

A COMPARISON STUDY?

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The question occurred to me recently (October 2020) -
Has there ever been a comparison study of canteens?

Items Offered (Staff; male, female, Juvenile Prisoner; city,
county, jail; state, federal)

Item Cost (Wholesale; street Retail, Canteen) factor in
shipping costs - e.g., goods cost more in Alaska due to
shipping costs)

Who operated the canteens.

Who benefits from the canteens.

What the outside vendor contracts permit and how the benefi-
ciaries benefit. (e.g., permitted to increase prices
every six (6) months; canteen profits exceeding a certain
amount go into the government's coffers.)

All of this information should be available on-line, I would
think.

Why would it be of interest?

There is the common perception that the outside vendors are
taking advantage of their monopoly status to grossly overcharge
the prisoners. For example - at Wakulla Correctional Institution,
in Florida, the staff pay 50 cents for a bottle of water. The
prisoners, however, are charged \$1.02 for the same size bottle.

Another perception is that vendor contracts are granted to
benefit "insiders". That is, "Company A" gets the contract, even
though "Company B" would be a better vendor, because certain
individuals (e.g., the wife of a Department of Corrections
bureaucrat) have a financial interest in "Company A".

(The author is a former Death Row prisoner who has been serving
time in Florida since 1971.)