Investigation of Sustainability and Profitability of Correctional Centers in Nigeria

Olutope Adeniyi Adewole, Ayokunle A Akinmoladun, Wemimo Iyetunde Omoniyi

Caleb university, Imota, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The Nigerian Correctional Service Act (2019) envisions a rehabilitative system, but the operational realities are defined by overcrowding, underfunding, and systemic inefficiencies. This systematic review explores how sustainability and profitability are integrated in this difficult environment and reconceptualizes what is meant by profit to encompass economic returns and the social value of less recidivism. In a review of 58 studies, the research found that there were critical obstacles such as catastrophic overcrowding, deteriorated infrastructure, and a fundamental disconnect between policy and practise in rehabilitation, which resulted in recidivism rates as high as 75%. Nonetheless, the review also singles out the possible international models such as vocational industries, prison agricultural work, and social enterprises, which provide access to cost reduction, internal revenue streams and effective reintegration of inmates. The main contribution of the study is the original hybrid framework that suggests three synergistic pillars, namely: (1) the establishment of the decongestion base through non-custodial actions; (2) the creation of market-aligned, Sustainable Enterprise Zones of agribusiness, manufacturing and digital services; and, (3) the creation of an integrated circuit of reintegration to secure post release support. The paper finds that the conversion of the Nigeria correctional facilities into a sustainable institution depends on addressing the challenge of governance, establishment of economic value, and development of an indestructible connection with community integration. This study gives a critical roadmap to policymakers and demonstrates the need to conduct pilot studies to empirically test the feasibility and effects of the proposed framework.

Keywords: Sustainability, Profitability, Correctional Centers, Nigeria, Rehabilitation. **Word Count:** 6,052

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian penal system has witnessed a major legislative change with the introduction of the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) Act, 2019 which supersedes the Prisons Act of 2004. This landmark legislation represents a paradigm shift from a purely punitive model to one that prioritizes rehabilitation, reformation, and successful reintegration of offenders into society (Longpoe & Longpoe, 2021). However, there is a deep division between this progressive legal framework and the realities of operation in the nation's correctional facilities.

The current status of correctional centers in Nigeria is broadly classified as critical, with overcrowding being a major issue (Ikpa, 2020; Joseph et al., 2021; Peter et al., 2024). Facilities designed for a specific capacity are being populated by groups several times larger than their capacity. For instance, according to the study by Longpoe & Longpoe (2021), the number of prison facilities built in 1955 to house 800 inmates is currently holding about 3,113 inmates as of December 3 2019 with this prison population increasing drastically year by year. This extreme congestion has grave repercussions, directly compromising access to essential services like adequate nutrition, healthcare and sanitation, and thus failing to meet both national welfare standards, and international standards like the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Mandela Rules) (Joseph et al., 2021; Popoola et al., 2023). Consequently, the fundamental rehabilitative mandate of the NCoS Act is made challenging, as overcrowding and inadequate funding take priority from educational and vocational training to basic, and often failing, custodial management (Abrifor et al., 2023).

This situation brings about a critical analysis of whether the correctional centers in Nigeria can transform into institutions that are both sustainable and profitable without infringing on the welfare and rights of the inmates.

In this context, "sustainability" has come to mean more than environmental concerns and includes economic viability and long-term social value, including successful reintegration, including reduction of recidivism. "Profitability" is also expanded from a narrow focus on financial benefit to also encompass the considerable social and economic returns that accrue from reducing rates of re-offending and minimizing the costs of imprisonment over the long-term (Davis et al., 2023). International models offer compelling evidence that this dual objective is attainable. Initiatives such as the "Green Prisons" model in United States, the United Kingdom and Sri Lanka demonstrate how sustainable practices can generate cost savings and create meaningful training opportunities (Numa & Oyeleke, 2023). Furthermore, educational programs within prisons have been shown to yield a high return on investment; for example, in the United States, every dollar spent on prison education saves four to five dollars in re-incarceration costs, illustrating a powerful form of social profitability (Davis et al., 2023). Therefore, this systematic literature review is guided by the following research questions:

i. What international and theoretical models successfully integrate sustainability and profitability within correctional services? ii. What is the current capacity of Nigerian correctional centers to adopt such models, given their extant challenges?

iii. What are the primary ethical and governance considerations in implementing profit-generating activities in a correctional environment? iv. What framework can be proposed to guide the development of sustainable and profitable correctional practices in Nigeria?

The purpose of this review is to systematically investigate these questions by synthesizing global evidence and contextualizing it within Nigeria's unique socio-economic and governance landscape. This paper aims to move beyond cataloging problems and toward proposing a viable, ethically-grounded framework for transforming Nigeria's correctional system into one that is truly corrective, sustainable, and beneficial to society at large. This aim will be achieved by critically analyzing models such as vocational industries, correctional agriculture, and social enterprises.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualizing Sustainability and Profitability in Correctional Systems

Beyond conventional definitions of concepts in the correctional system, the concept of sustainability is best conceptualized within the concept of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL), which has economic, environmental and social dimensions (Elkington, 1997). Economically it denotes policies to minimize the operational cost and generate internal revenue so as to lessen the fiscal load on the state. Environmentally, it means initiatives such as conserving resources, reducing waste, and using green technologies. Socially, and possibly most importantly, sustainability relates to the long-term successful reintegration of offenders that will minimize recidivism and enhance community safety (Ayuk et al., 2023). Practices like internal agriculture or manufacturing not only reduce costs, but they also contribute as pillars for this social sustainability by giving inmates something to do and learn, giving them purpose (A.R.C. Foundation, 2019).

Concurrently, profitability in corrections must be distinguished from crass commercial gain. It is reconceptualized as the production of economic and social value. Direct financial returns from the sale of goods or services made in correctional industries is one aspect (Brobbey, 2015). However, the more important "profit" is social, i.e. the quantifiable reduction in recidivism rates and the corresponding societal costs. As Gisler et al. (2018) point out, the inmates who take part in vocational training are less likely to reoffend which translates to lesser cost for the criminal justice system and a more productive citizenry. This aligns with cost-benefit analyses, such as those from the United States, indicating that every dollar invested in prison education saves four to five dollars in re-incarceration costs, representing a substantial social return on investment (Davis et al., 2023). Therefore, a truly sustainable correctional model empowers inmates with professional skills, reduces the net operational costs, and rigorously follows the international human rights (Muasya, 2023).

The Nigerian Correctional Service Act (2019) sets a strong legal framework for such integrated approach with a specific provision for the provision of opportunities for inmate education, vocational training, and modern agriculture practices. However, a gap lies between the intent of the legislature and the reality of

implementation. As Oroleye (2018b) notes, many facilities do not have the basic infrastructure to implement these mandates, much less the advanced workshops or farms to make enterprises profitable, raising the question of how correctional centers could possibly expect to be viable in Nigeria.

The Current State of Nigerian Correctional Centers

The operational environment of Nigerian correctional centers is generally dominated by crises that are more systemic in nature that affect the pursuit of sustainability or profitability directly. The most widespread problem is severe overcrowding. Historical data shows that as far back as the 1990s the system had 54,000 against a designed capacity of 31,000 (Ssanyu, 2024). Despite provisions in the NCoS Act (2019), which were meant to curb this, the application is still uneven, and facilities are still operating far beyond their limits (Abba, 2016). This congestion has a catastrophic effect on the living conditions, with reports of prisoners sleeping on the floors with inadequate nutrition and healthcare, thus failing to meet the UN's Standard Minimum Rules (the Mandela Rules) (Abrifor et al., 2023).

While some scholars like Aliyu (2018) have suggested that overcrowding can lead to informal social cohesion and resilience among the inmates, the overwhelming consensus is that it leads to debilitating effects. Empirical studies, one of which was carried out at Ado-Ekiti Correctional Center, reported that 71% of staff and inmates said that essential services were critically strained as a result of overcrowding (Ebue & Ezegbe, 2015). The finding of Ebue & Ezegbe (2015) has been confirmed by research such as that of Essoh, Asangausung & Peter (2025) in Akwa Ibom State and Iyaomolere (2025) in Lagos state. In addition, practices such as sharing of drugs by inmates or pooling of food resources, as conceded by Ikoh (2021) are not signs of robust systems but rather desperate coping mechanisms that increase health risks and inefficiencies in the system (Joseph et al., 2021). Ultimately, overcrowding speeds up the decline of infrastructure, raises costs per inmate, and redirects limited resources to other areas rather than rehabilitation programs, which makes it almost impossible to prioritize sustainability (Mbang et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the rehabilitation programs have been observed to be chronically underfunded and ineffective (Makinde, 2019; Essoh, Asangausung & Peter, 2025). Although the NCoS Act encourages agriculture and vocational training, the infrastructure is mostly inadequate. Prison farms, which are usually a throwback to the colonial period, are often more focused on subsistence-level production of staple crops such as rice and cassava, with few opportunities to produce a surplus for the market (Ohazulike & Chikwendu, 2023). Critical gaps in post-release support (i.e., job placement and reintegration services) negate the potential benefits of any skills acquired in custody (Olabamiji, 2025). These initiatives are further hampered by a chronic lack of funds for functioning and inadequate tools among poor storage facilities, identified in the studies of prisons in Enugu and Edo states (Uddin et al., 2020). Consequently, the system currently exists in a state of consumption; using more resources than it produces, and failing to break the cycle of recidivism (Yishau, 2024).

