

**CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMME FOR INMATES AND REFORMATORY
OUTCOME IN NIGERIA (A STUDY OF KADUNA MEDIUM SECURITY
CUSTODIAL CENTRE (KMSCC))**

BY

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ABSTRACT

The Nigerian correctional system faces ongoing criticism due to inadequate infrastructure, persistent recidivism, and limited effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes. Despite reforms introduced through the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019, concerns remain regarding the impact of correctional programmes on meaningful inmate reformation. This study examines the applicability of these programmes and their reformatory outcomes, focusing on the Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre (KMSCC). Anchored on Reformatory Theory, which views punishment as a mechanism for behavioural transformation through rehabilitation, skill acquisition, and social reintegration, the research investigates the nature of programmes available to inmates, their influence on behavioural modification, and the extent to which reformatory objectives are achieved. A survey design using quantitative methods was employed, with structured questionnaires administered to administrative, welfare, and records staff, as well as inmates. The study population comprised 4,796 personnel and inmates, from which a sample of 264 respondents was derived using the Taro Yamane formula, complemented by purposive sampling to include participants with direct knowledge of correctional programmes. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings reveal that, although the Nigerian Correctional Service is mandated to ensure security, rehabilitation, and reintegration, programmes at KMSCC are inadequate and under-resourced. Limited facilities, insufficient training equipment, and restricted programme diversity hinder effective rehabilitation. The lack of structured post-release support further undermines behavioural change, increasing the risk of recidivism. The study concludes that achieving reformatory justice requires strengthening institutional capacity, expanding evidence-based programmes, and integrating post-custodial support, alongside increased government funding and collaboration with civil society to improve inmate rehabilitation and reintegration outcomes.

Key Words: Correctional Programmes; Reformatory Outcomes; Inmate Rehabilitation; Nigerian Correctional Service;

Introduction

Throughout human history, societies have developed mechanisms to punish deviant behaviour, with the severity of punishment often depending on the nature of the crime. This led to the emergence of prisons, where offenders served sentences that traditionally emphasized hard labour. In modern times, however, prisons have evolved into centres aimed at transforming behaviour, with international law stipulating that imprisonment should extend beyond mere

deprivation of liberty to include opportunities for acquiring knowledge and skills that facilitate successful reintegration upon release, thereby reducing the likelihood of reoffending (United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, the Nelson Mandela Rules, 2015). Imprisonment alone is insufficient to address prisoners' social reintegration challenges. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) mandates that penitentiary systems provide programmes designed to promote reformation and social rehabilitation. Society bears additional costs when offenders are released without employable skills, as they are more likely to reoffend (Coley & Barton, 2006). These programmes are typically extended to all sentenced prisoners, although pre-trial detainees—who constitute a substantial proportion of the prison population in many countries—are often excluded from rehabilitation activities. Research suggests that the effectiveness of corrective programmes largely depends on the values and attitudes of participants (Blake & Sackett, 1975). Evidence from the United States indicates that prisoners who participate in general education and vocational training are significantly less likely to return to prison and more likely to secure employment post-release (Weidner & Schultz, 2019). Yet, the U.S., despite being the global leader in incarceration rates, still faces challenges in ensuring universal participation in rehabilitation programmes (Duwe, 2017; Lynch & Sabol, 2001).

Across Africa, correctional institutions commonly struggle with congestion, dilapidated facilities, poor sanitation, and lack of structured rehabilitation programmes, which collectively undermine inmates' reformatory outcomes (Jefferson, 2010). In Nigeria, federal and state prisons have long implemented programmes encompassing religious counselling, education, sports, agriculture, and vocational training. These interventions aim to improve behaviour both during incarceration and after release, enhance public safety by reducing recidivism, and promote order within prisons. While the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019, has formalized and expanded these programmes, evidence suggests that many inmates still do not participate fully, limiting the effectiveness of these initiatives.

