

## FACTORS AFFECTING THE CORRECTIONAL FUNCTIONS OF CORRECTIONAL CENTRE IN AWKA METROPOLIS, ANAMBRA STATE

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### Abstract

Correctional centres are vital institutions in the contemporary era, saddled with the responsibility of reforming, punishing, and rehabilitating convicted inmates. However, correctional centres, especially in Nigeria, appear to be struggling to perform these fundamental responsibilities effectively. It is particularly troubling that some discharged inmates struggle to successfully reintegrate into society. Against this backdrop, this paper examines the factors affecting the correctional functions of the Awka Correctional Centre. The study is anchored on the frustration-aggression theory as its theoretical framework. A mixed-methods research design was adopted, involving both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection. A sample size of 156 correctional officers was used for the administration of questionnaires, while eight (8) officers participated in in-depth interviews. The quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 25, while the research questions were addressed using frequency counts and percentages. The qualitative data were analyzed using the thematic method. The findings revealed that overcrowding of inmates is one of the major factors affecting the correctional functions of the Awka Correctional Centre. The study also found that the current infrastructure and facility conditions at the Centre adversely affect the implementation of rehabilitation and reformation programmes for inmates. Based on these findings, it is recommended, among other measures, that to address the persistent problem of overcrowding and poor living conditions at the Awka Correctional Centre, the government and relevant stakeholders should implement a comprehensive decongestion strategy. This strategy should include accelerated trial processes, the adoption of non-custodial sentencing options, and the expansion of existing facilities.

**Keywords:** Correctional Centres, Reformation, Rehabilitation, reintegration, and Deterrence

### Introduction

Correctional centres, commonly known as prisons or penitentiaries, play crucial roles in the criminal justice system. One of which includes serving as facilities for the confinement of individuals convicted of crimes. Their primary purpose is to administer punishment, deter crime, rehabilitate offenders, and protect society by removing dangerous individuals from the community (Kendig, et al., 2024). The concept of correctional facilities has evolved significantly over time, reflecting changes in societal attitudes toward crime and punishment. The origins of correctional centres can be traced back to the late 18th century, particularly in the United States. Before this period, punishment for crimes was predominantly corporal or capital; methods included execution, flogging, and other forms of physical punishment. However, these practices were increasingly viewed as inhumane and ineffective at deterring crime (Cleverley, 2023).

The establishment of correctional centres in Africa is deeply intertwined with the continent's colonial history, particularly the impacts of European colonization and the Atlantic Slave Trade. Before European intervention, traditional African societies employed various forms of punishment that were often restorative rather than punitive (Balakrishnan, 2022). These systems focused on compensation for victims and social reintegration rather than incarceration. However, as European powers began to colonize Africa in the late 19th century, they introduced their own penal systems, which included prisons as a means of exerting control over colonized populations. Colonial authorities viewed prisons not only as facilities for punishment but also as tools for maintaining order and discipline within their territories. The early colonial prisons were built on the legacy of detention practices established during the slave trade. Once slavery was abolished, these facilities continued to serve as reservoirs of cheap labour, essential for the economic exploitation of colonies. The colonial prison system expanded significantly during this period, creating a network of detention sites that included not just prisons but also labour camps and internment facilities (Olayode, 2017). This expansion was part of a broader strategy to assert authority over colonized peoples and suppress dissent against colonial rule. Similarly, in Nigeria, the origin of correctional centres dates back to the colonial era when prisons were built by the colonial masters to curtail crime and exert control over the colonial subjects (Olayode, 2017).

Over the years however, correctional centres have evolved to become an integral part of the criminal justice system. Correctional centres play a crucial role in the criminal justice system by serving multiple functions that are essential for public safety, rehabilitation, and societal order. At their core, correctional facilities are designed to separate individuals who have been convicted of crimes from the general population (Popoola, et al., 2022). This separation is vital for protecting society from those who pose a threat due to their criminal behaviour. By confining offenders, correctional centres help to prevent further crimes and maintain public safety. The act of incarceration serves as a form of punishment, which is one of the primary purposes of prisons and jails. This punitive aspect is intended not only to penalize wrongdoers but also to deter others from engaging in similar criminal activities by demonstrating the consequences of such actions.