International Models Integrating Sustainability and Profitability

Globally, there are several working models on how to harmonize sustainability objectives with profitability, both economic and social. These models provide valuable lessons that can be learned in a process of contextual adaptation in Nigeria. For example, vocational training and prison industries are some of the most established approaches (Rosli, Anuar & Hamzah, 2021). These programs have inmates engage in productive work, manufacturing products from furniture to textiles that are either for use by the state or sale to the public. In the United States, the federal prison industry program has raised a lot of revenue while giving inmates experience in working (Brobbey, 2015). More importantly, the recidivism reduction impact is well-documented; inmates that participate in such programs have significantly lower rates of re-offending and higher post-release employment prospects (Boateng et al., 2025). Similarly, social enterprise initiatives, such as the United Kingdom's "Fine Cell Work", which offers inmates a chance to take on meaningful and skilled labor such as embroidery and needlework, build self-esteem, independence, and a small income, which can help to enhance their chances of successful reintegration (Day et al., 2017).

Agricultural projects are also another possible model, especially for agrarian economies such as Nigeria. With agricultural projects, the well-managed prison farms can greatly lower the costs associated with food procurement and offer useful vocational training while generating surplus that can be sold (Godwin et al.,

2025). International examples vary from the familiar farming practices to novel approaches such as hydroponics that are being implemented in countries ranging from Canada to Kenya and Rwanda (Fernando, 2023; Godwin et al., 2025). These projects prove that agriculture can achieve cost savings while at the same time providing inmates with marketable skills. The underutilization of this potential in Nigeria, as mentioned by Uddin et al. (2020), indicates a key area of investment and reform.

Beyond agricultural projects, social enterprise models are a more innovative approach and blend social missions with market based strategies. These types of enterprises, which are sometimes carried out in partnership with NGOs or the private sector, engage in enterprises with inmates or ex-offenders that cater to community needs (Gibbon & Rutter, 2022). They are aimed at being commercially sustainable while offering transformational employment and skill development (Ismail & Johnson, 2019). In Nigeria, organizations such as "Hope Behind Bars Africa" are piloting such models. The strength of social enterprises is that they are able to work with agility, which directly connects the labor of inmates to market demands and generates a way of thinking that is entrepreneurial and highly relevant to the Nigerian economic context (Van der Wal, 2021).

Lastly, restorative justice and non-custodial measures are essential to sustainable correctional systems. By redirecting low-risk offenders from incarceration with conditions that require conditional release, community service, and probation, these approaches provide a direct solution for overcrowding by addressing its underlying cause (Widodo & Kasih, 2025). The NCoS Act (2019) reflects these alternatives, which are in line with international best practices. While promising, their success in Nigeria depends on strong governance and monitoring systems to avoid abuse and ensure compliance (Izevbuwa et al., 2023).

The Nigerian Ethical and Governance Considerations

The pursuit of profit and sustainability in a carceral setting is fraught with profound ethical considerations. The primary risk being the exploitation of inmate labor. Scholars like Montes (2020) warn that viewing corrections through an economic lens can undermine justice, evoking historical parallels with exploitative labor systems. The NCoS Act (2019) mitigates this by explicitly stating that inmate work must be for rehabilitation, not "industrial reward." However, activists caution that without fair wages, transparent accounting, and independent oversight, even voluntary work can become exploitative, with benefits accruing to the administration rather than the inmates (Jayne-Oswald, 2025).

These ethical risks are magnified by the governance context in Nigeria, which is often characterized by corruption and a lack of transparency (Lacity et al., 2015). Without strong accountability mechanisms, revenues generated from prison industries may be misappropriated rather than reinvested into improving inmate welfare and programs. Furthermore, there is a tension in society with respect to the allocation of resources; in a nation struggling with high youth unemployment, public opinion may be opposed to perceived preferential treatment for offenders (Turvencic, 2017). Therefore, any model of sustainability should be designed with unchangeable ethical guarantees such as fair compensation, voluntary participation, reinvestment of proceeds into rehabilitation services, and compatibility with international human rights instruments such as the Mandela Rules (Redo & Sawicki, 2021). This ensures that the dignity and rights of inmates remain paramount and that correctional centers are truly institutions of reformation rather than exploitation.

Empirical Review and Research Gaps

Empirical inquiries have consistently and rigorously recorded the problem of overcrowding and its debilitating effects. A survey conducted in Ado-Ekiti Correctional Center by Olabamiji (2025) gives granular evidence, showing how the capacity of this facility is grossly violated, causing strain on resources, healthcare and sanitation, which ultimately results in the failure of the rehabilitation programs. This is supported by a mixed methods study in Kwara State by Salawu & Alfakoro (2024), which attributes the increase in awaiting trial inmates directly to overstretching of physical infrastructure and security issues such as prison breaks. The methods of these studies, the majority of which were surveys, questionnaires and interviews, manage to capture the lived reality of overcrowding but are frequently confined to a specific geographical location, making national assessment impossible.

Further empirical work has dissected the legal and institutional frameworks of the system. The comparative legal analysis by Danjuma et al. (2018) confirms the theoretical compatibility of laws in Nigeria with international standards such as the Mandela rules in respect of Prison Vocational Labor (PVL). Similarly, Kekere (2016) describes the provisions under the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) 2015 whereby decongestion is provided for. However, these studies are largely doctrinal and policy analyses that do not go beyond the empirical measurement of the implementation gap or the tangible impact of these legal provisions on recidivism rates or inmate skill acquisition.

Beyond the problem of overcrowding, empirical research has revealed other important, under-serviced areas. Ogunlesi and Ogunwale (2018), through the review of extant structures, expose the profound neglect of correctional mental healthcare in understaffing, funds deficits, and ethical quagmires. On the other hand, the study of Odewole et al. (2021) on the financial sustainability of Nigerian public institutions, although the focus is on the health sector, offers a methodological blueprint and a sobering conclusion of great relevance to corrections, and that is, the dependency on central authority funding and the inability to generate adequate internal revenue. This finding is an indirect suggestion that correctional centers are likely to suffer from the same financial unsustainability, although no direct empirical study has confirmed this.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a systematic literature review methodology, designed to be transparent, reproducible, and comprehensive. The review was carried out in strict accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines in order to ensure that the review procedures were methodologically robust and to minimize bias.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria:

i. **Population**: Research studies targeted at correctional centers, prisons, inmates and ex-offenders in Nigeria. For comparative models, studies that were carried out in other countries were included.

ii. **Concept**: The central phenomena of interest were 'sustainability' (economic, environmental, social) and 'profitability' (both financial and social, e.g. recidivism reduction) within correctional settings. This included operational models such as vocational training, prison industries, agricultural projects, social enterprises and restorative justice programs.

iii. **Context**: Studies that were conducted in the context of the Nigerian criminal justice system or studies from a foreign context that offered transferable knowledge to the Nigerian context.

iv. **Study Types:** Empirical studies (quantitative studies, qualitative studies, mixed methods), peer reviewed journal articles, government reports, legal analyses and doctoral theses.

v. **Date of Publication**: The search was restricted to the literature between January 2010 and July 2025 in order to guarantee the consideration of recent developments, including the period after the passage of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act (2019).

Exclusion Criteria:

i. Studies that were not published in English language.

ii. Opinion pieces, editorials, non-research-based commentaries lacking empirical data or systematic analysis.

iii. Studies limited to the psychological profiling of offenders and had no linkage to correctional programs or system sustainability.

iv. Duplicate publications of the same study

Information Sources and Search Strategy

A comprehensive and systematic search was undertaken in the multiple electronic databases to capture a large breadth of relevant literature. The main databases were Google Scholar, JSTOR and African Journals Online (AJOL). To control for the possibility of publication bias, additional searches (supplementary searches) were conducted on the websites of governmental and organizational bodies, including the Nigerian Correctional Service and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The search strategy used a combination of keywords and boolean operators that was customized to the specific syntax of each database to be searched. The basic search string was constructed around four conceptual blocks:

i. **Location:** ("Nigeria" OR "Nigerian") ii. **Setting:** ("prison*" OR "correctional cent*" OR "correctional facilit*" OR "penal institution")

iii. **Intervention/Model:** ("sustainab*" OR "profitab*" OR "vocational training" OR "prison industri*" OR "prison farm" OR "agricultur*" OR "social enterprise" OR "restorative justice" OR "non-custodial")

iv. **Outcome:** ("rehabilitation" OR "recidivism" OR "reintegration" OR "overcrowding" OR "cost efficiency")

An example of the full search string used in Google Scholar is: ("Nigerian prisons" OR "Nigerian correctional services") AND ("sustainability" OR "profitability" OR "vocational training" OR "prison agriculture") AND ("rehabilitation" OR "recidivism"). The search started on October 9, 2025, and was updated periodically until the final analysis date of October 19, 2025.

Study Selection and Screening Process

The selection process for the studies was conducted using the PRISMA framework, through a multi-stage process of screening studies to ensure that they met the eligibility criteria. The process was managed with the use of a structured workflow. First off, the initial searches of the database turned up 2,348 records. An additional 42 records were found by manual search of reference lists and grey literature sources. After the removal of 618 duplicates, 1772 unique records were available for screening. Then the titles and abstracts of these 1,772 records were screened against the inclusion and exclusion criteria by the primary researcher. This process led to the exclusion of 1,542 records that were not relevant to the research questions.

