

# Assessing the Treatment of Inmate and Recidivism in Abakaliki Correctional Centre, Ebonyi State-Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

The paper is centered on the treatment of inmate and recidivism in Abakaliki correctional centre, Ebonyi State. The paper aimed at investigating into the treatment approach adopted by the correctional staff in handling convicts in their custody; inmates and staff perceptions of the goals of imprisonment; the extent the prisons abide by the Standard Minimum Rules (SMRs) of the United Nations; and inmates' attitude towards reformation and rehabilitation. A descriptive study design using a questionnaire was used. We proposed and recommended that in order to curb recidivism and stop inhumane treatment of inmates, our correctional center officials and correctional system should treat inmates in a manner that conforms with the rights they have been guaranteed under that Nigerian Correctional Act and the Nigerian Constitution. It was also concluded that the treatment of inmates are inhumane and inhumane treatments leads to recidivism which compliments the need for a better corrective approach in order to stop recidivism. It is of paramount importance that further studies be carried out to ascertain other ways by which inhumane treatment of inmates can be stopped and other measures that need to be adopted to curb recidivism.

**Keywords:** Correctional Service, Inhumane, Inhumane Treatment, Inmate, Recidivism.

## INTRODUCTION

Inhuman treatment of inmates can be described as how the inmates are being treated while in the correctional center by the prison management and staff, the manner by which all the categories of inmates are being treated or handled and what and how the services the prison provides are being giving to them while they are in the prison[1]. When a person is detained or sentenced to imprisonment, they are deprived of one of their most basic human rights: the right to liberty. The

deprivation of liberty necessarily results in prisoners becoming dependent on the detaining authorities for the realization of their other basic human rights[2]. As the Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners sets out: Except for those limitations that are demonstrably necessitated by the fact of incarceration, all prisoners shall retain the human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and, where the state concerned is a party, the International

Covenant on Economic and Social Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol thereto, as well as such other rights as are set out in other United Nations Covenants[3]. The police, prison service and other State bodies responsible for detaining individuals therefore have a responsibility to ensure not only that the decision to detain an individual is lawful, but also that their treatment and care whilst in detention is both fair and compliant with human rights standards. Creating and maintaining inmate and detainee files is an essential tool for protecting and upholding these standards[4]. The purpose and justification of a sentence of imprisonment or a similar measure deprive of liberty is ultimately to protect the society against crime. This end can only be achieved if the period of imprisonment is used to ensure, so far as possible, that upon his return to the society, the offender is not only willing but able to lead a law-abiding and self-supporting life [5]. So, the manner in which an inmate is treated is what will indicate if such inmate will go back to crime or not upon his release[6]. The correctional services, centers, and facility is meant not to only punish offenders/inmates but also to reform, rehabilitate, and educate them by providing recreational skill acquisition opportunities so as to enable them not to engage in crime pre and post release but the reverse has been the case, the prisons keep getting terrific and inhumane[7]. When the inmates are treated according to the basic principle for the treatment of inmates and the standard minimum rules (SMR) adopted by the United Nations it is termed that the rule of treatment is being followed but when it is not

#### **Brief Overview of Correctional Service in Nigeria**

The origin of modern Correctional Service in Nigeria is 1861 was the year when conceptually, Western-type correctional was established in Nigeria. The declaration of Lagos as a colony in 1861 marked the beginning of the institution of formal machinery of governance. At this stage, the preoccupation of the colonial government was to protect legitimate trade, guarantee the profit of British merchants as well as guarantee the activities of the missionaries. To this end, by 1861, the acting governor of the Lagos colony and who was then a prominent British merchant in Lagos formed a Police Force of about 25 constables[11]. This was followed in 1863 by the establishment in Lagos of

in accordance it is being seen that such correctional service renders inhumane treatment to the inmates serving their time in such correctional service facility[8].

According to Nwefoh et al.[9], ill-treatment and torture of detainees were widespread" in Nigerian prisons. Human rights watchdogs have described correctional facilities conditions in the country as harsh, appalling and damaging to the physical and mental health of inmates. Correctional facilities are overstretched and overcrowded, with many holding three times their designated capacities. There are reports of Nigerian prison inmates sleeping two to a bed or on the floor in filthy cells, with poor sanitation and food and medication in short supply. Prison inmates are routinely tortured, beaten and abused and female inmates especially face the threat of rape. Inmates have also been denied contact with families and friends unless they can afford to bribe prison guards[10]. All of these could amount to crime in the prison and committing of crime by an offender even after release due to the psychological or mental stress and strain that an inmate has been subjected to, and in most cases overcrowding in prisons lead to criminal learning and the inmates subjected to the survival of the fittest where the hardened offenders rule over the minor and star offenders there by subjecting them to carry out their bidding at this point criminal behavior is being learned and upon release such inmate goes on to pose more threat to the society by perpetrating more dangerous crimes. Violence crimes in the prison occurs also due to overcrowding and inmate molestation.