In addition to punishment, correctional centres are increasingly recognized for their potential role in rehabilitation (Egwuagu & Udentia, 2022). Many facilities now incorporate programmes aimed at helping inmates develop skills and behaviours that will enable them to reintegrate successfully into society upon release. These programmes can include educational opportunities, vocational training, mental health counselling, and substance abuse treatment (Perpectson, 2023). The focus on rehabilitation acknowledges that many incarcerated individuals come from disadvantaged backgrounds and may have faced significant challenges prior to their offenses, such as poverty, lack of education, or mental health issues. By addressing these underlying factors within a structured environment, correctional facilities can facilitate personal growth and reduce recidivism rates, helping former inmates become productive members of society rather than returning to crime (Ojiochie & Oli, 2025). In spite of the key roles correctional centres play, they are plagued by many issues that impede on their effectiveness. Correctional centres, especially in Nigeria continue to face severe challenges including overcrowding, poor sanitation and healthcare services, rampant corruption, lack of rehabilitation programmes, and inadequate staff training. These issues collectively hinder efforts towards reforming inmates and ensuring humane treatment within the prison system. (San, 2024).

Research into correctional systems and their effectiveness has been conducted globally, addressing various factors such as staffing levels, funding, infrastructure, programme availability and quality, inmate demographics, institutional culture, and policy frameworks. However, the impact and interplay of these factors can vary significantly depending on the specific geographical, socio-economic, and administrative context of a correctional institution (Engstrom & Van Ginneken, 2022). This paper is intended to fill the unique gap in knowledge as a result of dearth of specific, empirical data and detailed analysis concerning the particular factors influencing the correctional functions within the correctional centre located in Awka, Anambra State. To achieve this objective, the following research questions were formulated.

1. What factors affect the correctional functions of Awka correctional centre?
2. What is the state of infrastructure in Awka correctional centre?
3. How do the current infrastructure and facility conditions at the Awka correctional centre impact the implementation of rehabilitation and reformation programmes for inmates?

## **Review of Relevant Literature**

### **Factors affecting correctional functions of correctional centres**

The correctional functions of correctional centres are significantly influenced by a variety of structural, institutional, and human factors that determine whether these facilities fulfil their roles of rehabilitation, deterrence, retribution, and reintegration. One of the most pressing challenges is overcrowding, which remains a persistent issue in many correctional centres across Nigeria and globally. Overcrowding results from delayed judicial processes, excessive pre-trial detentions, and inadequate prison infrastructure. This situation leads to strained resources, worsened inmate health, and limited access to correctional programmes, thus weakening the rehabilitative function of prisons (Joseph et al., 2021). In Nigeria, inadequate prison space and rising inmate populations have made the fulfilment of correctional goals difficult, often leading to poor living conditions and the spread of communicable diseases (Bukie & Ogbanga, 2024). These conditions create environments of tension and violence that undermine the potential for meaningful rehabilitation and re-entry preparation.

Staff capacity and training are also crucial determinants of correctional success. The correctional workforce is responsible for maintaining discipline, facilitating rehabilitation, and ensuring that correctional centres operate efficiently and humanely. However, where personnel are inadequately trained, poorly remunerated, and overstretched, they often resort to brutality or neglect, worsening inmate outcomes (Mbano, 2024). In Nigeria, correctional officers frequently lack modern rehabilitation tools, psychosocial support skills, and exposure to best global practices, which compromises their performance (Lawal, 2025). Comparatively, in Canada and Germany, correctional officers receive continuous professional training to handle diverse inmate needs and ensure institutional stability (Leclerc, et al., 2025). The absence of these measures in countries with weak correctional

systems often leads to abuse of power, corruption, and institutional decay, rendering correctional goals unachievable (Mbanjo, 2024).

Another critical factor is the availability and quality of rehabilitation programmes, which are central to transforming inmates and reducing recidivism. Rehabilitation includes vocational training, education, psychological therapy, and re-entry programmes that prepare inmates for life after incarceration (Evans, 2024). In Nigeria, the minimal provision of these programmes is largely due to underfunding, poor management, and lack of political will to reform correctional institutions (Ndaguba, et al., 2018). Most inmates are released without any form of skill acquisition or psychological counselling, thus heightening the chances of reoffending. In contrast, countries like Norway and Finland have invested in inmate education, psychological services, and community integration programmes that focus on human development over punitive incarceration (Lappi-Seppälä, 2022). The disparity in programme delivery between the Global South and North underscores the importance of prioritizing rehabilitation as a strategic tool for sustainable corrections.

Infrastructural decay and outdated facilities further hinder correctional effectiveness. Many correctional centres operate in buildings constructed decades ago, which lack modern security technology, adequate ventilation, clean water, and sanitation (Aluko et al., 2022). In Nigeria, prison infrastructure is often dilapidated and unfit for human habitation, fostering a culture of neglect and human rights violations (Nebeife et al., 2022). Internationally, correctional systems in less developed countries face similar problems, where financial constraints limit facility upgrades (Olaleye et al., 2023). Conversely, countries like the Netherlands and Japan have adopted architecture that promotes dignity, healing, and order within correctional settings (Soliman, 2024). Correctional environments that reflect respect for human dignity tend to produce more rehabilitative outcomes, while those grounded in neglect breed hostility, hopelessness, and institutional failure (Jones, 2024).

