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Hospitality in and outside of prisons: prison restaurants and cafés

Tracy Harkison 

School of Hospitality and Tourism, Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand
Correspondence: Tracy.Harkison@aut.ac.nz

ABSTRACT: "Hospitality" is certainly not a word that comes to mind when one thinks of a prison, and neither does the phrase "award-winning restaurant". But there are now several hospitality establishments that have opened inside and outside of prisons using offenders and ex-offenders as their workforce. While working, they can complete hospitality education and training programmes, which can result in some positive outcomes. One is producing skilled labour and the other is reducing the recidivism rate of graduates from hospitality education and training programmes. All the information and data reviewed for this article are from a wider study and published sources. This article highlights different hospitality establishments inside and outside of prisons using hospitality education and training programmes. It focuses on the similarities in and differences between two of these hospitality establishments (The Clink and Street & Arrow) and discusses what future research would need to be conducted to determine what rehabilitative effects hospitality could have for offenders and ex-offenders.

KEYWORDS: education, ex-offenders, offenders, restaurants, training

Introduction

Hospitality has been a topic of interest and research for over 40 years. Burgess (1982) first examined it through the metaphor of gift exchange and many scholars since have tried to define it. Brotherton (1999) defined hospitality as a human exchange that is contemporaneous, and is entered into voluntarily with the intent to increase the mutual well-being of people through the provision of food or drink and accommodation. O'Gorman (2007) stated that hospitality exists within the lived experience and that it is a gift shared between the "host" and the "guest" that turns a stranger into a "friend" for a limited period of time. Ariffin et al. (2013) suggested the ultimate aim of hospitality is creating a memorable service experience through the host-guest interpersonal relationship. There have been so many definitions of hospitality over the last 40 years that it is hard to isolate one complete definition; however, there is one thing that we can be sure of, and that is that hospitality is one of the world's oldest professions. It is suspected that hospitality has a history that is as long as the existence of human society (Ryan, 2015), but it is much more than shelter, food, and water — it can change lives, and has done so for thousands of people. This change happens via hospitality education and training programmes and these have been used worldwide to increase employment opportunities for a number of disadvantaged groups of people, including unemployed youth, people with disabilities, homeless people and ex-offenders (Cosgrove & O'Neill, 2011; Katz, 2014).

Several prisons worldwide are now running hospitality establishments in the form of restaurants and cafés in working prisons, using hospitality education and training programmes to create second chances for offenders — for example, The Clink restaurants in the United Kingdom (UK), Les Beaux Mets

restaurant in France and InGalera restaurant in Italy (Lavanga, 2016; The Clink, 2020; Le Borgne, 2022). Several organisations have also set up hospitality establishments (restaurants and cafés) outside of prisons using hospitality education and training programmes — for example, Street & Arrow café in Scotland, Trade School Kitchen café in New Zealand and All Square restaurant in the United States of America (Strang, 2018; Uren, 2018; Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, 2020) to create second chances for ex-offenders. Over the last 15 years, the number of these innovations has increased, and some of them have developed into award-winning restaurants; in 2019, Thomas-Graham wrote an article "The gourmet restaurants in the world inside a prison", highlighting some of these award winners.

The innovation of using education and training for offenders is certainly not a new concept. In France after World War II, correctional reforms were introduced in the form of vocational training and rehabilitation, which was considered an integral part of the restructuring of each inmate's personality while they were incarcerated (Fize, 1982). As for education and training for ex-offenders outside of prison, again this is not a new concept. 50 years ago, in the USA, one of the first projects offering education and training outside of prison was set up. The National Supported Work Demonstration Project (Uggen, 2000) was a large-scale experimental employment programme implemented in nine US cities. It was designed to target offenders, youth dropouts and drug users who had a history of both chronic and recent unemployment. To be eligible, ex-offenders were required to have been in prison six months prior to enrolment (Newton et al., 2018).

Two developments which are perhaps new are using hospitality education and training programmes in restaurants or cafés in a working prison, using offenders for the workforce, and

restaurants or cafés run by ex-offenders. These programmes are seen as a way to rehabilitate, facilitate and mobilise a new form of self-hood for marginalised individuals through entrepreneurial freedom and hospitality employment (Hollows & Jones, 2010; Kelly et al., 2015). Morrison (2018) suggested that there is a need for researchers to continue exploring and expanding the boundaries of hospitality, and it can be seen that hospitality research is gradually expanding into domains that have been previously unexplored (Altinay et al., 2023). One of these domains was evaluating online reviews of the Clink training restaurants, as the topic of training restaurants has rarely been researched, especially those based in a working prison (Gebbels et al., 2021). Harkison and McIntosh (2019) highlighted the need for further research to examine how hospitality training and employment could enable a positive opportunity for people to change their lives. This article highlights different hospitality establishments inside and outside of prisons using hospitality education and training programmes. Focusing on the similarities and differences between two hospitality establishments (The Clink and Street & Arrow), I discuss what future research would need to be conducted to determine what rehabilitative effects hospitality could have on offenders and ex-offenders.