four courts: a Police court to resolve petty disputes, a criminal court to try the more serious cases, a slave court to try cases arising from the efforts to abolish the trade in slaves and a commercial court to resolve disputes among merchants and traders. The functioning of these courts and the police in that colonial setting necessarily meant that prison was needed to complete the system. And it was not long in coming for in 1872, the Broad Street Prison was established with an initial inmate capacity of 300[12]. In the Niger Delta, the relationship between the local people and the British merchants had before then been moderated by special courts of merchants backed by the British Navy especially

with the appointment of John Beecroft as a consul in 1849. The need for a merchant court was underscored by the fact that most conflicts between the merchants and the local people were in the main commercial. Although there was evidence of prison in Bonny at this time, not much is known about its size and content. But those who were later to oppose British rule were usually deported as happened in the case of Jaja of Opobo and King Dappa of Bonny. However, the progressive incursion of the British into the hinterland and the establishment of British protectorate towards the end of the 19th century necessitated the establishment of the prisons as the last link in the Criminal Justice System. Thus by 1910, there already were prisons in Degema, Calabar, Onitsha, Benin, Ibadan, Sapele, Jebba and Lokoja. The declaration of protectorates over the East, West and North by 1906 effectively brought the entire Nigeria area under British rule. However, that did not mark the beginning of a unified Nigerian Prisons [13].

Even so, the colonial prison at this stage was not designed to reform anyone. There was no systematic penal policy from which direction could be sought for penal administration. Instead, prisoners were in the main used for public works and other jobs for the colonial administration. For this reason, there was no need for the recruitment of trained officers of the prisons. Hence, colonial prisons had no trained and developed staff of their own instead, the police also performed prison duties. As time went on, ex-servicemen were recruited to do the job. They were also very poorly run and the local prison conditions varied from one place to another in their disorganization, callousness and exploitation. But so long as they served the colonial interests of ensuring law and order, collecting taxes, and providing labour for public works, they were generally left alone. The result was that the prisons served the purpose of punishing those who had the guts to oppose colonial administration in one form or the other while at the same time cowing those who might want to stir up trouble for the colonial set up [8].

The prison regulation was published in 1917 to prescribe admission, custody, treatment and classification procedures as well as staffing, dieting and clothing regimes for the prisons. These processes were limited in one very general sense. They were not geared towards any particular type of

treatment of inmates. Instead, they represent just policies of containment of those who were already in prison. Besides, they were limited in application to those who were convicted or remanded in custody by criminal courts of the British-inspired supreme or provincial types. Those remanded or convicted by the Native courts were sent to the Native Authority prisons. The prison regulation also distinguished between awaiting trial and convicted inmates and even stipulated the convict – category to be found in each type of prison. But the limited application of this general rule to the national prison while the Native Authority Prison went their own way effectively stultified the appearance of a national prison goal-orientation in terms of inmate treatment [14].

It was not until 1934 that any meaningful attempt was made to introduce relative modernization into the correctional service. It was at this time that Colonel V. L. Mabb was appointed Director of prisons by the then Governor, Sir Donald Cameron. Although, a military officer, Mabb had an understanding of what prisons should be. And he went on to do his best. What he seemed to have focused his attention on was the formation of a unified prison structure for the whole country but he failed. Yet, he succeeded in extending the substantive Director of Prisons' supervisory and inspectoral powers over the Native Authority Prisons by this time dominant in the North. It was also during his tenure that the Prisons Warders Welfare Board was formed [15].

His efforts were to be continued by his successor R. H. Dolan (1946 – 55). Mr. Dolan was a trained prison officer and when he assumed duties in Nigeria, he already had a wealth of experience in prison administration in both Britain and the colonies. Although, a scheme for the introduction of vocational training in the National Prisons had been introduced in 1917 and it failed except in Kaduna and Lokoja prisons where it was functioning in 1926, Mr. Dolan reintroduced it in 1949 as a cardinal part of a penal treatment in Nigeria. He also made classification of prisoners mandatory in all prisons and went on to introduce visits by relations to inmates. He also introduced progressive earning schemes for long term first offenders. He also transferred the Prisons Headquarters formerly in Enugu to Lagos to facilitate close cooperation with

other Department of State [16]. He also introduced moral and adult education classes to be handled by competent Ministers and teachers for both Christian and Islamic education. Programmes for recreation and relaxation of prisoners were introduced during his tenure as well as the formation of an association for the care and rehabilitation of discharged prisoners. But above all, he initiated a programme for the construction and expansion of even bigger convict prisons to enhance the proper classification and accommodation of prisoners [17].