Legal and policy frameworks also significantly shape how correctional institutions operate. When laws are outdated or inconsistently applied, they perpetuate injustice and obstruct correctional goals. Nigeria's correctional policies have been described as rigid and insufficiently aligned with international human rights standards (Fatoki, 2021). Moreover, sentencing policies that favour incarceration over alternative measures such as community service or parole contribute to prison congestion and limit correctional efficacy (Omariba, 2023). In contrast, countries with progressive justice policies prioritize alternatives to imprisonment, decriminalize petty offenses, and encourage restorative justice practices (Gunawan et al., 2024). These approaches recognize that overreliance on imprisonment is counterproductive and that flexible, rights-based policies can better serve both inmates and society.

Finally, societal attitudes and stigmatization significantly affect correctional functions, especially regarding reintegration. The success of a correctional system is partly measured by how well it prepares inmates for reintegration into society (Ike, et al., 2023). However, when ex-inmates are met with societal rejection, joblessness, and discrimination, the chances of successful re-entry diminish. In Nigeria, social stigma and cultural perceptions of incarceration make it difficult for former inmates to secure employment or regain social acceptance (Onwuchekwe et al., 2023). Globally, countries with strong social support systems and re-entry programmes have shown better correctional outcomes by actively involving communities in post-incarceration rehabilitation (Jones-Thompson, 2025). Community-based strategies that foster acceptance, mentorship, and economic empowerment help reduce recidivism and support the holistic function of correctional centres (Kjellstrand, et al., 2022).

### **The state of infrastructure in correctional centres**

The condition of infrastructure in correctional centres has long been a reflection of broader societal priorities, justice policies, and institutional neglect. Across many countries, including Nigeria, correctional facilities remain severely underfunded and physically degraded, creating environments that are both punitive and inhumane. The lack of basic facilities such as clean water, adequate sanitation, and sufficient sleeping space highlights systemic decay (Nebeife et al., 2022). In Nigeria, overcrowding in correctional centres is worsened by dilapidated cell blocks, damaged roofs, leaking plumbing systems, and insufficient ventilation, often leading to health hazards and psychological distress among inmates (Olaleye et al., 2023). Globally, similar conditions persist in places like India, Brazil, and even the United States, where aging facilities struggle with poor maintenance and resource constraints (Dolovich, 2021). These infrastructural deficiencies contribute significantly to the violation of fundamental human rights and contravene international correctional standards. Olateru-Olagbegi (2023) argues that Nigeria's prisons are structurally incapable of meeting even the minimum requirements for inmate welfare due to decades of neglect and minimal investment. On the international stage, scholars such as Bessemans and Vandendriessche (2024) emphasize that deteriorating infrastructure exacerbates the harshness of incarceration, undermining rehabilitation efforts.

The deplorable condition of prison infrastructure goes beyond mere aesthetics or comfort; it affects the health, dignity, and behaviour of inmates. In Nigeria, many correctional facilities still rely on structures built in the colonial era, some of which have seen no substantial renovation since their establishment (Joseph et al., 2021). This has led to a situation where prison walls are crumbling, electrical systems are outdated or non-functional, and essential utilities like water and electricity are erratic (Nebeife et al., 2021). Such conditions are mirrored in other developing countries where prison overcrowding and infrastructure collapse have reached crisis proportions (Dikötter & Brown, 2018). Inmates are forced to sleep on bare floors, share narrow cells with dozens of others, and lack access to proper hygiene, all of which fuel aggression, communicable diseases, and mental health issues. According to Mbanjo (2024), correctional facilities in Nigeria are not only under-equipped but often unsafe, making both inmates and staff vulnerable to violence and health risks. Lieblich (2020) have underscored how physical environments within prisons significantly affect prisoner morale, behaviour, and the overall institutional climate (Wooldredge, 2020).