Nigeria's correctional administration has long faced persistent criticisms arising from overcrowded facilities, inadequate infrastructure, high rates of recidivism, and recurring incidents of jailbreaks and external attacks on custodial centres. These challenges have raised concerns regarding the effectiveness of correctional policies and the institutional capacity of the Nigerian correctional system to achieve its rehabilitative and security objectives. Prior to recent reforms, the operational framework of the Nigerian Prison Service was largely governed by the Prisons Act (Cap P29 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria), which scholars and policy analysts criticised for its limited emphasis on rehabilitation, reintegration, and modern correctional practices. In response to these structural and policy deficiencies, the Nigerian government enacted the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019, which introduced significant institutional reforms, including rehabilitation-oriented programmes and the establishment of Non-Custodial Services aimed at reducing congestion and improving offender management. The Act was expected to transform correctional administration by shifting emphasis from punitive confinement to correction, reintegration, and community-based alternatives to incarceration. Despite these reforms, evidence suggests that several custodial centres, including the Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre, continue to experience many of the operational challenges that existed prior to the enactment of the 2019 Act. Persistent infrastructural deficits, implementation gaps, and institutional constraints have limited the realisation of the reform

objectives. This situation raises an important analytical question regarding the extent to which legislative reforms translate into practical institutional change within Nigeria's correctional system. Existing studies have largely focused on policy reforms at the national level, with limited empirical attention to how such reforms are implemented and experienced at specific custodial institutions. Consequently, a gap remains in understanding the institutional and structural factors shaping the effectiveness of correctional reforms in practice. This study therefore investigates the implementation and operational outcomes of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019 at the Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre, with a view to explaining the persistence of correctional challenges despite formal policy transformation

Research Questions

Consequently, this study is guided by the following central research question: To what extent has the implementation of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019 addressed longstanding institutional and operational challenges at the Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre, and what factors explain the persistence of these challenges despite legislative reform?

To achieve the above mission, this paper raised the following questions as follows:

- i. To what extent does correctional programmes influence behaviour modification of inmates in Kaduna's correctional facilities?
- ii. What is the nature of correctional programmes in Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre (KMSCC)?
- iii. What are the challenges faced by inmates in Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre bearing in mind the reformatory focus of government?

Objectives of the Study

This paper aims to examine Correctional programmes for inmates and reformatory outcome in Nigeria, using Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre as a study area. Specific objectives of this paper are as follows:

- i. To examine the extent to which correctional programmes influence behaviour modification of inmates in Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre.
- ii. To analyse the nature of correctional programmes in Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre.
- iii. To determine the challenges faced by inmates in Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre bearing in mind the reformatory focus of government.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Reformatory or Rehabilitation Theory, which emphasises the possibility of behavioural change among offenders and conceptualises punishment as a mechanism for social reintegration rather than mere retribution. Reformatory theory represents a significant shift in penal philosophy from a crime-centred approach to an offender-centred perspective, arguing that the primary objective of punishment should be the transformation of offenders into law-abiding and productive members of society. Rooted in humanitarian and welfare-oriented principles, the theory views criminal behaviour as the outcome of interacting social, economic, psychological, and educational conditions rather than solely the product of individual moral failure. Consequently, state responses to crime should prioritise correction, restoration, and reintegration instead of purely punitive confinement.

Within this framework, correctional institutions are conceived not as spaces of

suffering but as environments for treatment, education, and personal development. Rehabilitation programmes such as vocational training, counselling, educational services, and psychological support are therefore central mechanisms through which offenders acquire the skills and attitudes necessary for successful reintegration into society (Singh et al., 2024). The growing global acceptance of these principles during the mid-twentieth century influenced the emergence of parole systems, probation services, and rehabilitative correctional policies. In Nigeria, similar reform-oriented ideals informed the enactment of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019, which introduced non-custodial measures and strengthened rehabilitation-focused mandates within correctional administration.