On manpower development, he was instrumental to the founding of the Prison Training School, Enugu in 1947. He also saw to the appointment of educated wardresses to take charge of the female wings of the

#### **The Concept of Recidivism in Nigeria Correctional Service**

Crime is any act that violates the law of the society or serious offence against the law of the society for which is there the punishment of incarceration in the prisons. In recent years there seems to be a global upsurge in crime rate that appears not to be gender discriminative as both males and females are involved. There are different views and opinions expressed by many criminologists concerning the causes of crimes. Since crime is a complex psychological, sociological and situational behaviour, Weidmand and Chopik [19] viewed the causes from broad dimensions. These dimensions had been tied up closely with sociological theory which is biforked into environmental and situational causes, hence generic causes mediated through personality factors or personality characteristics. According to Eysenck [20], personality characteristics are tied to criminality. The inability of certain individuals to tolerate frustrating situations without resorting to aggressive and violence tendency is a product of personality traits. Mosaku [21] in their study on personality traits of female inmates in some Nigerian prisons concluded that extroversion, neuroticism and psychoticism were significant in predicting criminality. Further, they found that psychoticism traits of inmates have the highest contributory factor to criminality. The other factors which contribute to criminal behaviour are only moderating factors to criminality.

Prison sentence is the punishment that judges give to someone who has been declared guilty of a crime. Carlsmith [22] argued that sentencing is a complex process with several interlinked aims of punishing

prisons and he generally tried to improve the service conditions of the prison staff. In addition, he took classification a step further when in 1948 he opened four reformatories in Lagos and converted part of the Port-Harcourt prisons for the housing remand and treatment of juveniles. Five years later, he was to build an open prison in Kakuri - Kaduna to take care of first offenders who had committed such crimes as murder and manslaughter, and who are serving terms of 15 years or more. The idea was to train them with minimum supervision in agriculture so that on discharge, they could employ themselves gainfully. In fact, Dolan's tenure represented a very high point in the evolution of Nigeria Correctional Service [18].

offenders which are generally condensed into retribution, incapacitation and deterrence. According to Daly [23], the pivotal agent in the dispensation of justice is the criminal court, and the main means of doing so at its disposal is the sentence, that its able to impose. The importance of sentencing is to discourage or prevent individuals from committing crime which is similar to the one for which the offender has been sentenced. Punishment is a way to prevent the individual from committing additional crimes. The purpose of punishment is for someone to learn from what has been done wrong. Punishment is a system of correcting which depends largely on the offences. Before the advent of prisons, corporal punishments were often imposed for serious crimes. Punishments are in various forms; physical punishment like flogging, hanging, beheading, confinements, incarceration, imprisonment, probation and parole which put severe restrictions on the condemned persons from freedom of action and movement. According to Sarraf [24], punishment is a widespread and firmly established standard or mainstream approach to criminal conduct which reduces the likelihood of future or continued criminal behaviour. Observations and reports have it that at any one time, only a fraction of those committing crimes in society are apprehended and punished. Yet the public visibility of this process is held to act as a general deterrent for the remainder of the population, including those likely to offend. If general deterrence operates to an extent that justifies its central position in society, then there should be some associations between the

activity of the criminal justice system and the total amount of crime.

Globally, recidivism has become a very serious challenge to communities, societies and governments. Report has it that recidivism among released prisoners in 30 American states is high. In a study carried out by Durose, Cooper and Snyder[25] in the United States of America, it was found out that over 67.8% of the 404,638 prisoners released in 2005 were re-arrested within 3 years while 76.6% were arrested within five years. In Norway, it was discovered that recidivism rate ranged from 14% to 42% depending on whether the sample included arrested, convicted or imprisoned[26]; while in Sweden, a 2-year reconviction rate amongst prisoners was 43%. England and Wales recorded a recidivism rate of 59%[27]. According to Osayi[28], recidivism has increased tremendously in Sub-Saharan Africa, and also has become a major social problem affecting the society, governments, multinationals and humanitarian organisations the world over. Amos and Odivwri[29] posit that recidivism has become very high and a common phenomenon among Nigerian subjects, both the male and female prisoners in the Nigerian prison custody. Ike et al.[30] in his study found out that the prevalence rate of criminal recidivism in Nigeria in 2005 was