Another major consequence of poor correctional infrastructure is the obstruction of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes. Correctional centres are not merely punitive spaces; they are also meant to provide educational, vocational, and psychological services aimed at reforming inmates. However, in many Nigerian prisons, the lack of space, equipment, and proper facilities has rendered such programmes largely ineffective (Joseph et al., 2021). Mwanza (2021) highlights how the absence of libraries, classrooms, and vocational training workshops diminishes the prospects of inmates acquiring life skills necessary for reintegration into society. Similar observations are made in correctional systems in Eastern Europe and parts of Southeast Asia, where limited resources severely hinder the delivery of correctional programmes (Lappi-Seppälä, 2022). Furthermore, the psychological effect of living in degrading conditions can erode any positive behavioural changes gained during incarceration. Adetona (2024) stresses that rehabilitation becomes a hollow concept in a prison system where inmates are more concerned with basic survival than personal growth.

The lack of infrastructure also undermines the working conditions of prison staff, many of whom operate under harsh, unsafe, and demoralizing environments. Correctional officers in Nigeria often work long hours with minimal support, frequently exposed to risk due to broken security systems, lack of surveillance cameras, and inadequate protective facilities (Adetona, 2024). This mirrors conditions reported in several other prisons across the world, where outdated security systems make it difficult for staff to maintain order or prevent escapes (Aliyu, 2018). When the physical environment is compromised, the effectiveness of prison staff is also weakened, leading to increased tension, corruption, and abuse (Wooldredge, 2020). According to Turner et al., (2023), the morale of prison officers is deeply tied to their working conditions, which are often overlooked in infrastructural discussions. They further argue that institutional decay also breeds institutional dysfunction, as staff become disengaged and prisoners more hostile, turning correctional centres into zones of perpetual conflict.

The problem of poor infrastructure is also intimately tied to government priorities, policy inertia, and systemic corruption. In Nigeria, budget allocations to the Nigeria Correctional Service are often inadequate, and even when funds are approved, they are either poorly disbursed or mismanaged (San, 2024). This is consistent with broader trends in many developing countries where the justice sector is underfunded, and prison infrastructure is considered a low priority in national development plans (Soliman, 2024). Even in wealthier nations, prison reform often lags due to political indifference or populist demands for harsher penalties. Ogu, et al., (2022) note that in Nigeria, the lack of transparency in prison spending and absence of independent oversight mechanisms has allowed infrastructure to decay unchecked.

The need for urgent infrastructure reform in correctional centres cannot be overstated, as it holds implications for justice, human rights, public health, and national security. Transforming prisons into institutions that uphold dignity and encourage reform requires not only financial investment but also a reorientation of political and moral priorities (Ojiochie & Oli, 2025). In Nigeria, this means moving beyond token renovations to implement comprehensive prison reforms backed by legislation, transparency, and civil society oversight. Uche (2025) advocated for public-private partnerships and international donor engagement to address the funding gaps in correctional services. Across the world, there is growing recognition that the prison environment shapes not only inmate behaviour but also societal outcomes upon their release.

### **The impact of infrastructure and facility conditions at correctional centres on implementation of rehabilitation and reformation programmes for inmates**

The condition of infrastructure and facilities within correctional centres plays a pivotal role in shaping the success or failure of rehabilitation and reformation programmes for inmates. In many correctional institutions, especially in developing countries like Nigeria, infrastructural decay remains a major obstacle to the realization of effective correctional ideals. Overcrowded cells, poor sanitation, dilapidated buildings, and lack of basic amenities frustrate

any attempt at meaningful rehabilitation. The prison environment should ideally reflect the principles of reformation, but when it resembles a place of punishment and neglect, it instead reinforces criminal behaviour and psychological trauma. Adebayo and Oladipo (2023) assert that the congestion in Nigerian prisons, with inadequate bedding and hygiene, violates inmates' dignity and disrupts rehabilitative services. From an international lens, Smith (2022) emphasizes that modern correctional institutions must prioritize humane conditions to align with global standards of prisoner rehabilitation. When the environment is substandard, inmates are less receptive to change and more likely to reoffend upon release.

The lack of functional and adequately equipped vocational and educational facilities in correctional centres further undermines the goal of reintegrating inmates as productive members of society. Rehabilitation is not just about keeping inmates confined; it involves actively engaging them in learning skills and knowledge that will reduce recidivism. In Nigeria, most prison workshops and classrooms are either non-functional or lack the tools and resources necessary for effective training. Onwuka and Eze (2020) highlight the failure of vocational programmes in Nigerian correctional centres due to a lack of funding and poor infrastructure. This creates a situation where inmates, even when willing, are not provided with the necessary tools for reformation. In many Western nations, prison education has been linked with reduced reoffending, but this success is tied to investments in the physical and intellectual infrastructure of prison education systems. Without such investments, reformation becomes a hollow concept.

