a jailed term and given a prison uniform for the purpose. Also, majority of the respondent defined inmate as a rejected offenders or deviant in society. This support the submission of Chambliss (1994) who noted that an inmate is a person who is freedom has been ceased, apprehended and convicted to serve a jailed term. The study also revealed the perception of the normal (non inmate) as explained by the respondents. It was also exposed that the normal perceived the inmates to be a deserted person in society; the respondents also agreed that the normal perceived that inmates were people with high level of criminality. Also less than 50 percent of the inmates agreed that the normal perceived that inmates were people with questionable character. All the respondents supports the motion that the normal perceived the inmates as hooligans and irresponsible people, while above fifty percent of the respondents agreed that the normal perceived inmates as the non conformists in society.

Furthermore, this research work found that all the respondents agreed that they were non-conformists. Also above 90 percent of the respondents sees themselves as condemned people, while 83 percent of the inmate (respondents) perceived that they were criminals. It was revealed from the study that among other responses in which the respondents classified themselves to be include deviant, and non conformist which all of them (respondents) agreed on, other classification include merciless people, unlucky people, rejected people and poor people. This finding agreed with the idea of Marcus (1992), who explained that self-concept is a hypothetical construct which allows someone to explain himself better than the way people explain him or her.

The study found that all the respondents agreed and submitted that the society require their needs and gave them sense of belongingness before they were convicted. Also the study revealed that they were friendly to many while their contribution to the societal development embedded with social interaction cannot be overemphasized before they were jailed. Above 56 percent of the respondent submitted that the people of the society considered them to be a conformist, not until they were been apprehended and convicted. In addition, almost all the respondents 90 percent agreed that before they were imprisoned, their lives were secured and people sees them as part of the society, in which their lives was secured with adequate security in the society. In similar vein, almost all of the inmate respondents confirmed that before they were convicted, they can lay their hands on any employment of their choice. Also people considered them for position of authority which means they can allow to contest for political position and also allowed to exercise their franchise right as a responsible member of the society.

Finally, the findings of this study amplify the view of (Susan, 2001) that self concept is perceived as how individual visualize themselves in their social milieu. This is because the inmates classified the non-inmate (normals) being a recognised people in society, conformists, people with unquestionable character, trustworthy, and people with high level of responsibility as perceived by the respondents.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

The issues of self-concept are a serious and fundamental concept among individuals of different social classes such which has generated a lot of discussion among scholars. A comparative study of self-concept of the normals (non-inmates) and the inmates as done in the research work is undoubtedly an interesting one.

In most considerations of the self-concept taking the stance in this study, the individuals' self-concept is based on the way others respond to him/her. The individuals self-concept function to direct his/her behaviour in the dimension of Cooley's "looking glass self". The individuals' perceptions as well reflect the actual responses of others towards him or her.

Furthermore, Warner (2003) in his own analysis of 'self' opined that 'man is a self-reflecting animal' due to the fact that he/she alone has the ability to objectify himself or herself, to stand apart from himself or herself, as it were and to consider the kind of being he/she is and what it is that he/she wants to do and become. In essence man alone is capable of reflections of consciousness, of thinking of himself or herself as an object.

Finally, the implication of this study is that an individual's behaviour, whether normal or abnormal, may reflect his or her response to how other treat him or her and what values and labels others assigned to him or her. Obviously, the above enables both inmates and normals to have effectively judged themselves through a self-concept approach.

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