For eligibility, the full texts of the remaining 230 articles were retrieved and underwent a stringent eligibility evaluation. At this stage, 172 studies were excluded with reasons, the commonest of which were the lack of empirical data, a focus outside the Nigerian context and without transferrable insights, or a major focus on pure criminological theory without program evaluation. A total of 58 studies were included, where all the eligibility criteria were met and these studies were included in the final qualitative synthesis. This process is shown in detail in the PRISMA flow diagram (see Appendix 1).

Data Extraction and Management

Data from the included 58 studies were extracted into a standardized pre-piloted data extraction form that was developed in Microsoft Excel. The form captured the following key information for each study, including bibliographic information, methodological characteristics, context, key findings and conclusions and recommendations (see Appendix 2).

Quality Assessment and Risk of Bias

The methodological quality of the included empirical studies was critically appraised using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), version 2018. The MMAT is intended for simultaneous appraisal of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies. Each study was evaluated according to 5 relevant criteria with respect to its methodology.

Scores were assigned as follows: 1 (Yes), 0.5 (Can't Tell) or 0 (No) for each criterion. Studies were not excluded according to quality scores to give a complete picture of the evidence available; however, the quality

rating was used to weigh the evidence during the synthesis phase. The quality of the evidence base as a whole was moderate. A significant proportion of studies used strong survey designs, but common limitations were lack of representativeness in the sampling, lack of adequate description of data collection instruments, and absence of consideration of researcher bias in qualitative research.

Data Synthesis and Analysis

Given the heterogeneity in the methodologies, interventions, and outcomes of the 58 studies included, a meta analysis was not possible. A thematic synthesis approach was used instead. This involved a three stage process, which was:

i.   **Free Line-by-Line Coding:** Findings and discussion sections of all included studies were systematically coded and key concepts and phrases were identified.

ii.   **Development of Descriptive Themes**: These initial codes were grouped into clusters based upon their similarities and relationships, forming descriptive themes summarizing the main findings across the literature (e.g., "Prevalence and Impact of Overcrowding", "Perceived Ineffectiveness of Vocational Training").

iii.   **Generation of Analytical Themes**: The descriptive themes were then analyzed and interpreted in relation to the research questions. This meant moving beyond the content of the primary studies to the formation of new interpretive constructs to put forward a coherent framework for understanding the integration of sustainability and profitability in the Nigerian corrections.

The synthesis was an iterative process, moving back and forth between the extracted data and the emerging themes to ensure they were grounded in the evidence. NVivo 12 software was used to facilitate the organization and management of the coding process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Nigerian Context

The overwhelming consensus across the empirical studies is that the current state of Nigerian correctional centers is one of systemic failure, creating an environment where sustainability and profitability are not only unattained but are actively precluded. The most pervasive and debilitating challenge in literature is the catastrophic overcrowding. From the Niger Delta Region, where prisons are "highly congested" with inmate numbers far exceeding actual capacity (Okiwe et al., 2020), to the Ado-Ekiti Correctional Center, where operations beyond intended capacity strain resources and increase risks to inmate health (Olabamiji, 2025), empirical evidence consistently emphasizes overcrowding in Nigerian correctional centers.

This is not a localized issue but a national crisis, with a study of the Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Center confirming it holds more inmates than its capacity, making inmate upkeep a "difficult task" (Ardo et al., 2020). The root causes are well-diagnosed, which is a dysfunctional criminal justice administration characterized by a high proportion of awaiting trial inmates (ATIs), abuse of arrest powers, and delayed judicial processes (Salawu & Alfakoro, 2024; Kekere, 2016; Umukoro & Kore-Okiti, 2023). This congestion has tangible, devastating consequences. It directly contributes to the "dehumanization" of the inmates as documented in Ilesa Prison, where conditions are "terrible" with overcrowded cells and inadequate sanitation (Adegbami & Uche, 2015).

The socio-psychological effects are severe, with the overwhelming presence of the Awaiting Trial Persons (ATPs) limiting reformation of the convicts and compromising their mental wellbeing (Osayi & Onuoha, 2023). Furthermore, it causes a public health crisis, leading to an increase of incidences of stress, violence, infectious diseases such as Malaria and skin diseases, and mental health problems such as depression among inmates (Olabamiji, 2025; Raphael & Ajah, 2019; Ogunlesi & Ogunwale, 2018). This environment of congestion and crisis is worsened by a chronic and debilitating lack of resources.

The empirical data highlights a tripartite failure, that is, inadequate financing, poor infrastructure, and shortage of qualified personnel. Study after study points to "inadequate funding" as a main obstacle, from

difficulties in prison farm management (Uddin et al., 2020) to the administration of the entire prison system (Onyekachi, 2016). This financial anemia is manifested in "deteriorating facilities," "insufficient training materials," and lack of rehabilitation equipment (Alamu & Makinde, 2019; Aliyu et al., 2017; Yecho, 2018). The situation is so bad that a study carried out on the welfare of prison staff from Oke Kura prison revealed that the prison failed to meet the basic standards of the U.N. Prison system with the use of bucket toilets at all times and the inmates were at risk of contracting very dangerous diseases (Aliyu, Mustaffa, & Nasir, 2016).

The human resource capacity is also crippled, with a noted "lack of qualified personnel" for rehabilitation programs to a general "low staff strength" that paralyzes operations (Alamu & Makinde, 2019; Uddin et al., 2020). The combination of these factors, overcrowding, underfunding, and poor infrastructure make the system fundamentally unsustainable. It runs in a perpetual state of consumption, wherein the primary goal is lost from rehabilitation to trying to maintain the offenders with the bare minimum, entirely failing in its mandate to reform and reintegrate the offenders. As Yecho (2018) conclusively argues, the prison system has failed to accomplish its foundational objectives that have evolved to become a "poverty of imprisonment" that has hardened rather than healed.

Aspiration vs. Reality for Rehabilitation Programs

The NCoS Act 2019 envisages a system that is centered on rehabilitation. However, the empirical evidence shows a deep abyss between this legislative aspiration and the operational reality. While different rehabilitation programs that include vocational training (carpentry, tailoring, welding), educational programs (adult literacy), and counselling are reported to exist in many facilities (Makinde & Olabode, 2020; Stephen & Dudafa, 2017; Uche et al., 2015), their effectiveness is widely contested and gravely hampered.

The sense of the success of these programs is so deeply fractured. For instance, in Enugu Prison, majority of the prison inmates viewed programs as only "fairly successful" (62.8%) and "not successful" (31.0%) (Uche et al., 2015), which was also echoed in Okaka Prison, where 32.1% of prison inmates found prisoner programs "not successful" (Stephen & Dudafa, 2017). This inmate-staff perception gap is critical; whilst inmates often perceive counselling as "largely ineffective" and express dissatisfaction with the quality of programs (Inimiesi, 2025), prison officials are more likely to perceive instructors as "very effective" (Nwune et al., 2018). This disconnect implies that programs are developed and tested in an institutional metric rather than the true transformation of inmates.

The fundamental failure of such programs is in their structural inadequacies and their detachment from success after release. A critical finding in several studies is the almost complete lack of post-release support and reintegration mechanisms. Research on prison farms noted that "no provisions" were made by management to support inmates upon release (Uddin, Igbokwe, & Olaolu, 2019). This lack of "aftercare services" and "followup" is repeatedly identified as one of the big drivers of recidivism (Ayuk, Omang, & Nwankwo, 2022; Otu, 2015). Without a bridge back into society, skills learned in custody are outdated, and ex-convicts meet a wall of "stigmatization," "discrimination," and "employability redundancy," which actively excludes them back into crime (Ashibi & Adams, 2023; Ilori, 2024). The result is a recidivism rate estimated between 60 and 80 percent for youth offenders within three years of release (Garba, 2025), which is an absolutely devastating indicator of systemic failure. The programs, however well-intentioned, are thus rendered symbolic and not substantive, thereby failing to reach the "social profitability" of reduced re-offending.

Viable Models for Integration

Despite the current state of things, literature also points to models that if adapted and implemented appropriately, could bring a blend of sustainability and profitability to Nigeria. These models fit in with reconceptualized definitions of profitability that take in both the economic returns and social value. First off, *Vocational Training and Prison Industries* is one of the most promising avenues. Empirical evidence validates their potential for empowerment and recidivism reduction.

In Gombe Central Correctional Center for example, vocational skills acquisition in carpentry and welding had a "significant and positive impact" on reformation (Inusa, 2022). Studies in Southwestern Nigeria also confirm the availability of such programs and their capacity to empower the inmates if they are appropriately

supported (Makinde, 2023). The model has an implicit component of economic sustainability, that is, the production of marketable products, such as furniture and textiles, to yield internal revenue, which lessens the operational cost burden on the state. However, the existing implementation is fraught with lack of modern tools, poor training materials, and lack of connection to market demands and restricts their rehabilitative as well as economic potential (Aliyu et al., 2017).