Health facilities within prisons are another critical component of inmate rehabilitation often neglected due to infrastructural deficiencies. Physical and mental health support is vital for rehabilitation, yet most correctional centres in Nigeria lack well-staffed clinics or functional mental health services. Inmates with untreated illnesses or psychological conditions are more prone to violence, depression, and isolation, which undermine reformation efforts.

The availability and condition of recreational and spiritual facilities within correctional centres also influence inmate transformation. A rehabilitative environment is one that allows inmates access to constructive outlets for stress, introspection, and personal growth. Unfortunately, in many Nigerian prisons, such facilities are either non-existent or grossly inadequate. From a broader perspective, Turner (2023) states that prisons must support the full spectrum of inmate needs, including emotional and spiritual wellbeing, to reduce the psychological effects of incarceration. Facilities that promote mental, emotional, and spiritual growth are essential in moving correctional institutions from punitive to reformative models. The absence of such facilities in many correctional centres around the world reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of what true rehabilitation entails.

Moreover, the lack of adequate staff housing, office spaces, and administrative facilities has implications for the effectiveness of correctional staff, who are crucial actors in the rehabilitation process. Poor working conditions do not motivate prison officers and hinder their ability to engage constructively with inmates. In Nigeria, many officers work under intense pressure due to inadequate infrastructure, leading to burnout and in some cases, brutality or indifference toward inmates. The structural environment in which correctional officers operate in has significantly influence their attitude and by extension, the success of reformative interventions.

In conclusion, the impact of infrastructure and facility conditions on rehabilitation and reformation programmes in correctional centres cannot be overstated. From educational and vocational training, healthcare provision, and recreational facilities, to staff support systems, the physical environment either enables or undermines rehabilitation goals. In Nigeria and other nations where correctional infrastructure is neglected, efforts at inmate reform remain largely theoretical. Rehabilitation is not an abstract ideal—it must be supported by tangible, functional infrastructure. Until correctional centres are upgraded to reflect modern standards of care and development, the reformation of inmates will remain a distant goal rather than an achievable reality.

### **Theoretical Anchorage**

#### **Frustration-Aggression Theory**

Frustration-Aggression Theory, originally proposed by John Dollard, Leonard Doob, Neal Miller, Orval Mowrer, and Robert Sears in 1939 and later expanded by Berkowitz (1989), suggests that aggression is often the result of frustration when individuals are blocked from achieving a desired goal, they may respond with aggressive behaviour. The theory posits a direct relationship between frustration (unmet needs or goals) and the expression of aggression.

The correctional functions of correctional centres, particularly their role in rehabilitating offenders and maintaining institutional order, are significantly undermined by factors that can be effectively interpreted through the lens of Frustration-Aggression Theory. This theory posits that when individuals are blocked from achieving

legitimate goals, they experience frustration which, if not resolved, often leads to aggression. In correctional centres, systemic issues like overcrowding, poor sanitation, inadequate medical care, lack of vocational training, prolonged pre-trial detention, and abusive treatment by correctional staff create chronic frustration among inmates. These conditions deny prisoners their basic rights and obstruct any real possibility of personal reform or social reintegration, leading to heightened emotional tension and frequent outbreaks of aggression, including riots, violence among inmates, and attacks on correctional officers. Correctional staff members are not exempted from this cycle, as poor remuneration, insufficient training, lack of institutional support, and an overwhelming workload contribute to their own frustration, which may manifest as aggression toward inmates or neglect of duty. As such, the persistent failure of the correctional system to provide humane conditions and rehabilitative services perpetuates a hostile environment, thereby defeating the very purpose of incarceration. Frustration-Aggression Theory thus offers a critical framework for understanding how unmet needs and systemic neglect within the prison environment translate into aggression and institutional dysfunction, emphasizing the urgent need for structural reforms that address both inmate and staff welfare to restore the correctional centre's intended functions.

Despite its widespread application, the Frustration-Aggression Theory has been subjected to several criticisms that question its universality and explanatory power. One major critique is its overly deterministic assumption that frustration inevitably leads to aggression, which oversimplifies human behaviour by ignoring other possible responses such as withdrawal, apathy, or problem-solving. Critics argue that not all frustrated individuals become aggressive, and not all aggressive behaviours stem from frustration, as factors like personality traits, cultural background, social leaning, and situational cues also play significant roles in shaping human reactions (Alam, 2023).