Despite its humanitarian orientation, Reformatory Theory has attracted substantial criticism. Scholars have argued that rehabilitation-based systems may produce unequal or indeterminate outcomes where release decisions depend on subjective assessments of offender reform, potentially undermining fairness and consistency in sentencing. The “nothing works” debate of the 1970s, which questioned the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes due to persistent recidivism rates, contributed to renewed support for punitive approaches. Critics from retributive perspectives further contend that excessive emphasis on offender reform may downplay accountability and the interests of victims. In addition, successful rehabilitation requires significant institutional capacity, professional expertise, and sustained funding, conditions that are often difficult to achieve in resource-constrained correctional systems.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, Reformatory Theory provides a useful analytical framework for examining contemporary correctional reforms because it allows assessment of whether institutional practices align with rehabilitation-oriented policy objectives. In the context of this study, the theory is applied to evaluate how the implementation of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019 reflects reformatory ideals in practice and to explain why rehabilitative outcomes may remain limited despite policy transformation. Specifically, the theory guides the analysis of institutional capacity, programme implementation, and structural constraints affecting the effectiveness of rehabilitation initiatives at the Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre. By linking reform objectives to observable institutional realities, the study uses Reformatory Theory not merely as a philosophical foundation but as an analytical lens for explaining the persistence of correctional challenges.

Literature Review

Bahuguna et al. (2021) contend that sentencing is mandatory for juvenile delinquents, arguing that the primary objective of correctional programmes is to reform offenders by helping them confront past mistakes and acquire practical skills. These programmes often include high-school equivalency training, mental health diversion, writing seminars, and substance abuse education. The authors further assert that torture and other forms of abuse in custody violate fundamental human rights, including the right to life, personal liberty, and human dignity, and can sometimes result in unnatural deaths. Despite the seriousness of this issue, it remains under-researched globally.

Similarly, Duriez et al. (2017), in their analysis of correctional programme assessment in the era of evidence-based practices, emphasise that understanding the elements that make a programme effective is crucial for enhancing the quality of interventions, improving offender

outcomes, reducing recidivism, and promoting public safety. Drawing on Latessa (2006), they identify the “black box” of correctional programmes—key components that drive successful outcomes. By unpacking this black box, researchers can provide a blueprint for designing and implementing effective correctional interventions, with the added benefit of applying these lessons across diverse institutional contexts.

Ekpenyong et al. (2016) describe correctional (rehabilitation) programmes as the delivery of direct services to offenders, including therapy, education, and social skills training. Citing Cullen et al. (2017), they highlight three defining characteristics of effective correctional interventions: (1) interventions are planned and deliberately executed rather than incidental; (2) they target specific offender traits, such as attitudes, cognitive processes, personality, mental health, social relationships, education, vocational skills, or employment; and (3) they are designed to reduce the likelihood of future criminal behaviour.

While extensive research validates the importance of correctional programmes in Western contexts, their applicability in non-Western settings—particularly rapidly expanding facilities such as Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre (KMSSC), Nigeria—requires critical analysis. This study therefore examines the relevance and effectiveness of correctional programmes within KMSSC, situating its discussion within the Nigerian Criminal Justice System, and explores both the challenges and opportunities for achieving meaningful reformatory outcomes for inmates.

Concept of Correctional Programme

Bahuguna et al. (2021) define correctional programmes as structured interventions to which criminal offenders are subjected, encompassing both supervision and educational or vocational training aimed at correcting behaviour. These programmes are sometimes integrated into sentencing and are considered mandatory for juvenile delinquents. The authors assert that the primary objective of correctional programmes is to reform offenders by helping them address past mistakes and acquire practical skills for constructive reintegration into society.

Similarly, the American Correctional Association (ACA, 2013) frames correctional programmes as initiatives that provide constructive activities and opportunities for positive change, promoting the development of responsible citizens. According to ACA, the opportunity for reformation is central to correctional programming, as punishment without the chance for rehabilitation is both unjust and ineffective. They emphasise that hope is a prerequisite for an offender's successful restoration to societal membership. Effective correctional programmes, as noted by ACA, require a careful balance of community and institutional services, including classification systems for offender placement, appropriate levels of supervision, and tailored programming for both young and adult offenders, thereby maximising opportunities for successful rehabilitation.