Agricultural projects too are in line with the previous literature, and are another highly viable model, especially in view of the agrarian economy in Nigeria. Evidence from prison farms in Enugu and Edo states indicates that prisoners prefer and actively engage in crop production generally with rice farming being the most preferred because of its reputation as a staple food that has an available market (Uddin, Igbokwe, & Olaolu, 2019). This suggests that there is some inherent alignment between inmate motivation and economic opportunity. A well managed, market-oriented prison agriculture system could simultaneously address a number of objectives like, the minimization the cost of feeding inmates (economic sustainability), providing workable vocational training that is relevant to the national economy (social profitability), and contributing to national food security. However, the present status of these farms is one of "inadequate funding," "lack of physical infrastructure," and "inadequacy of agricultural equipment" (Uddin, Igbokwe, & Chah, 2020), which has prevented them from growing beyond subsistence-level production.

Although not so well documented in the Nigerian empirical literature, social enterprise models provide a transformative pathway. These models, which engage inmates or ex-convicts in businesses that address community needs, combine social missions and market-based strategies. The results on the need for "collaborative efforts" with NGOs (Oyewo 2023) and the potential for "collective effort" in program implementation (Alkali 2023) are the foundation for this approach. A social enterprise could, for example, partner with local tech companies to offer in-demand skills such as coding, which will directly connect rehabilitation to market viability. The agility of such enterprises would be able to circumvent bureaucratic inertia and establish a direct pipeline from inmate training to post-release employment, closing the critical gap in reintegration.

Finally, *Restorative Justice and Non-Custodial Measures* are not just for profit generation in a financial sense but are perhaps the most important in order to achieve overall system sustainability. The empirical literature is very much in favor of these alternatives, such as probation, parole, and community service as a "panacea" to prison congestion (Ogwezzy, Adebayo, & Kekere, 2016; Kpae, 2020). In that, by redirecting low-risk offenders from the penal system, these measures are directly targeting the cause of overcrowding, thereby freeing up limited resources that could instead be redistributed to make custodial centers more sustainable and their rehabilitation programs more effective. The NCoS Act 2019 gives us the legal framework for this; it is its implementation that is failing because of "lack of will" by the government and stakeholders (Umukoro and KoreOkiti, 2023).

Navigating the Perils of Profit

The pursuit of profitability in a carceral setting is a moral minefield, and the literature highlights critical ethical and governance considerations that must be front and center in any reform agenda. The primary ethical risk is the exploitation of inmate labor. The specter of prisons becoming profit-centric institutions raises legitimate concerns about the normalization of exploitative practices, echoing colonial legacies of forced labor. The empirical studies, while not directly documenting widespread exploitation, highlight conditions that would facilitate it: a lack of transparency, poor accountability, and the desperate vulnerability of the inmate population. The recommendation for "public supervision" and "labor guarantees" (Guido, 2024) is therefore not merely academic but a practical necessity.

The single greatest impediment to ethical and effective implementation, however, is the governance deficit that is characterized by corruption and lack of accountability. A study carried out in Cross River state specifically identified "corruption" as a significant factor impeding the treatment of offenders (Predictors Hampering Treatment, 2023). In Kwara State, the problem of corruption and favoritism were mentioned as the main challenges within facilities (Alfakoro & Olalekan, 2025). In a system where resources for basic welfare are mismanaged (Aliyu, Mustaffa, & Nasir, 2016), the possibility of revenues generated from prison industries being misappropriated, instead of being reinvested into inmate welfare and improvement of programs, is exceptionally high. This sets up a perverse incentive where the economic activities of inmates could be used

to benefit corrupt officials without any rehabilitative benefit, thus destroying the entire ethical basis of the model. Therefore, any framework for sustainable and profitable corrections must be established on an unpredictable basis of ethical safeguards and effective governance. This includes:

i.   **Fair Compensation and Voluntary Participation**: Inmate work must be voluntary and fairly compensated, consistent with international standards of labor and the rehabilitative, rather than punitive, purpose of work.

ii.   **Financial Transparency and Reinvestment:** A transparent financial accounting mechanism, possibly with independent oversight, should be provided to ensure the ring-fencing of all profits and their reinvestment in the correctional system - through better living conditions, rehabilitation programs, and post-release support funding.

iii.   **Alignment with Rehabilitation**: All profit-making activity should be clearly tied to some rehabilitative objective and give the inmates market-relevant skills and certifications that hold real value when they are released back into society.

A Proposed Hybrid Framework for Sustainable and Profitable Corrections in Nigeria

By synthesizing the results and discussions that are presented above, it is clear that a sustainable way ahead necessitates a multifaceted, integrated framework that tackles the fundamental reasons for failure while simultaneously capitalizing on the opportunities that have been discovered. Rather than being a single model, this framework is a collaborative ecosystem that is comprised of numerous improvements.

Pillar 1: Systemic Decongesting and Governance Reform.

Before any model of sustainability can take root, the system must be pulled out of its state of collapse. This requires an uncompromising concentration on implementing the existing legal provisions for decongesting. The ACJA 2015 and NCoS Act 2019 need to be activated with political will. This includes the aggressive use of noncustodial measures such as parole and probation for low-risk offenders (Kpae, 2020), setting up special courts for speedy trial of ATIs (Salawu & Alfakoro, 2024), and possibly the executive prerogative of pardon for minor offenders who have been pending trial for a long time. At the same time, it is absolutely necessary to completely revamp the government systems. This entails combating corruption by means of independent audits, increasing openness in the budgeting process, and professionalizing the penal service by providing workers with ongoing training and enhanced welfare benefits in order to diminish perverse incentives.

Pillar 2: Market Aligned Sustainable Enterprise Zones

Within decongested and better managed facilities, the system can create "Sustainable Enterprise Zones" that are focused on specific, high potential sectors. These would not be the ad-hoc underfunded workshops of the past, but properly capitalized and professionally managed units.

i.   **Agribusiness Zones:** Leveraging the proven interest of prisoners and the agricultural potential of Nigeria, these Agribusiness Zones would transcend subsistence farming to include the entire agribusiness value chains, from the cultivation of crops and raising of animals to processing, packaging and marketing. Surplus produce would be sold to offset operational costs, with a portion of profits going into an inmate welfare and post-release fund.

ii.   **Vocational and Manufacturing Zones:** Should be equipped with modern tools and attached to the market demands. Employability would be guaranteed here by training certified by national bodies such as Industrial Training Fund (ITF). Production could vary from furniture and garments for government institutions to the assembly of low-tech consumer goods to provide a tangible source of revenue.

iii.   **Digital and Service Enterprise Zones**: In partnership with NGOs and private tech companies, these zones would offer training in high-demand digital skills (coding, data entry, graphic design). Inmates could undertake outsourced projects, providing them with a portfolio and work experience that is highly relevant in the modern Nigerian economy.

Pillar 3: Integrated Reintegration & Social Profitability Circuit.

This is the component that will ensure economic activities translate into social profit and reduced recidivism. It involves creating a seamless circuit from incarceration to community. Upon entry, inmates would be assessed and assigned to an enterprise zone based on their aptitude and market analysis. Throughout their term, they would not only work but also receive life skills and counselling tailored to the challenges of reintegration (Ayuk, Omang, & Nwankwo, 2022). Upon release, a dedicated reintegration unit, potentially in partnership with NGOs, would provide transitional housing, job placement services in conjunction with the skills gained, and mentorship to navigate stigma. The "good conduct certificate" required under the NCoS Act would be formally linked to the skills certification offered from the enterprise zones, providing employers with a physical record of the capabilities of an ex-inmate.

This hybrid framework assumes that sustainability and profitability are not possible through siloed interventions. Only by at once tackling governance (to have a conducive environment), market-aligned economic models (to create value), and an unbreakable connection with reintegration (to ensure social profit) will the Nigerian correctional system be turned from a national liability into an engine of rehabilitation, productivity and sustainable social development.

CONCLUSION

This systematic review aimed to move beyond cataloging problems and toward proposing a viable, ethically grounded framework for transforming Nigeria's correctional system into one that is truly corrective, sustainable, and beneficial to society at large. The study successfully identified viable international models, critically assessed Nigeria's incapacitating challenges, delineated the critical ethical pitfalls, and proposed an original, hybrid framework for transformation. The unique contribution of the study is this integrated framework, which assumes that the goals of sustainability and profitability are interdependent and can only be achieved by simultaneous reform along three pillars - systemic decongestion and governance, market-aligned enterprise zones, and a robust reintegration circuit.

The conclusion is that the present condition of corrections in Nigeria is fundamentally unsustainable, functioning as an expensive, consumption-based, crime-perpetuating system of overcrowding, underfunding and ineffective rehabilitation. However, this review shows that a transition is possible. Therefore, by adopting the hybrid framework that has been proposed and which strategically links decongestions efforts with establishing agribusiness, vocational and digital enterprises all cemented by post-release support, it is possible for the system to evolve. It can go from being a national liability to being a center of rehabilitation, bringing not only economic value but also the immeasurable social profit of reduced recidivism. For this transformation to take place, however, future research needs to go beyond diagnosis to action. Pilot studies are urgently required to empirically test the components of the framework, undertake cost-benefit analyses of the enterprise zones, and develop sound metrics for measuring social return on investment in the Nigerian context.