### Methodology

This is a mixed methods research which involves the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. The study organization is the Awka Correctional Centre located in Awka South Local Government Area (LGA). The population of the study comprised of correctional officers in Awka Correctional Centre, Amawbia, Awka South LGA, Anambra State. According to the Nigerian Correctional Service, the number of correctional officers in Awka Correctional Centre is 164 which also formed the sample size for the paper. The respondents to the questionnaire were selected using probability sampling techniques while the participants in the interviews were selected purposively. The quantitative data collected from the field was processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 software. However, the data was presented, analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and simple percentages. On the other hand, the qualitative data that was collected through IDI was analyzed using thematic analysis. Variables and ideas in the data were coded and organized under distinct themes. Each theme was discussed and necessary illustrative quotes were extracted to support and elucidate the quantitative data.

### Results

One hundred and fifty-six (156) questionnaires were administered by the researcher, out of which 148 (94.9%) of the questionnaires were correctly filled and returned. Eight questionnaires were lost. The analysis is consequently based on the correctly filled and returned 148 questionnaires.

**Table 1: Respondents' views on the main challenges affecting correctional functions at Awka Correctional Centre**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Overcrowding of inmates	67	45.3
Inadequate staffing levels	36	24.3
Limited training and skills of staff	18	12.2
Poor inmate discipline and security issues	14	9.5
Corruption or mismanagement	13	8.8
Total	148	100.0

### Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 shows that 45.3% of respondents identified overcrowding of inmates as the principal challenge affecting correctional functions, followed by 24.3% who pointed to inadequate staffing levels, 12.2% who attributed problems to limited training and skills of staff, 9.5% who cited poor inmate discipline and security issues, and 8.8% who associated the challenges with corruption or mismanagement. Together, this finding indicate that structural and human-resource shortages. Notably overcrowding and understaffing dominate perceptions of what undermines the correctional centre's capacity to carry out custody, rehabilitation, and reintegration functions. According to an IDI participant:

One of the biggest challenges affecting correctional functions at Awka Correctional Centre is the overcrowding of inmates. With so many people crammed into the facility, it becomes difficult to manage daily routines, maintain discipline, and provide adequate rehabilitation programs. Most staff members are struggling to monitor everyone properly, which increases the risk of conflicts and security issues. In addition to overcrowding, there are not enough officers to handle the workload, meaning that supervision is often stretched thin. Many of the staff members also lack sufficient training and skills, which makes it harder to implement effective correctional strategies. On top of these operational issues, corruption or mismanagement can sometimes interfere with the smooth running of the centre, further weakening efforts to rehabilitate inmates. Overall, the combination of too many inmates, limited human resources, and inadequate training makes it challenging to maintain order and provide meaningful correctional programmes (Male, 42 years, Correctional Officer, 2025).

**Table 2: Respondents' views on the factor most influencing the ability of the centre to rehabilitate inmates**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Availability of educational programmes	37	25.0
Access to vocational training opportunities	44	29.7
Frequency of counselling sessions	24	16.2
Support from external NGOs or community	13	8.8
Prisoners' willingness to participate in programmes	30	20.3
Total	148	100.0

**Field Survey, 2025**

Table 2 shows that 29.7% of respondents identified access to vocational training opportunities as the most influential factor affecting the correctional centre's ability to rehabilitate inmates, followed by 25.0% who pointed to the availability of educational programmes, 20.3% who emphasized prisoners' willingness to participate in programmes, 16.2% who attributed the effectiveness of rehabilitation to the frequency of counselling sessions, and 8.8% who associated rehabilitation success with support from external NGOs or the community. Together, these findings indicate that skill-building and educational interventions are viewed as the core drivers of successful rehabilitation, while inmate motivation, consistent psychological support, and external partnerships also play important but secondary roles. This suggests that strengthening vocational and educational programmes, while simultaneously promoting participation and enhancing counselling and external support systems, would significantly improve the correctional centre's rehabilitation outcomes. This finding aligns with the opinion of an IDI participant:

From my experience as a correctional officer, one of the biggest factors that affect our ability to rehabilitate inmates is giving them access to vocational training. When prisoners have the chance to learn practical skills like carpentry, tailoring, or computer work, it keeps them occupied, gives them hope, and prepares them for life outside. Education programs are helpful too, but skills training has a more direct impact on reducing recidivism because inmates leave with something tangible they can use to earn a living. Counselling sessions are important as well, but without the hands-on opportunities, it is hard for inmates to apply what they learn in real life. Support from NGOs or the community helps, but it cannot replace structured programmes within the centre. Another key point is the willingness of prisoners themselves, they have to engage actively for any program to work (Male, 39 years, Correctional Officer, 2025).