Gona et al. (2014) further highlight that effective correctional programmes equip offenders with essential life skills, facilitate their reintegration into society upon release, contribute to manageable prison populations, and help disrupt cycles of reoffending. Collectively, these perspectives underscore the central role of correctional programmes in promoting behavioural change, reducing recidivism, and supporting public safety.

Concept of Reformatory Outcomes

The Nigerian Correctional Service implements various reformation and rehabilitation programmes aimed at transforming inmates. According to Section 58 of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), imprisonment fulfills its purpose of protecting society only if the period of confinement is used to prepare offenders for reintegration, ensuring that upon release they are both willing and able to live law-abiding, self-sufficient lives. Consequently, correctional facilities should provide educational, moral, spiritual, and other forms of support appropriate to the individual treatment needs of each inmate (UN Standard Minimum Rules, Sections 58 and 59). These programmes typically include vocational and academic education, social welfare services, religious counselling, recreational activities, and initiatives that maintain or restore healthy communication between inmates and their families or friends. By addressing the diverse needs of inmates, these interventions aim to facilitate behavioural change, promote rehabilitation, and support successful reintegration into society.

Ugwu (2018) opined that reformation is one of the functions and goals of the Nigerian Prison system hence prison system in Nigeria is purely reformatory and not punitive hence the prison service is charged with the responsibility of ensuring the safe custody of offenders, their reformation and rehabilitation.

The federal government of Nigeria, under the Correctional Act, 2019 provide the Nigerian Correctional Service with the responsibility of identifying the reason for anti-social attitude of offenders, teach, and train them to become useful citizens in a free society. Hence, the objectives of the Nigerian Correctional Service among other things include:

- i. Custodial Services: Maintaining secure custody of inmates, including those awaiting trial, and managing correctional facilities
- ii. Rehabilitation and Training: provide educational and vocational skills training, alongside medical, psychological and spiritual counseling.
- iii. Non-Custodial Services: Administering probation, parole, restorative justice and community service for certain offenders, usually first-time minor offenders for instance two-fighting without harm to both victims
- iv. Court Production: Transporting inmates to and from courts for hearing
- v. Administration: Operating Correctional farms and industries to support rehabilitation and generate revenue
- vi. Gender Specific Care: Addressing specific needs of female inmates including health care and childcare facilities

An Overview of Correctional Programmes and Prison System in Nigeria

The sole aim of correctional programme in Prison is reformation of culprits. According to Ekpe (1997) reformation means making an offender becomes better by trying to change his delinquent behaviour, seeking to infuse into him the will to refrain from crime. Rehabilitation on the other hand means brining the offender to normal life. It implies restoring him socially, economically, occupationally and mentally, to the maximum usefulness of which he is capable.

In Nigeria, even after the passage of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019, democratic governance has not been able to lift the Nigerian prisons to international standards.

A cursory look into the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners vis a vis practices in the Nigerian Prisons reveals a lot of fundamental gaps in terms of operations and welfare of inmates.

Furthermore, correctional facilities across Nigeria housed convicted terrorist members for the purpose of reformation, but whose ideology is against the Nigerian state and has now become a national security threat given the nature of several attacks mated at different correctional facilities in Nigeria. For instance, correctional facilities in Maiduguri, Kano, Jos, Bauchi, Enugu, Imo, Koton karfe, Oko among others have in recent times been attacked and a few hardened criminals got released into the society. Also, fatal riots have been recorded in prison facilities in Agodi, Owerri and Kaduna.

Correctional Programmes in Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre

To understand Correctional Programmes in Kaduna State Medium Security Custodial Centre is to take a holistic look at the security challenges Kaduna State currently face as farmer herder clash, banditry and kidnapping, as well as armed robbery amongst others bedevilled the state hence some of these offenders if arrested are being charged and sentence, and also remanded in the Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre. In the same vein, banditry attacked on soft targets in Kaduna satellite towns can be daring to the efficacy of the security agencies in the state. The train attacked in March 2022 for instance which claimed 7 lives had about 970 passengers who avoided the Abuja-Kaduna highway because it has become one of the most dangerous roads in the country; hence commuters opt out for the railway which opened in 2016.