Literature review

Lashley (2015) stated that the act of hospitality and service is to make others feel comfortable, welcome and pampered, whether it is prison meal distribution or a five-star hotel's fine dining restaurant. One factor that sets hospitality apart from other industries is the high amount of human interaction that is involved and the fact that its aim is to generate happiness in someone's life (Pizam & Shani, 2009). As previously suggested, all parties involved in hospitality have their well-being enhanced through continuous human exchange (Brotherton, 1999), and O'Gorman (2007) highlighted that the hospitality experience is one of the contributors to and the root of the social interaction that has developed societies. Friends and other households develop relationships through hospitality and increase their circle of friends — as previously noted, hospitality is about making strangers into friends for a short period of time (O'Gorman, 2007). Hospitality work can be characterised as needing a high degree of teamwork and collaboration, and it involves a high degree of solidarity between employees. It has been strongly recommended that working during incarceration is important for rehabilitation, as it can lead to gaining an education and the development of personal skills (Beier, 2015). It has also been suggested that hospitality can create opportunities for the disadvantaged in societies across the developed and developing world (eHotelier, 2019). Having the opportunity to take part in hospitality training may give inspiration and aspiration to the disadvantaged to go beyond the horizons of disability, poverty, or addiction (eHotelier, 2019).

Hospitality can and has changed people's lives and there are now many hospitality establishments operating in working prisons, for example, the Fife and Drum restaurant located in Concord, Massachusetts, USA, on a 300-acre farm in a minimum-security prison. It delivers meals to the public using locally sourced meats and prison-grown produce. The prison also offers culinary and hospitality education for its students and, for over 30 years, it has successfully run the only publicly open restaurant to run out of a prison in the USA (Massachusetts Department

of Correction, 2020). The Restaurante Interno in Cartagena in Colombia is staffed by offenders in the Cartagena's San Diego Prison and is one of the first to be located in a women's prison. Education, training and employment opportunities are offered to the women housed in this prison system (Interno, 2020). The InGalera restaurant in Milan in Italy has a waiting list for reservations up to two months long. This Italian eatery provides guests with a gourmet experience in the Bollate medium-security prison. Initially set up as an education and learning environment to ensure future employment for students as they matriculate out of in-prison education and into the workplace, this restaurant is now set up to deliver lunch and dinner to the public (InGalera, 2020).

One of the most successful in-prison initiatives to provide hospitality education and employment opportunities to offenders in prisons has been The Clink Charity, which has opened four Clinks in the UK (The Clink, 2020). In 2009, while the prison High Down in Surrey was going through an expansion, Alberto Crisci, alongside his board of trustees, petitioned to have an underutilised piece of the prison's property turned into a restaurant, and as a result the Clink Charity was established. The purpose of this initiative was two-fold: one was to provide an alternative option that would aid in the reduction of recidivism in the UK justice system; the second was to provide students with an education that would inevitably lead to job prosperity and a chance for them to enrich and support their lives without resorting to criminal activities (Harkison & McIntosh, 2019; The Clink, 2020).

There are also many examples of restaurants and cafés run by ex-offenders. In 2007, in Singapore, ex-offender Benny Se Teo founded the Eighteen Chefs company to provide employment opportunities to marginalised groups of youth at risk and to ex-convicts. The aim is to help them integrate into the working community and live a normal life rather than falling through the cracks and back into crime. There are now eight outlets in Singapore (Cheah & Ou, 2019). In 2011, Culinary Club classes began at Grafton Correctional Institution in Cleveland in the USA. Two years later, Edwins Restaurant opened, founded by Brandon Chrostowski who employed ex-offenders (Edwins, 2023). Mellows is a Caribbean fusion restaurant and has served dishes to Jorja Smith and rappers Dave and Aitch, and it is also a place where rehabilitation and acceptance is given to former prisoners (Fofana, 2021). The Scottish Violence Reduction Unit was established in 2005 by the Scottish Police (Strathclyde) to help mitigate the violent behaviours and street gang activity of the area (Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, 2020). This is a hybrid service that works between the space of police work and government associations (Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, 2020). The space that they occupy allows them to take more of a risk when it comes to experimental developments aimed at reducing community crime. The food truck Street & Arrow was a social initiative developed in 2015 by the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, developed in Glasgow and delivered in a space donated by the Glasgow Council from which Street & Arrow began its journey of ex-offender professional development and community street violence reduction. In 2016, the Street & Arrow café opened in the Glasgow Dental Hospital and School. The initiative delivers second chances for ex-offenders who may be disadvantaged in finding employment after a criminal conviction (Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, 2020).