According to another IDI participant:

One of the biggest factors that affect our ability to rehabilitate inmates is giving them access to vocational training. When inmates have the chance to learn practical skills like carpentry, tailoring, or computer work, it keeps them occupied, gives them hope, and prepares them for life outside. Education programmes are helpful too, but skills training has a more direct impact on reducing recidivism because inmates leave with something tangible they can use to earn a living. Counselling sessions are important as well, but without the hands-on opportunities, it is hard for inmates to apply what they learn in real life (Male, 39 years, Correctional Officer, 2025).

**Table 3: Respondents' views on the external factor most affecting correctional functions at the centre**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Government funding and budget allocations	50	33.8
Community attitudes toward prisoners	32	21.6
Policy and regulatory frameworks	24	16.2
Media scrutiny and public opinion	32	21.6
Partnerships with rehabilitation-focused organizations	10	6.8
Total	148	100.0

**Field Survey, 2025**

Table 3 shows that 33.8% of respondents identified government funding and budget allocations as the most significant external factors affecting correctional functions at the centre, indicating that financial support play a central role in determining the institution’s operational capacity. This is followed by 21.6% who pointed to community attitudes toward prisoners and another 21.6% who cited media scrutiny and public opinion, suggesting that societal perceptions and external pressure shape how the centre functions and how effectively it can implement rehabilitation initiatives. Additionally, 16.2% of respondents attributed challenges to policy and regulatory frameworks, implying that legislative and administrative guidelines may either support or hinder correctional operations. Finally, only 6.8% highlighted partnerships with rehabilitation-focused organizations, indicating limited external collaboration in supporting inmate reformation. Overall, these findings imply that without adequate government funding and supportive societal and policy environments, the correctional centre may struggle to deliver effective custody, rehabilitation, and reintegration services, emphasizing the need for financial investment, positive public engagement, and stronger institutional partnerships. This finding is in line with the opinion of an IDI participant:

A major factor affecting the correctional functions at the centre is the limited funding from the government. With tight budgets, it becomes difficult to provide basic necessities like adequate food, clothing, and healthcare for inmates, not to mention investing in educational and vocational programs. Financial constraints also affect the maintenance of the facility, making it hard to repair infrastructure, buy security equipment, or even provide enough uniforms for staff. When money is scarce, priorities shift to immediate survival needs, and long-term rehabilitation programs often suffer. Even small improvements, like upgrading classrooms or workshops for skills training, become nearly impossible without proper funding. The lack of financial resources also limits staff training, which compounds problems like overcrowding and poor supervision. In essence, the shortage of funds restricts the centre’s ability to function efficiently and deliver meaningful rehabilitation services to inmates (Male, 53 years, Correctional Officer, 2025).

**Table 4: Respondents’ views on the condition of inmate housed at Awka Correctional Centre**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Well-maintained and adequately spacious	8	5.4
Maintained but overcrowded	59	39.9
Dilapidated and poorly ventilated	54	36.5
Makeshift or temporary structures	21	14.2
Severely damaged and unsafe	6	4.1
Total	148	100.0

**Field Survey, 2025**

Table 4 shows that 39.9% of respondents reported that inmate housing is maintained but overcrowded, followed by 36.5% who described the housing as dilapidated and poorly ventilated. Only 5.4% indicated that housing is well-maintained and adequately spacious, while 14.2% noted the use of makeshift or temporary structures, and 4.1% reported severely damaged and unsafe conditions. Together, these findings indicate that the majority of inmate housing is inadequate, with overcrowding, poor maintenance, and structural deficiencies dominating, which can adversely affect inmate health, safety, and overall rehabilitation outcomes.

**Table 5: Respondents’ views on the sufficiency of recreational and exercise facilities in the centre**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Fully adequate and well-maintained	5	3.4
Limited but usable	31	20.9
Poor condition and rarely accessible	46	31.1
Almost non-existent	35	23.6
Non-functional	31	20.9
Total	148	100.0

**Field Survey, 2025**

Table 5 shows that only 3.4% of respondents believed recreational and exercise facilities are fully adequate and well-maintained, while 20.9% indicated they are limited but usable. However, the majority expressed negative views, with 31.1% stating the facilities are in poor condition and rarely accessible, 23.6% reporting they are almost non-existent, and 20.9% describing them as entirely non-functional. Together, these findings indicate that recreational and exercise provisions in the centre are largely inadequate or unavailable, which can hinder inmate physical and mental well-being, reduce opportunities for rehabilitation, increase idleness and tension, and ultimately undermine the correctional centre’s ability to promote positive behaviour and successful reintegration. According to an IDI participant:

Recreational and exercise facilities in the centre are almost non-existent. Inmates have very few spaces to engage in physical activities or leisure, and what little is available is often in poor condition or difficult to access. Without proper recreational outlets, inmates spend most of their time confined to crowded cells, which can increase stress, boredom, and tensions among them. The lack of exercise and leisure opportunities also affects their physical and mental health, making it harder to maintain discipline and focus during rehabilitation programs. Overall, the absence of functional recreational facilities is a significant gap in creating a balanced and humane environment within the centre (Female, 54 years, Correctional Officer, 2025).