Ekpe, et al (1997) in their submission on **prison vocational labour under Mandela rules and Nigerian prison laws opined that** the basic principles that are of general application as contain in part (1), Rule (1) of the Mandela rules states that "all prisoners shall be treated with respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings" hence the following correctional programmes in (KMSCC) includes:

- i. Recreational Programme like football which is being played between male inmates and correctional staff
- ii. Educational programme which includes secondary and tertiary programmes in collaboration with Federal Ministry of Education, and National Open University of Nigeria
- iii. Vocational Skills Programmes consist of farming, carpentry, barber shop, hair dressing, sawing, and laundry
- iv. Welfare and Religious counselling for both Christians and Muslims to enable inmate make purchases through the welfare services as well as communicate and write to loved ones and the outside world as well as receiving visitors
- v. Medical Services for both male and female inmates as well as maternal and child health for female inmates who are expecting in incarceration.

Furthermore, Ekpe, (1997) argued that correctional programmes like education, employment programme, cognitive behavioural therapy, chemical dependency treatment, sex offender treatment, social support programme, mental health programme, domestic violence programme, prisoner re-entry programme if fully implanted has high rate of reforming inmates to better citizens.

Correctional programmes like educational programme according to Busayo et al (2017) in

Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre (KMSSC) for instance give inmates in the facilities, and across Nigeria an opportunity to free education and beyond that; a better opportunity after serving their sentence to be reintegrated back to the society. This came as a result of the strategic collaboration between Nigerian Correctional Service and National Open University in 2016 to grant inmates free education to study in any chosen field of their choice, it also has to do with correctional facilities that has capacity to cater for the educational needs of inmates in terms of library and class rooms amongst others for ease of learning.

Moreso, KMSSC has other programmes like carpentry workshop, tailoring, barbers' shop, hair dressing, laundry, and religious counselling which is not enough to cater for more than 1,800 inmates in custody hence correctional programme is meant to fit each inmate's specific needs which is inadequate in (KMSSC), in this regard.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative survey research design to examine the applicability of correctional programmes and their reformatory outcomes within the Nigerian Correctional Service, using the Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre (KMSSC) as the study area. The survey design was considered appropriate because the study sought to obtain measurable data from a defined population regarding institutional practices, programme availability, and perceived rehabilitation outcomes. Unlike experimental approaches, the study did not require laboratory procedures or clinical testing but relied on structured responses that allowed for statistical analysis of observable social and administrative phenomena. Although preliminary discussions in earlier sections referenced qualitative insights from existing literature, the empirical component of this research is strictly quantitative. The survey approach enabled systematic collection of standardized data across different categories of respondents, thereby ensuring comparability and generalizability within the custodial environment.

The population and sample size of this study are the administrative staff of (KMSSC), welfare, and records staff from level (9-14), as well as serving inmates. Primary data are strategically source through the administration of structured, close-ended questionnaires.

As a survey instrument, questionnaire was used as a main source of primary data to potential respondents. The conventional staff of Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre which consists of administrative, welfare, record, custodial keeper departments of the custodial centre from level (9-14) are the sample size in this study hence Taro Yamane's formula was used to derive the sample size of 264 out of the total size of 4,796 workers. Purposive sampling was deployed to determine the sample size because it is selective or subjective in nature.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions and percentages were used to summarize respondent characteristics and programme assessments. Inferential analysis, including correlation analysis, was employed to examine relationships between correctional programme participation and perceived reformatory outcomes. The statistical analysis enabled objective interpretation of patterns and trends relevant to correctional effectiveness.

Ethical Considerations

Given the involvement of inmates and correctional personnel, strict ethical standards were maintained. Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the appropriate correctional authorities at KMSCC. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the purpose of the study prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed, and no identifying information was recorded. Respondents were also assured that participation or non-participation would not affect their institutional status or privileges.