These are just some of the hospitality establishments that have opened in working prisons, or that have been established on the outside and are run by ex-offenders. At present, there is still a lack of literature and empirical research on the successes that these hospitality establishments have; however, The Clink Charity has stated that they have reduced the reoffending rate by 65.6% of their graduates (McIntosh et al., 2020; The Clink, 2020). So, if this hospitality "model" has had this success, it could be deemed that other hospitality models are also having this level of success. There is a need for further investigation to determine what rehabilitative effects hospitality could have on offenders and ex-offenders. Before recommendations are made for future research, the similarities and differences between two hospitality establishments (The Clink and Street & Arrow) will be highlighted, and the tools that these hospitality establishments offer offenders and ex-offenders will also be discussed.

All the information and data reviewed for this article are from a wider study and published sources. In the wider study, the CEO of The Clink and the police sergeant who works as the liaison officer with Street & Arrow were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. Researchers using semi-structured interviews are able to gain a balance between unstructured interviews, which enable a broad investigative approach, and very structured interviews, which have an explanatory and/or descriptive approach (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2008). The method

of analysis used was thematic, in which researchers identify the data, analyse it and then report patterns or themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). There were several reasons why secondary data was used for this article: it is time-efficient, as it saves the time normally required for designing a collection instrument, awaiting respondents and gathering the data (Creswell, 2009). It is more likely to be authentic than data collected for the original study, as the primary purpose of the data was originally intended to meet a specific need and was not connected to the research (Gray, 2014).

Findings and discussion

There are many similarities in and differences between The Click Charity and Street & Arrow hospitality establishments. When analysing the similarities, it could be seen that both had similar strengths, weakness, opportunities and treats, and these similarities can be found in Table 2, but first the differences (Table 1).

There are many differences between and similarities in these two hospitality establishments, and these can be seen in Tables 1 and 2. There are some common themes that run through the secondary data collection and the wider study (interviews were conducted with the CEO of The Clink and the police sergeant involved with Street & Arrow). These will now be discussed.

TABLE 1: Differences between The Clink and Street & Arrow

Characteristic	The Clink — inside working prisons	Street & Arrow — outside
<i>Why was it started?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce high reoffending rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To introduce a public health approach model
<i>When can people do the course?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the last 6 to 18 months of sentence Dedicated five-step programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After they have been released Dedicated 12-month programme Learning employment basics
<i>Where is the establishment situated?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restaurant in a working prison Dedicated hospitality training facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Café in a public space
<i>Data gained from the establishments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative — percentages on recidivism of graduates of the programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative — stories and testimonies
<i>Focus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very industry focused Hospitality involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holistic focus Other areas involved
<i>Size of operation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large enterprise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very small enterprise
<i>Education or training?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completing qualifications through City and Guilds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hands-on hospitality training and gaining experience
<i>Aim</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing the public's perception 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing the police's perception Preventing society spending more money on ex-prisoners Changing generations of offenders — stopping the ripple effect
<i>Accessibility to the public</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public do not have easy access to the restaurant — a lot of security around visits to The Clink 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anyone and everyone has access to the café
<i>Achievements</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Award-winning restaurants 	
<i>Moving forward</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More projects on the way 	
<i>Issues faced</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drawbacks on being on social media — victims find it hard to accept that prisoners are given a second chance

TABLE 2: Similarities in the form of a SWOT analysis of The Clink and Street & Arrow

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a risk that has paid off • "New" concept • Giving offenders/ex-offenders a second chance • Offenders/ex-offenders doing this for their family/children • In operation for over eight years
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with official channels • Selection process for offenders, civilians and ex-offenders is a long, drawn-out process • A huge amount of help inside and outside of the prison is needed to support offenders/ex-offenders
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For outside help (vouchers, etc.) and partnering with various departments (housing) to be involved • To break cycles — but early intervention is needed
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers not willing to take a chance on ex-prisoners • Both are charities — so both need money to keep running • Offenders'/ex-offenders' backgrounds — bad/wrong family situation

Cause

Both operations were started with a specific aim, focus, or reason and that was to reduce reoffending and to introduce a public health module. Forte (2021) noted that reports have stated that providing education in prison can reduce recidivism by 29%. One form of employment opportunity that has shown success is the operation of a restaurant. The restaurant industry might be one answer to eradicating recidivism by implementing more employment opportunity programmes in prisons (Forte, 2021). As the CEO of The Clink stated, "*The whole purpose of it was to reduce reoffending*". The sergeant of Street & Arrow stated they "*were looking for people who had come out of jail, who were ready to put all that behind them...and they found it difficult to get an opportunity to work*".