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APPENDIX Appendix 1: PRISMA Flow Chart
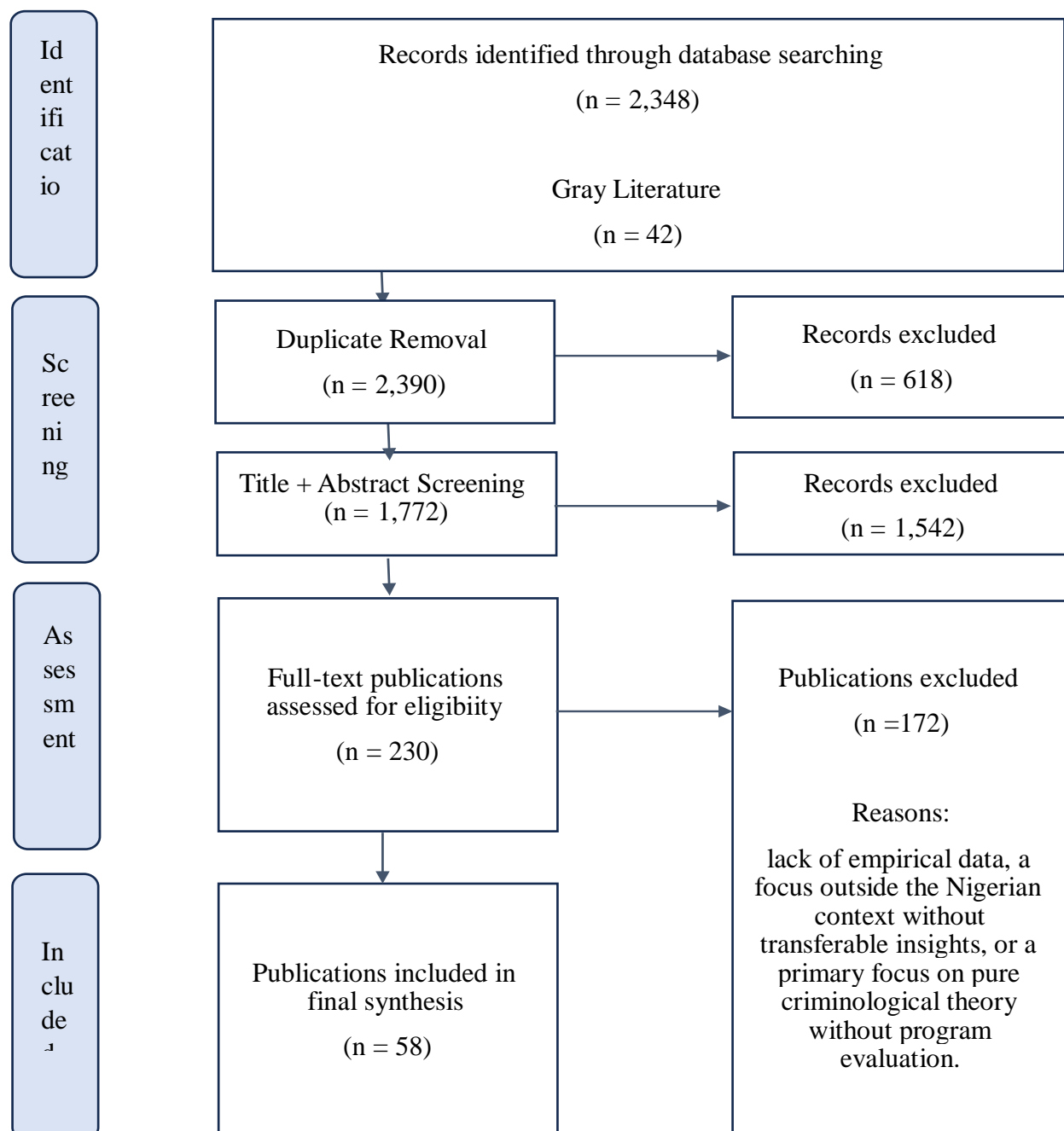
Appendix 2: Summary of Included Studies on Nigerian Correctional System

Bibliographic Details	Methodological Characteristics	Context		Key Findings	CONCLUSIONs & Recommendations
Olabamiji (2025). *Prison Overcrowding in the Nigerian Correctional System...* Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.	**Design:** Survey Research. **Data Collection:** Questionnaires (staff & inmates).	**Location:** Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. **Facility:** Ado-Ekiti Correctional Center.	– – –	Center operates beyond capacity. Overcrowding strains resources, negatively impacts healthcare, sanitation, and rehabilitation. Leads to increased stress, violence, and infectious diseases.	Overcrowding critically undermines rehabilitatio n. Recommends addressing admission rates and developing alternative sentencing.
Ogunlesi & Ogunwale (2018). *Correctional psychiatry in Nigeria...* BJPsych International.	**Design:** Review / Descriptive Analysis. **Data Collection:** Review of existing models, structures. **Analysis:** Thematic/Qualitative.	**Location:** Nigeria (National). **Facilities:** Various.	– – –	Mental health services are poorly structured, staffed, and funded. Significant treatment gap exists. Ethical challenges with prolonged incarceration of the insane.	Advocates for taskshifting and communitybased approaches to integrate mental health into primary care in prisons.
Salawu & Alfakoro (2024). *From 'Prisons to Correctional Services'...* Journal of Governance.	**Design:** MixedMethods Survey. **Data Collection:** Semi-structured interviews,	**Location:** Kwara State, Nigeria. **Facilities:** Correctional facilities in Kwara State.	–	Increase in awaiting trial inmates leads to congestion and prison breaks.	Recommends speedy judicial processes, construction of special apartments for ATIs,

Bibliographic Details	Methodological Characteristics	Context	Key Findings	CONCLUSIONs & Recommendations
	secondary data. **Analysis:** Them atic (Structural Functionalism).		– Physical infrastructure is overstretched.	and increased budgetary allocation.
Danjuma, Nordin, & Muhamad (2018). *Prison Vocational Labour Under Mandela Rules...* Interna tional Journal of Asian Social Science.	**Design:** Compar ative Legal Analysis. **Data Collection:** Doc ument analysis (Laws, Mandela Rules). **Analysis:** Doctri nal / Comparative.	**Location:** Nigeria (National).	– Nigerian legal framework is compatible with Mandela Rules on PVL. – PVL is essential for imparting employable skills. – A directorate for PVL exists in most prisons.	PVL is a viable tool for rehabilitatio n and reintegratio n if properly implemente d within the legal framework.
Kekere (2016). *Decong esting Nigerian Cerrectional services...* Jour nal of Law and Judicial System.	**Design:** Legal / Policy Analysis. **Data Collection:** Hist orical overview, empirical evidence, legal documents. **Analysis:** Conce ptual analysis.	**Location:** Ni geria (National).	– Prison congestion severely hinders rehabilitati on. – ACJA 2015 contains provisions for decongesti on, but implement ation is lacking.	Enforcemen t of ACJA 2015 provisions is essential for decongestio n. Success depends on effective implementa tion.
Odewole, Salawu, & Salawu (2021**).** *Evaluat ion of Financial*	**Design:** Quantit ative. **Data Collection:** Seco ndary financial	**Location:** Ni geria (National). **Facilities/Se ctor:** Federal	– None of the institutions met basic sustainabil	Public institutions in Nigeria are financially unsustainab

Bibliographic Details	Methodological Characteristics	Context		Key Findings	CONCLUSIONs & Recommendations
Sustainability... European Journal of Sustainable Development.	data (25 institutions). **Analysis:** Balanced Scorecard, Financial Ratios (IGR/Recurrent Expenditure).	Health Institutions.	–	ity standards. High dependency on central funding; low internal revenue generation.	le. Strategies to enhance internally generated revenue are critical.
Umukoro & Kore-Okiti (2023). *Legal Imperatives for Decongesting Correctional Centers...* Beijing Law Review.	**Design:** Legislative Review. **Data Collection:** Analysis of ACJA 2015, Police Act 2020, NCoS Act 2019. **Analysis:** Legal analysis.	**Location:** Nigeria (National).	– –	Congestion is a major drawback. New laws aim to address it, but there is a lack of political and stakeholder will for implementation.	Urges government to empower stakeholders (police, courts, corrections) to achieve the objectives of the new laws.
Alkali (2023). *Programme Planning in Adult Inmates Correctional Education...* International Journal of Social Science and Human Research.	**Design:** Literature Review. **Data Collection:** Review of existing literature. **Analysis:** Conceptual analysis.	**Location:** Nigeria (National).	– –	Education empowers inmates for selfreliance. It should be accessible to inmates.	- Collective effort is needed for successful implementation of correctional education for sustainable community development.
San (2024). *Perspective Chapter: Challenges in the Nigerian Correctional Facilities...* IntechOpen.	**Design:** Legislative Review. **Data Collection:** Analysis of NCoS Act 2019.	**Location:** Nigeria (National).	–	NCoS Act 2019 introduced significant reforms (Awaiting Trial Centers, satellite	Improved collaboration among government arms is needed to address ongoing challenges.