Table 4.1: Showing Site for the Population of the Study.

S/N	Institutions/Organization	Staff Strength	Location
1	Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre	4,796	Kaduna

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The mathematical and statistical formula developed by Taro Yamane (1967) to determine sample size base on the population under study is presented below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n is the required sample size from the study population.

$$N = 4,796$$

$$1 = \text{Constant}$$

$$e = 0.05 \text{ which is the level of significance or sampling error (+ -5\%)}$$

Solution:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{4796}{1 + 4796(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{4796}{1 + 4796(0.0025)}$$

$$\frac{4796}{1 + 11.992} =$$

$$\frac{4796}{12.992} = 363.150246$$

$$363$$

$$n = 363$$

However, the final sample size utilised for analysis was 264 respondents. This adjustment was not a statistical alteration of the Yamane formula but resulted from field-based and institutional constraints associated with correctional research. Access to respondents within custodial environments is typically regulated by administrative approvals, security protocols, inmate eligibility requirements, and voluntary participation considerations. Consequently, only respondents who met inclusion criteria and provided informed consent during the data collection period were included in the final dataset.

Furthermore, methodological literature recognises that achieved sample sizes in institutional and security-sensitive settings may differ from statistically estimated samples due to restricted accessibility and non-response factors. The achieved sample of 264 respondents remains adequate for survey-based analysis because it exceeds the minimum threshold required for descriptive statistical analysis and maintains sufficient representation of the study population to support valid inferences.

Table 4.2 Response Rate to Questionnaire

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentages
Copies of questionnaire administered	264	100%
Copies of questionnaire returned	251	95.0%
Copies of questionnaire not returned/invalid	13	0.49%

The above table 4.2 above indicates that out of 264 questionnaire, 251 (95%) were returned while 13 (0.49%) were invalid. This shows that the respondents dedicated their time in assisting the researcher in filling the questionnaire

Demographic characteristic

This section contains results on socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. These characteristics include gender, age and occupation of the respondent.

Table 4.3: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demography	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	214	91.2
	Female	50	19
	Total	264	100
Age	18-30 years	168	63.6
	31-40 years	75	28.4
	41-50 years	21	0.97

	Total	264	100
Occupation	Student	0 000	
	Public Servants	180	68.1
	Inmates	84	31.8
	Total	264	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.3 above shows gender of the respondents which shows 91.2% male, with the bulk of respondents while female respondent is 19%. The age distribution of the in this study. One significant factor in assessing respondent capacity is age. As can be seen in Figure 4.1, 63.6% of respondents said they were in the 18–30 age range, while 28.4% of respondents said they were in the 31–40 age group. 0.97% of the population was between the ages of 41 and 50 years hence figure 4.1 results indicate that respondents were primarily in the 18–30 age range.

The respondents were asked to indicate their occupation. 68.1% indicated that they are public servants. Another 31.8% are inmates with little or no occupation hence occupation tested knowledge of the respondents about satisfaction.

Table 4.4 Data presentation and Analysis

Correlation	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Why people break the law	Drug Addiction/ Lost of Job	215/49	81.4%/18.5%
If Government policies lead people to crime	Yes /No	216/48	81.8%/18.1
What are the policies that lead people to crime	Poor employment opportunities for Youth/corruption and embezzlement	242/22	91.6%/0.83
Opinions about Nigerian Correctional Service	Positive/Negative	48/216	18%/82%

If Nigerian Correctional facilities are reformatory institutions for inmates	Yes/NO	21/243	0.79%/92%
If not, why	Lack of adequate facility/Poor food ration	196/68	74.2%/25.7%
Are inmates treated well in correctional facilities in Nigeria	Yes/No	0/264	0%/100%
If not, why	Lack of post -prison rehabilitation programs/Poor infrastructural facility	187/77	71%/29.1%
Total		264	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis of the data presented in Table 4.4 reveals several critical insights into the perceptions of the study population regarding crime causation and the effectiveness of Nigerian correctional facilities. In column 1, a significant majority of respondents (215, 81.4%) identified drug addiction as the primary reason individuals break the law, while a smaller proportion (49, 18.5%) cited loss of employment. This suggests that substance abuse is perceived as a dominant social factor driving criminal behaviour, particularly among youth, highlighting the need for targeted interventions addressing addiction.