Structure

Both operations had dedicated programmes in place (education and training programmes). Beier (2015) suggested that offenders receiving a qualification in catering face the possibility of working in an industry that is one of the largest in the world. Education is essential for various areas of life and, for true reintegration into society, social skills such as communication are even more important (Beier, 2015). The CEO of The Clink explains that the hospitality industry operates on shift work, anti-social, unlovable hours and hard work that gains high rewards. The skills gained through hospitality — for example, discipline, routine and structure in their lives — enables ex-offenders to navigate a job in the industry a little more easily:

We are an education establishment...prisoners register with City and Guilds...they know how many sessions they have to attend, every unit is assessed internally by our assessor...Quarterly external verifiers come in and issue certificates...it's all about structure and routine.

This was echoed by the sergeant of Street & Arrow:

It's about learning the world of work, the basics...the routine, the structure of getting up, getting to work on time, taking instructions...and the theory behind it is a 12-month programme.

Family

Beier (2015) stated that hospitality can be seen as a way to strengthen family bonds and that prisoners who chose to work in the café saw hospitality as a way to reconnect with their families. The CEO of The Clink suggested that hospitality had the ability to build on social skills and this provides the students with confidence: "*It's a family and everyone comes into it with their own unique skills and gains more skills*". Another similarity seen in both establishments was the connection to family and that offenders and ex-offenders were doing the programmes for their families. The sergeant explained that one of the ex-offenders was doing the programme for his son:

He actually said to me — my son...I am doing this for my son...Before he just saw his dad bumming about, getting into trouble and going to jail...now he sees dad getting up early in the morning, going to his work, coming back, paying the bills and contributing to his community.

Hospitality

Both establishments could see the benefits that hospitality could give. As the sergeant of Street & Arrow explained, hospitality as an industry is extremely unforgiving. It is an industry that will push you to step outside of your comfort zone:

In the café they are faced with speaking to members of the public...they are faced into initiating conversations...it's amazing to see their confidence growing and improving.

Beier (2015) agreed, stating there is a high degree of customer interaction at the core of hospitality, and customer interaction enables prisoners to be seen as "normal" people and skilful individuals. They could lose the stigma of being a "prisoner" and increase their employability and self-confidence, allowing them to build relationships with the public and potential employers (Beier, 2015).

The sergeant explained that Street & Arrow is like any other café with all the pressure that comes along with serving food and beverages during busy periods, so students are *learning the world of work, the basics, getting up, getting to work on time, taking instructions, all of the day-to-day things that most people have...It is busy here so they've got to be on their toes.*

Burton (2017) agreed that the restaurant industry is particularly well suited to helping ex-offenders rebuild their lives, as they were able to really thrive in an environment where all it takes to succeed is a lot of hard work and dedication. The CEO of The Clink explained that when considering the important effect hospitality has on the students themselves, it can be seen that it provides them with a sense of accomplishment, and daily routine allows them to build a daily schedule: "*It is hard work, it is long hours...but it's very diverse...it's fun and they find their place*". They actively learn which skills work and which do not, and what tools are most successful in their own professional and personal development (Beier, 2015).

Future

The hospitality industry not giving ex-offenders a chance of employment was highlighted by both establishments. This was echoed in 2019 on the eHotelier website, where it was suggested that the mainstream hospitality industry needed to recognise the lack of opportunities provided to ex-offenders, by supporting and working with hospitality establishments who

educate and train offenders and ex-offenders, so that they would have access to a wide range of different talents that, with the right nurturing and support, can make loyal, enthusiastic and committed employees (eHotelier, 2019). In the same year, the Institute of Hospitality (UK) uploaded a management guide to employing ex-offenders, highlighting that hiring ex-offenders has proven to reduce reoffending, that most ex-offenders wanted to get their lives back on track, and that having a job would give them that opportunity (Institute of Hospitality, 2019).

Concluding comments

Hospitality is more than food, water and shelter — it can change and has changed thousands of lives. More hospitality establishments are opening inside working prisons and more hospitality establishments are employing ex-offenders. Hospitality can give offenders and ex-offenders certain skills and experience like timekeeping, communication, improving self-confidence, learning to deal with work pressure, leaning to contribute to society in a different way, learning to work long, anti-social hours and learning to be confident. These things will enable them to gain and maintain employment, so they have a better chance of not reoffending.

However, more research needs to be conducted to determine how hospitality can contribute to the rehabilitation of offenders and ex-offenders. The Clink Charity has proven that the recidivism rate of their graduates is lower than other offenders who have not graduated from a Clink programme, but this is only in one organisation and only in the UK. There are various aspects of hospitality — the intensive personal interaction, high degree of solidarity between people, collaboration, social skills, communication, discipline, routine and structure — that would need to be studied to determine which one or ones contribute to the rehabilitative effect for offenders and ex-offenders.

ORCID iD

Tracy Harkison — <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2409-231X>

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