Bibliographic Details	Methodological Characteristics	Context	Key Findings	CONCLUSIONs & Recommendations
	Analysis: Critical review.		– custodial centers). Service has not met expectations despite innovations.	
Abuchi & Ifeanyichukwu (2015). *Repositioning Nigerian Prisons for Sustainable National Development...* Journal for Studies in Management and Planning.	**Design:** Literature Review. **Data Collection:** Systematic review of available literature. **Analysis:** Thematic synthesis.	**Location:** Nigeria (National).	– Highlights challenges hindering prison operations.	Focuses on identifying issues for prison reform and sustainable development.
Makinde & Olabode (2020). *Assessment of Rehabilitation Programmes...* Canadian Social Science.	**Design:** Descriptive Survey. **Data Collection:** Onsite observation, questionnaires (256 inmates), interviews. **Analysis:** Descriptive statistics (SPSS).	**Location:** Southwestern Nigeria. **Facilities:** 3 facilities in Ogun, Osun, and Ondo States.	– Various programmes available (recreation, literacy, education, counselling). – High agreement on adequacy of education (83.8%) and religious (88%) programmes, but low for adult literacy (41.9%).	Rehabilitation programmes are available but need strengthening, especially in aftercare services.
Adebayo & Taiwo	**Design:** Review / Policy	**Location:** Nigeria	– - Overcrowd	Urgent need for

Bibliographic Details	Methodological Characteristics	Context	Key Findings	CONCLUSIONs & Recommendations
(2020). *Correctional Facilities and Coronavirus Endemic...* [Pre print].	Analysis. **Data Collection:** Analysis of current state, challenges. **Analysis:** Thematic.	(National). **Facilities:** Various.	ing and unhygienic conditions pose extreme COVID-19 risk. Authorities were unprepared for an outbreak.	improved disease prevention, control strategies, and addressing overcrowding.
Ilori (2024). *Correctional Institution (Prison) and the Control of Recidivism...* The Malaysian Journal of Social Administration.	**Design:** Quantitative. **Data Collection:** Questionnaires (200 recidivists, 200 officials). **Analysis:** Descriptive statistics (Reliability: 0.706-0.860).	**Location:** Southwestern Nigeria.	75% recidivism rate within 2-3 years. High stigmatization and unemployment among ex-convicts. Intervention strategies have been ineffective.	Need for policies and awareness campaigns to discourage criminal behavior and support reintegration.
Yecho (2018). *The Poverty of Imprisonment as a Correctional Measure in Nigeria.* Research on Humanities and Social Sciences.	**Design:** Review / Theoretical Analysis. **Data Collection:** Secondary data from scholars. **Analysis:** Juxtaposition of philosophy and practice.	**Location:** Nigeria (National).	Prison system has failed to reform/rehabilitate. Inconsistent policies and dehumanizing conditions. High recidivism.	Advocates for alternatives to imprisonment like community-based programs and vocational training.
Ayuk, Omang, & Nwankwo (2022). *Continuous ExOffenders' Reformation...* International Journal of	**Design:** Literature Review. **Data Collection:** Review of prison conditions, reformation processes.	**Location:** Nigeria (National).	Exoffenders become hardened due to stigmatization.	Recommends prison schools, vocational training, and a follow-up scheme

Bibliographic Details	Methodological Characteristics	Context	Key Findings	CONCLUSIONs & Recommendations
Criminology and Sociology.	**Analysis:** Them atic synthesis.		– Lack of training tools and poor prison conditions hinder rehabilitation. No followup after release.	involving social workers.
Ardo et al. (2020). *Rehabil itation of Inmates in Nigeria...*	**Design:** Quantit ative. **Data Collection:** Que stionnaires & interviews (264 admin, 220 retrieved). **Analysis:** Descri ptive statistics (SPSS v22).	**Location:** S okoto State, Nigeria. **Facility:** Sok oto Medium Security Custodial Center.	– Poor living conditions. – Facility is overcrowd ed. – Insufficien t funds for inmate upkeep. Relationsh ip between conditions and rehabilitati on effectivene ss.	Highlights the link between poor conditions and failed rehabilitatio n. Implies need for better funding and conditions.
Ulo (2019). *The metamorphosis from the nigeria prison service...*	**Design:** Theoreti cal / Policy Analysis. **Data Collection:** Revi ew of origin, problems, and new Act. **Analysis:** Polem ical criticism.	**Location:** Ni geria (National).	– NCoS Act 2019 emphasize s rehabilitati on and introduces noncustodial services. Aims to reduce overcrowd ing and recidivism.	The Act represents a positive shift. Recommen ds improveme nts for future implementa tion.
Makinde (2023). *Availab ility of Rehabilitation*	**Design:** Descript ive Research. **Data Collection:** On-	**Location:** S outhwestern Nigeria. **Facilities:** S	– Various rehabilitati on programm	Programme s need strengtheni ng,

Bibliographic Details	Methodological Characteristics	Context	Key Findings		CONCLUSIONs & Recommendations
Programmes... Journal of Public Policy and Administration .	site observation, questionnaires, interviews. **Analysis:** Descri ptive analysis.	elected facilities in the region.	–	es are available and assessed as adequate. Greater percentage of agreement on adequacy than disagreem ent.	particularly in aftercare services.
Ayuk, A. A., & Okpa, J. T. (2023). Predictors Hampering Treatment of Offenders in Nigeria's Custodian Centers.	**Design:** MixedMethods. **Data Collection:** Que stionnaires (400 respondents), indepth interviews (6 per center). **Analysis:** PPMC , Content analysis.	**Location:** Cr oss River State, Nigeria. **Facilities:** C orrectional institutions in 3 senatorial districts.	–	Corruption , inadequate rehabilitati on equipment, and low funding hamper treatment of offenders.	Recommen ds a special committee for prison reforms, infrastructu re improveme nt, and pardoning some ATIs.
Alamu & Makinde (2019). *Challe nges to Effective Implementation* ... Canadian Social Science.	**Design:** Descript ive Survey. **Data Collection:** Que stionnaires (241 inmates), indepth interviews. **Analysis:** Descri ptive statistics.	**Location:** S outhwestern Nigeria. **Facilities:** N igeria Prison Facilities in the region.	–	Key challenges: Lack of funds (96.6%), poor inmate welfare (88.8%), deteriorati ng facilities (75.5%), lack of qualified personnel (70.2%), poor healthcare (76.0%).	Clearly identifies funding, welfare, and infrastructu re as primary barriers to effective rehabilitatio n.
Alfakoro & Olalekan	**Design:** Descript ive Survey.	**Location:** K wara State,	–	Challenges :	Recommen ds

Bibliographic Details	Methodological Characteristics	Context	Key Findings	CONCLUSIONs & Recommendations
(2025). *Revamping the conditions of awaiting trial inmates...* Journal of Governance & Development.	**Data Collection:** Questionnaires (ATIs), secondary data.	Nigeria. **Facilities:** Correctional facilities in Kwara State.	– corruption, favoritism, poor hygiene, hard labor, health issues. No clear difference in treatment of convicted vs. awaiting trial inmates.	improved conditions for officers, adoption of ICT, and segregation of convicts and ATIs.
Oyewo (2023). *Inmate Rehabilitation Idea and the Challenges of Policy Implementation ...*	**Design:** Desk Research. **Data Collection:** Analysis of available information post-2019 Act. **Analysis:** Policy analysis.	**Location:** Nigeria (National). **Facilities:** Nigerian Correctional Centers.	– 2019 Act identifies rehabilitation as a core responsibility. – Challenges in policy implementation have hindered progress.	Successful implementation requires a holistic effort: staff training, inmate assessment, funding, and NGO collaboration.
Garba (2025). *Rehabilitation and Recidivism Trends among Youth Offenders....*	**Design:** Narrative Literature Review. **Data Collection:** Peer-reviewed research, policy documents, international reports. **Analysis:** Thematic (Social Learning Theory).	**Location:** Nigeria (National). **Facilities:** Correctional facilities for youth.	– High recidivism (60-80%) among youth offenders. Gap between policy and implementation. – Overcrowded, underresourced facilities with limited programs.	Comprehensive reform is needed, addressing structural factors like poverty, stigma, and lack of reintegration.

Bibliographic Details	Methodological Characteristics	Context	Key Findings	CONCLUSIONs & Recommendations
Stephen & Dudafa (2017). *Prisons Rehabilitation Programmes in Nigeria...* Studi es in Sociology of Science.	**Design:** Survey. **Data Collection:** Questionnaires (Purposive sample of convicted inmates). **Analysis:** Descri ptive statistics.	**Location:** B ayelsa State, Nigeria. **Facility:** Ok aka Prison.	_ _ _ _ Programmes exist (literacy, carpentry, tailoring, etc.). 65% perceived as fairly successful, 32.1% as not successful. Major hindrance: inadequate funding (36.4%). 88.4% believe programmes made a positive impact.	Despite challenges, inmates perceive value in rehabilitatio n programme s. Highlights need for adequate funding.
Okiwe, Abu, & Anele (2020). *Conditi ons and Congestion Level...*	**Design:** Crosssectional Survey. **Data Collection:** Questionnaires (387 inmates), secondary data. **Analysis:** Frequency, Percentage, ChiSquare.	**Location:** Ni ger Delta Region, Nigeria. **Facilities:** S elected prisons in the region.	_ _ Prisons are highly congested. Welfare services are inefficient and ineffective. Facilities are inadequate .	Recommen ds reforms to improve conditions, including addressing abuse of arrest powers and inadequate legal aid.
Jon-Nwakalo (2018). *Recidiv ism and Crowding as Determinants...* Public Policy and Administration Research.	**Design:** Econom etric Modeling. **Data Collection:** Seco ndary data (1965-1985). **Analysis:** TRA NSLOG model, Ordinary Least Squares.	**Location:** Ni geria & New York (Comparativ e).	_ In Nigeria, rehabilitati on programs are a positive determinan t of recidivism (i.e., may	Alternatives to incarceratio n are more effective than building new prisons. Rehabilitati on