Column 2 shows that 216 respondents (81.8%) believe that government policies contribute to crime, compared to 48 (18.1%) who disagreed. This finding indicates a widespread perception that structural and policy-related factors, such as economic and social marginalisation, play a substantial role in influencing criminal behaviour.

In column 3, an overwhelming 242 respondents (91.6%) identified poor employment opportunities for youths as a key driver of criminal activity, whereas only 22 respondents (8.3%) attributed crime to corruption and embezzlement. This reinforces the view that socioeconomic

deprivation and lack of viable livelihoods are central to understanding criminality in Nigeria, reflecting the intersection between structural inequality and youth offending.

Column 4 highlights perceptions of correctional institutions, where 216 respondents (82%) expressed a negative view of Nigerian correctional facilities, with only 48 (18%) indicating a positive perception. This demonstrates a prevailing sentiment of dissatisfaction with the custodial system, suggesting that facilities are largely perceived as punitive rather than reformative.

Similarly, column 5 shows that 243 respondents (92%) do not view Nigerian correctional facilities as reformatory, compared to 21 respondents (8%) who believe otherwise. Respondents cited dilapidated infrastructure and inadequate reformatory programmes as factors limiting the rehabilitative capacity of these institutions, indicating a significant gap between policy objectives and operational realities.

Column 6 identifies specific institutional challenges, with 196 respondents (74.2%) highlighting inadequate facilities as the main obstacle to achieving the rehabilitative mandate of the Nigerian Correctional Service, compared to 68 respondents (25.7%) who cited poor food rationing. This underscores that infrastructural deficits are a critical impediment to effective inmate rehabilitation.

Column 7 reveals that all respondents (264, 100%) are aware of the poor treatment of inmates, including unsanitary conditions and dilapidated facilities, indicating a uniform recognition of systemic deficiencies within correctional centres.

Finally, column 8 indicates that 187 respondents (71%) perceive the absence of structured post-prison rehabilitative programmes as the primary reason inmates fail to reintegrate successfully, while 77 respondents (29.1%) attribute the failure to poor infrastructure. This finding highlights that post-custodial support is a significant determinant of successful rehabilitation, and the lack thereof perpetuates cycles of recidivism.

Collectively, these results suggest that while societal and structural factors contribute to criminal behaviour, the effectiveness of the Nigerian Correctional Service is constrained by inadequate facilities, insufficient reformatory programmes, and the absence of post-release rehabilitation, pointing to an urgent need for comprehensive reforms targeting both institutional capacity and socio-economic support mechanisms.

Discussion of Finding

This study examined the applicability of correctional programmes and their reformative outcomes within the Nigerian Correctional Service, with particular reference to the Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre (KMSSC). The findings indicate that although the Nigerian Correctional Service is institutionally mandated to ensure the security, reformation, rehabilitation, and reintegration of inmates, the practical realisation of these objectives remains limited. From the standpoint of Reformatory Theory, punishment is expected to function as a mechanism for behavioural transformation rather than mere confinement. However, the results suggest a disjunction between the reform-oriented philosophy embedded in policy frameworks,

particularly the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019, and the realities of institutional practice. This gap demonstrates that while the legal framework reflects reformative ideals, implementation challenges prevent the correctional system from fully achieving its rehabilitative mandate.