### **Discussion of Findings**

It was found that overcrowding of inmates was the major factor affecting the correctional functions of the Awka Correctional Centre. This finding aligns with a growing body of research that underscores congestion as a fundamental challenge undermining the objectives of correctional institutions in Nigeria. A study by Joseph et al. (2021) showed that overcrowding not only strains available resources but also deteriorates the physical and psychological well-being of inmates, thereby weakening the rehabilitative intent of correctional facilities. Similarly, Ajah and Nweke (2017) found that inadequate facilities and congestion in Awka and Abakaliki prisons compromise inmates' welfare and obstruct proper reformation processes, suggesting that excessive inmate population directly affects institutional functionality.

This paper found that infrastructure is generally dilapidated in Awka Correctional Centre. This finding resonates with numerous studies that have highlighted infrastructural decay as a key barrier to the effective functioning of correctional facilities in Nigeria. Ajah and Nweke (2017) reported that prison facilities in Awka and Abakaliki are in deplorable conditions, with inadequate space, poor ventilation, and deteriorating buildings that hinder rehabilitation and welfare services. Similarly, Abdullahi and Akande (2023) emphasized that the poor maintenance culture and structural neglect of correctional buildings increase the risk of collapse and undermine the safety of both inmates and staff.

This paper found that the current infrastructure and facility conditions at the Awka Correctional Centre adversely impact the implementation of rehabilitation and reformation programmes for inmates. This finding aligns with existing literature that underscores the close link between the state of correctional facilities and the effectiveness of rehabilitation initiatives in Nigeria. Ajah and Nweke (2017) observed that poor infrastructural conditions in Awka and Abakaliki prisons severely limit opportunities for skill acquisition, education, and counselling, thereby impeding inmates' reformation. Supporting this, Kanu and Kanu (2024) found that vocational skills training programs in Anambra correctional facilities are underutilized due to poor physical structures, insufficient equipment, and overcrowded learning spaces. Ogundipe (2023) also emphasized that meaningful rehabilitation is impossible in environments lacking adequate facilities for training, counselling, and reintegration.

### **Conclusion**

Correctional centres are intended to rehabilitate and reform inmates globally; however, this has not always been the case. This paper examines the factors affecting the correctional functions of the Awka Correctional Centre and finds that overcrowding, poor infrastructure, inadequate staff strength, and limited vocational and educational opportunities significantly hinder its rehabilitative capacity. The findings reveal that both structural and human resource deficiencies, particularly congestion and a shortage of personnel, constitute major obstacles to achieving effective custody, reformation, and reintegration of inmates. Poor funding, obsolete facilities, and insufficient training for correctional officers also weaken staff morale and institutional efficiency. Rehabilitation programmes, which should be central to correctional practice, are grossly inadequate due to a lack of facilities, irregular programming, and weak collaboration with external partners. Consequently, many inmates leave the centre without acquiring meaningful skills for reintegration into society, thereby contributing to recurring criminal behaviour and high recidivism rates. The study further reveals that poor infrastructure and inadequate security equipment compromise the safety of both staff and inmates, while corruption and ineffective administrative policies exacerbate operational challenges. These conditions have far-reaching implications for human rights, justice delivery, and national development.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

To address the persistent problem of overcrowding and poor living conditions at the Awka Correctional Centre, the government and relevant stakeholders should implement a comprehensive decongestion strategy. This should include accelerated trial processes, the adoption of non-custodial sentencing options such as parole and community service, and the expansion of existing facilities.

To strengthen the rehabilitation and reformation of inmates, the Nigerian Correctional Service should expand and adequately fund vocational and educational programmes that equip inmates with practical and employable skills.

Establishing functional workshops, libraries, and classrooms within the centre, as well as partnering with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private organizations for training initiatives, will enhance inmates' chances of successful reintegration into society and reduce recidivism.

Furthermore, to facilitate the reintegration of ex-inmates and reduce social stigma, community-based re-entry programmes should be developed through collaboration among correctional institutions, civil society organizations, and local communities. Sensitization campaigns and partnerships with employers should promote the acceptance of reformed individuals, while post-release support in areas such as employment, housing, and counselling will help prevent recidivism and enhance public safety.

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