Bibliographic Details	Methodological Characteristics	Context	Key Findings	CONCLUSIONs & Recommendations
			– increase it). Crime rates increase crowding. Alternative s to incarceration reduce crowding more than construction.	programs in Nigeria are ineffective.
Ashibi & Adams (2023). *Criminal Recidivistic Tendencies...* African Multidisciplina ry Journal.	**Design:** Descript ive Survey. **Data Collection:** Indepth interviews (43 ex-convicts). **Analysis:** Them atic (General Strain Theory).	**Location:** S outh-South Nigeria. **Facilities:** C orrectional institutions in the region.	– Programm es are welldesigned but prison subculture and reintegrati on labelling cause recidivism. Employabi lity redundanc y is a factor.	Recommen ds community sensitizatio n, enabling environmen t for exconvicts, and noncustodial sentences.
Balogun & Bello (2024). *The Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS)...* Man gabdi.	**Design:** Qualitat ive Case Study. **Data Collection:** Liter ature review, interviews, observations. **Analysis:** Them atic analysis.	**Location:** Ni geria (National). **Facilities:** S everal correctional facilities.	– NCoS has deradicaliz ation programs. Challenges : Overcrowd ing, limited funding, staff shortage, stigma.	Recommen ds improving facility capacity, program curricula, personnel competence , and M&E systems.
Egwu et al. (2024). *Assessi ng the Treatment of*	**Design:** Descript ive Study. **Data Collection:** Que	**Location:** E bonyi State, Nigeria. **Facility:** Ab	– Inhumane treatment of inmates contributes	Need for a corrective approach adhering to

Bibliographic Details	Methodological Characteristics	Context	Key Findings	CONCLUSIONs & Recommendations
Inmate and Recidivism... D eleted Journal.	stionnaires (inmates & staff).	akaliki Correctional Center.	– to higher recidivism. Staff approach does not align with UN Standard Minimum Rules.	inmate rights to reduce recidivism.
Aliyu, Mustaffa, & Nasir (2017). *Issues Affecting the Effectiveness...* IRA-International Journal of Management & Social Sciences.	**Design:** Themati c & Content Analysis. **Data Collection:** Boo ks, journals, internet resources. **Analysis:** Them atic synthesis.	**Location:** K wara State, Nigeria. **Facility:** Ok e Kura Prison.	– – – Inadequate funding for tools/mach inery. Shortage of qualified manpower in workshops. Idleness leads to reoffending.	Rehabilitati on practices need alignment with research. Solutions must address specific needs and circumstanc es.
Hadi & Mohamed (2017). *Reform ation of offenders in Nigerian correctional institutions.*	**Design:** Survey. **Data Collection:** Que stionnaires (224 offenders from 7 institutions). **Analysis:** Pearso n Correlation.	**Location:** Ni geria (National). **Facilities:** 7 correctional institutions.	– – – Strong positive relationshi p between counsellin g services and rehabilitati on. Strong positive relationshi p between medical care and rehabilitati on. Moderate relationshi p for moral instruction.	Recommen ds compliance with internationa l best practices and more emphasis on moral instruction.
Aliyu & Mustaffa (2022). *Prison*	**Design:** Qualitat ive. **Data**	**Location:** K wara State, Nigeria.	– Programm es empower	Addressing impediment s (rejection,

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Correctional Rehabilitation Programme... J ournal of Contemporary Governance and Public Policy.	**Collection:** Foc us Group (10 informants). **Analysis:** Them atic Analysis (NVivo 10).	**Facility:** Ok e Kura Prison.	– inmates and reduce recidivism. Impediments: societal rejection, assimilation challenges, program continuity, insufficient training materials.	materials) is crucial for the success of rehabilitation efforts.
Uche et al. (2023). *Incarce rated individuals and education programmes...* PLOS ONE.	**Design:** Qualitat ive. **Data Collection:** Indepth interviews (20 convicted individuals). **Analysis:** Them atic Analysis.	**Location:** I mo State, Nigeria. **Facility:** Ow erri Correctional Centers.	– – – Education programmes are available but quality is low. Inmates cannot choose their programmes. Lack of awareness of social workers' role.	Inclusion of correctional social workers is necessary for reform, rehabilitation, and reintegration.
Ogwezzy, Adebayo, & Kekere (2016). *Restora tive justice and non-custodial measures...* Nn amdi Azikiwe University Journal of International Law and Jurisprudence.	**Design:** Literatu re Review. **Data Collection:** Revi ew of criminal justice system, laws. **Analysis:** Theor etical / Conceptual.	**Location:** Ni geria (National).	– – – Current punitive measures are ineffective. Categorizing inmates can prevent corruption of minor offenders. Vocational training for ATIs can	Posits that restorative justice and noncustodial measures can reduce recidivism and congestion.

Bibliographic Details	Methodological Characteristics	Context	Key Findings	CONCLUSIONs & Recommendations
			empower them.	
Uche et al. (2015). *Effectiv eness of Rehabilitation Programmes...* Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences.	**Design:** Crosssectional Survey. **Data Collection:** Que stionnaires (145 inmates). **Analysis:** Frequ ency tables, percentages (SPSS).	**Location:** E nugu State, Nigeria. **Facility:** En ugu Prison.	_ _ Programm es exist (literacy, carpentry, tailoring, etc.). 62.8% perceived as fairly successful, 31.0% as not successful. Major hindrance: lack of funding (35.2%).	Confirms existence of programme s but highlights perception of limited success and funding as a key barrier.
Onyekachi (2016). *Proble ms and Prospects of Administration of Nigerian Prison...* Journ al of Tourism and Hospitality.	**Design:** Survey. **Data Collection:** Prim ary & secondary sources. **Analysis:** Simpl e tables, percentages.	**Location:** Ni geria (National).	_ _ _ Inadequate funding is a significant impedimen t. Lack of rehabilitati on facilities increases recidivism. Existing laws negatively impact administrat ion.	Federal government should increase funding and amend laws to focus on rehabilitatio n.
Raphael & Ajah (2019). *Health Services and CUL-DE-SAC of Inmates Correction...* In ternational Journal of Scientific and	**Design:** MixedMethods. **Data Collection:** Que stionnaires (320 respondents), indepth interviews (12). **Analysis:** Quant	**Location:** A nambra & Ebonyi States, Nigeria. **Facilities:** A wka and Abakaliki Prisons.	_ _ High prevalence of malaria (97%) and skin diseases (93.8%). Other issues: obesity,	Health programs and policies are necessary to improve inmate wellbeing and facilitate

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Research Publications.	itative & Qualitative.			high BP, infections, depression (82.5%).	correction/reintegration.
Okiwe, Abu, & Anele (2020). *Welfare and Effect of Correctional Congestion...*	**Design:** Crosssectional Survey. **Data Collection:** Questionnaires (387 inmates), secondary data. **Analysis:** Frequency percentage tables.	**Location:** Niger Delta Region, Nigeria. **Facilities:** Selected prisons in the region.	– – –	Most inmates acquire a skill. Library facilities are nonfunctional. Inmates fed once a day. Congestion leads to untimely deaths and infections.	Highlights the dire state of welfare services and the lethal impact of congestion.
Ekpeyong & Ebitimi (2024). *Interrogating the rehabilitation programmes...* Wilberforce Journal of the Social Sciences.	**Design:** Crosssectional Survey. **Data Collection:** Questionnaires (275 inmates), 21 key informant interviews. **Analysis:** Chisquare, SPSS v21.	**Location:** Bayelsa State, Nigeria. **Facility:** Okaka Prison.	–	Vocational courses, counselling, and educational training significantly impact rehabilitation and reintegration.	Recommends expanding ICT-driven vocational courses and promoting genderinclusive training.
Otu (2015). *Analysis of the causes and effects of recidivism...* International Journal of Development and Management Review.	**Design:** Literature Review. **Data Collection:** Review of existing literature. **Analysis:** Thematic synthesis.	**Location:** Nigeria (National).	– –	Recidivism caused by discrimination, lack of aftercare, family issues, substance abuse, peer influence. Effective strategies: qualitative treatment, educational	Recommends state-ofthe-art facilities, expanded education programs, and responsive aftercare.