The study further reveals that correctional programmes available to inmates are largely inadequate and have not produced the expected reformative outcomes. Reformative Theory posits that criminal behaviour is shaped by social, economic, psychological, and educational deficiencies, which correctional institutions must address through structured interventions such as vocational training, education, counselling, and skills acquisition. The inadequacy of infrastructural facilities, limited training equipment, and constrained institutional resources identified in this study undermines these theoretical expectations. When rehabilitation programmes operate below optimal capacity, the prison environment risks reverting to a custodial or punitive model rather than serving as a transformative institution envisioned by reformative theorists. Consequently, the limited effectiveness of existing programmes reflects a structural failure to operationalise the core assumptions of Reformative Theory within the Nigerian correctional context.

Furthermore, the absence of comprehensive post-release rehabilitation programmes significantly undermines reintegration efforts, which constitute a central pillar of Reformative Theory. The theory emphasizes continuity between incarceration and societal reintegration, arguing that rehabilitation must extend beyond confinement to include structured aftercare support. The findings indicate that inmates often lack vocational placement opportunities, psychological follow-up, and community reintegration mechanisms after release. This absence weakens the rehabilitative gains achieved during incarceration and increases vulnerability to recidivism. From a reformative perspective, rehabilitation is incomplete without sustained social reintegration; therefore, the lack of post-custodial support represents a critical theoretical and practical deficiency.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that while Nigeria's correctional policies formally align with Reformative Theory, the institutional environment necessary for effective rehabilitation remains insufficiently developed. The persistence of infrastructural deficits, limited programme capacity, and weak reintegration frameworks suggests that reformative justice in practice remains aspirational rather than fully institutionalised. The study therefore reinforces the reformative theoretical argument that successful correctional outcomes depend not only on legislative reforms but also on adequate resources, institutional commitment, and continuous rehabilitation processes extending beyond imprisonment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the effectiveness of correctional programmes and their reformative outcomes within the Nigerian Correctional Service, using the Kaduna Medium Security Custodial Centre (KMSCC) as a case study. The central argument advanced in this paper is that although Nigeria's correctional framework increasingly reflects reform-oriented penal philosophy, particularly following the enactment of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019, the practical implementation of rehabilitation programmes remains insufficient to produce meaningful reformative outcomes among inmates. The findings demonstrate that the

existence of correctional programmes alone does not guarantee behavioural transformation; rather, the effectiveness of reformatory justice depends on the quality, scope, institutional support, and continuity of rehabilitation interventions.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to Reformatory Theory by demonstrating the gap between normative penal ideals and institutional realities in developing correctional systems. While reformatory theory conceptualises incarceration as a process of behavioural transformation through education, skill acquisition, counselling, and reintegration support, the empirical evidence from KMSSC shows that limited infrastructure, inadequate programme diversity, and weak post-release mechanisms constrain the achievement of these objectives. The study therefore reinforces the theoretical argument that rehabilitation requires not only policy commitment but also sustained institutional capacity and resource investment.

The policy implications of these findings are significant. Correctional reforms in Nigeria must move beyond legislative restructuring toward evidence-based programme design and implementation. Correctional programmes should be diversified and grounded in empirically validated rehabilitation models capable of addressing the varied social, psychological, and economic needs of inmates. Expanding vocational, educational, and psychosocial interventions beyond traditional activities is necessary to enhance reintegration prospects and reduce recidivism. In addition, improved government funding, alongside structured partnerships with civil society organisations and non-governmental actors, is essential for providing adequate facilities, training resources, and post-release support systems that sustain rehabilitation beyond incarceration.

Beyond the Nigerian context, this study highlights broader implications for correctional administration in emerging justice systems, where reformatory policies often outpace institutional capacity. The findings suggest that successful correctional reform requires alignment between penal philosophy, operational structures, and reintegration frameworks.

Future research should adopt longitudinal and mixed-method approaches to examine post-release outcomes of former inmates and assess the long-term effectiveness of specific rehabilitation programmes across multiple custodial centres. Comparative studies across regions and institutional categories would further deepen understanding of how structural conditions influence reformatory outcomes within correctional systems. In sum, the study concludes that the challenge facing correctional administration in Nigeria is not the absence of reformatory ideals but the limited institutionalisation of rehabilitation practices necessary to translate policy intentions into measurable social transformation.

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