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			l/vocational programs.	
Kpae (2020). *Parole and probation as remedy for nigeria's prison congestion problem.*	**Design:** Theoretical Review (Marxian analysis). **Data Collection:** Review of literature, reforms. **Analysis:** Critical analysis.	**Location:** Ni geria (National).	– Prison congestion due to high number of ATIs. Poor conditions lead to mental health issues and recidivism. Previous reforms have failed.	Recommends communitybased corrections (probation, parole) as alternatives to incarceratio n.
Folorunsho, Esther, & Olawunmi (2024). *Explori ng the Effectiveness of Rehabilitation Programmes...* Randwick International of Social Science Journal.	**Design:** MixedMethods, Nonexperimental. **Data Collection:** Questionnaires (330), in-depth interviews (15 return inmates). **Analysis:** Quant itative & Qualitative.	**Location:** O gun State, Nigeria. **Facilities:** 4 Correctional Facilities.	– Improper implement ation of programm es increases recidivism. Prison congestion negatively impacts programm e effectivene ss.	Recommends enhanced adult literacy, more counselors, and a postrelease support program.
Uddin, Igbokwe, & Olaolu (2019). *Prison Farm Inmates' Reformation and Rehabilitation.. . * Criminology & Social Integration.	**Design:** Survey. **Data Collection:** Sem i-structured interviews (inmates), questionnaires (staff). **Analysis:** Perce ntage, mean, SD, t-test.	**Location:** Z one G (Benin), Nigeria. **Facilities:** Pr ison farms in selected states.	– Crop production (e.g., rice) is the most implement ed program. Inmates prefer rice farming due to market demand.	Recommends sustaining agricultural programs and expanding into animal husbandry for better skills.

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			– No postrelease support provisions.	
Ajah (2018). *Criminal Justice Administration and Panic of Prison Correction in Nigeria.* Journal of Law and Judicial System.	**Design:** Documentary Research. **Data Collection:** Newspapers, textbooks, gov't publications, internet. **Analysis:** Theoretical (Twofactor theory).	**Location:** Nigeria (National).	– – Prisons have become breeding grounds for criminals. Failure to reform and correct offenders.	Recommends introduction of noncustodial sentences and control of unethical practices by administrators.
Inimiesi (2025). *Inmates' Character Reformation and Recidivism in Nigeria...* International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation.	**Design:** MixedMethods. **Data Collection:** Surveys (267 inmates), interviews (30 key persons). **Analysis:** Quantitative & Qualitative (CBT & Social Learning Theory).	**Location:** Bayelsa State, Nigeria. **Facility:** Okaka Correctional Facility.	– – – Vocational training has some positive effects. Counselling is largely ineffective (inmate perception). Overcrowding impedes rehabilitation.	Recommends personalized rehabilitation strategies and enhanced educational/ vocational training.
Nwune et al. (2018). *Correctional Programmes Within the Prison Community...* Developing Country Studies.	**Design:** Crosssectional Survey. **Data Collection:** Questionnaires, Indepth Interviews (396 respondents). **Analysis:** SPSS, theme-based content analysis.	**Location:** Anambra State, Nigeria. **Facilities:** Awka, Onitsha, Nnewi, Aguata Prisons.	– – Gap between policy and practice. High rate of recidivism suggested. Inmates perceive instructors as less efficient than officials do.	Recommends a committee for periodic supervision of prison programmes to enhance effectiveness.

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			_ Inmate lack of interest due to minimal perceived impact.	
Inusa (2022). *Perceiv ed Impact of Vocational Skills Acquisition...* K ashere Journal of Education.	**Design:** Survey. **Data Collection:** Stru ctured questionnaires. **Analysis:** Descri ptive statistics (Mean, SD).	**Location:** G ombe State, Nigeria. **Facility:** Go mbe Central Correctional Centers.	_ _ Vocational skills (carpentry 37%, welding 33%) have a significant positive impact on reformatio n. Majority of exconvicts were male, informal education, aged 2140.	Vocational skills acquisition is a effective tool for reformation and reducing recidivism.
Zo & Oo (2016). *Prison Reforms System and Inmate's Welfare in Nigeria.* Arts and Social Sciences Journal.	**Design:** Descript ive Survey. **Data Collection:** Que stionnaire (100 respondents). **Analysis:** Simpl e frequency, percentages (SPSS).	**Location:** E kiti State, Nigeria. **Facilities:** A do-Ekiti and Olokuta Prisons.	_ _ _ Poor criminal justice administrat ion leads to high number of ATIs and overcrowd ing. Overcrowd ing is a major threat to inmate welfare. Reforms have a positive impact on welfare.	Recommen ds government intervention to implement reforms and allocate funds for infrastructu re.

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Emmanuel (2016). *Service work as anantidote to prison problems in nigeria.* Agora International Journal of Juridical Sciences.	**Design:** Comparative Analysis. **Data Collection:** Comparison of prison systems (Nigeria, UK, US). **Analysis:** Comparative analysis.	**Location:** Nigeria (National)..	– Focus on overcrowding and violation of prisoners' rights.	Advocates for service work as an alternative to imprisonment to maintain dignity and reduce recidivism.
Joseph & Devi (2025). *Emerging Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities..* .	**Design:** Conceptual Framework. **Data Collection:** Review of current practices, evidence-based research. **Analysis:** Conceptual synthesis.	**Location:** Nigeria	– Shift from punishment to rehabilitation. – Persistent challenges: overcrowding, mental health, recidivism. – Evidence supports rehabilitation over punishment.	Emphasizes innovative approaches and collaboration to address systemic inequities.
Adekanmbi & Ezikpe (2018). *Prison Education in Nigeria.* IGI Global Book Chapter.	**Design:** Review / Historical Analysis. **Data Collection:** Review of history, programs, challenges. **Analysis:** Conceptual.	**Location:** Nigeria (National).	– Prison education is at a nascent stage. – Traditional African focus was on restorative justice vs. modern punishment. – Current practices do not fully support	Specific interventions and research are needed to enhance prison education effectiveness.

Bibliographic Details	Methodological Characteristics	Context	Key Findings	CONCLUSIONs & Recommendations
			rehabilitation.	
Ajah (2018). *Educational Training of Inmates in Awka and Abakaliki Prisons, Nigeria.*	**Design:** Observational / Qualitative. **Data Collection:** Assessment of current state, facilities. **Analysis:** Qualitative analysis.	**Location:** Anambra & Ebonyi States, Nigeria. **Facilities:** Awka and Abakaliki Prisons.	— — Educational facilities are grossly deficient. Deficiencies are contrary to the goal of reformation.	Emphasizes the need for quality educational training, which previous studies have not adequately addressed.
Uddin, Igbokwe, & Chah (2020). *Challenges of Prison Farm Management in Nigeria.* Criminology & Social Integration.	**Design:** Survey. **Data Collection:** Interviews (inmates), questionnaires (staff). **Analysis:** Percentage, mean, SD, t-test.	**Location:** Enugu & Edo States, Nigeria. **Facilities:** 2 Prison Farms.	— Major challenges: Inadequate funding (100%), lack of physical infrastructure (100%), low staff strength (78.9%), inadequacy of equipment (94.4%).	Clearly identifies funding and infrastructure as the paramount challenges for prison agriculture.
Adegbami & Uche (2015). *Good Governance and Prison Congestion in Nigeria...* Public Policy and Administration Research.	**Design:** MixedMethods. **Data Collection:** Questionnaires, interviews (60 inmates, 6 officials). **Analysis:** Descriptive statistics, content analysis.	**Location:** Osun State, Nigeria. **Facility:** Maximum Security Prison, Ilesa.	— — Majority of inmates are youths (18-45), many with tertiary education (65%), and married (80%). Terrible prison conditions: overcrowding, poor sanitation, low-	Concludes a direct link between poor governance (unemployment) and prison congestion/ crime.

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			quality food.	
Amunnadi & Omemma (2019). *Prison overcrowding in nigeria and the place of religion...*	**Design:** Descriptive Survey. **Analysis:** Theoretical frameworks ("preferential option for the poor").	**Location:** Ni geria (National).	– Overcrowding is a critical problem with physical, psychological, medical, and economic impacts.	Modern prison management should focus on reform. Religious communities can promote decongestion through moral support and empowerm ent.
Aliyu, Mustaffa, & Nasir (2016). *The difficulties of staff welfare...*	**Design:** Descriptive Survey. **Data Collection:** Structured questionnaires. **Analysis:** Tables , frequency, percentages, Chi-square.	**Location:** K wara State, Nigeria. **Facility:** Ok e Kura Prison.	– – – Fails to meet U.N. welfare standards. Use of bucket toilets poses health risks. Mismanag ement of resources risks epidemics.	Governmen t should construct more facilities. State government s should be allowed to establish detention centers.
Nwune, Ajah, Egbegi, et al. (2019). *Across the Wall...*	**Design:** Crosssectional Survey. **Data Collection:** Questionnaires, IDI Guide (396 respondents). **Analysis:** SPSS, theme-based content analysis.	**Location:** A nambra State, Nigeria. **Facilities:** A nambra State Prison Command.	– – Mixed perception s on functionali ty of rehabilitati on programm es. No consensus on effectivene ss between inmates	Recommen ds a committee for periodic supervision of prison activities and programme s.
Bibliographic Details	Methodological Characteristics	Context	Key Findings	CONCLUSIONs & Recommendations
			and officials.	

Osayi & Onuoha (2023). *Sociopsychological Effects of Awaiting Trial Inmates...* SSR N.	**Design:** MixedMethods. **Data Collection:** Data from 200 respondents (convicts, ATPs, staff).	**Location:** E nugu State, Nigeria. **Facility:** En ugu Prison.	– – –	Overwhel ming ATP presence limits reformatio n of convicts. Convicts remain unrepentan t. Health and sociopsychologi cal wellbeing are compromis ed.	Recommen ds periodic reform of the criminal justice system for speedy trials to reduce congestion.