37.3%. This statistic is high when compared with other countries which have less than 10%. Amos[31] found out that the estimated prevalence of recidivism in Nigeria prisons was 52.4%. It has also been reported that 81% of male offenders and 45% of female offenders in Nigeria were re-arrested within 36 months of release from the prison custody. Scholars in Nigeria such as Ajah and Ugwuoke[12] and Amos[31] have supported that there is an increase in the rate of reoffending and that male offenders have greater propensity to reoffend. Studies done by researchers have offered explanation on factors that could be responsible for the increase in the rate of recidivism. Some of the factors that could be responsible for an increase in the rate of recidivism among male ex-prisoners could be the harsh prison conditions and negative attitude of the public towards ex-convicts. Others include stigmatization of prisonisation, defective prison system which promotes the dissemination and exchange of criminal influences and ideas, alcohol and substance abuse, poor educational attainment and peer group influence[32]. Other predisposing factors which increase recidivism among male recidivists in Nigeria are marital status, number of siblings/children, socio-economic status, ethnicity, family background, imprisonment terms and type of crime.

#### Factors that Leads to Inhuman Treatment of Inmates

Some of the factors that leads to the inhuman treatment of inmates include:

1. **Skewed Ideology of Prisonization in Nigeria:** The ideology of the Nigerian prisons system is still hinged on brutality and vengeance. The ideology is premised on punishment than rehabilitation, reformation and resettlement. In Nigeria, offenders are sent to prison to atone for the wrongs they have committed, instead of for treatment like is obtainable in other climes. Hence, ex-offenders are not properly prepared for life after imprisonment, and this contributes to the seemingly high rate of reoffending and crime in Nigeria[12].
2. **Poor Rehabilitation Model of the Nigerian Prison System:** The major aim of any prison is to rehabilitate those who are in conflict with the law. Prisons in Nigeria have failed in their attempts to fulfil their aim of rehabilitating criminals and making them better citizens. This is because the Nigerian prison system has a very poor

rehabilitation model which has outlived its relevance in this present age. The rehabilitative model of the Nigerian prisons system is a continuation of the colonial model; little or no changes has been made since the introduction of conventional imprisonment in Nigeria. Again, the rehabilitation facilities in Nigerian prisons are archaic, comatose and non-functional. This has become an impediment in the rehabilitation efforts in our prisons. Infact, as it stands now, there is little or no rehabilitation in Nigerian prisons as the facilities for rehabilitation are not there. There is also dearth of professionals such as psychologists, social workers, counsellors etc, in our prisons. This has led to poorly rehabilitated inmates. Thus, the inmates are most often times deformed in prison rather than being reformed[32].

3. **Poorly trained staff of the Nigerian Prison system:** This is one of the major causes of inhuman treatment of inmates in Nigeria. The quality of the

staff in the Nigerian prison system is very poor. Staff are recruited without recourse to their antecedents, crime history or medical history. Recruitment into the Nigerian Prisons Service is based on biases and sentiments; hence, at the end, criminals and all manners of misfits find their ways into the payroll of the Nigerian Prisons Service. Besides that, the quality of training given to these staff is grossly inadequate. Most staff are recruited and deployed to the prison without being effectively trained; while those that find their ways into the training schools are not properly trained in contemporary techniques in prison management. These staff that are poorly trained are later deployed to the prisons to reform, rehabilitate and reintegrate prisoners. The result in the long run can best be imagined than experienced[4].

4. **Trafficking by staff:** This is a fall out of the poor training gotten by the staff in the training schools. Staff are not properly trained, thereby engaging in unwholesome acts like trafficking in contraband such as hard drugs with the inmates they are meant to reform. Trafficking is one of the major causes of inhuman treatment in Nigeria. Through trafficking, drug offenders get access to drugs and still continue to depend on them. Hence, making mockery of the little rehabilitative training they get[33].
5. **Lack of Facilities in Nigerian Prisons:** Nigerian prisons are bereft of facilities for rehabilitation and reformation of inmates and due to this factor the prison staffs that are meant to reform and rehabilitate this inmates become lazy and rather focus on maltreatment and torturing of these inmates. Facilities such as workshops for the training of inmates are not provided for the officers to carry out their jobs. Such workshops usually are used for the training of inmates in handcrafts so that they can fall back to them when they are discharged.

#### 1. Effects of Inhumane Treatment on Inmate

Human rights watchdogs have described conditions in Nigerian correctional facilities and detention centers as damaging to the physical and mental health of inmates. While the prevalence of mental disorders is high, access to appropriate healthcare is grossly inadequate. Understanding the current state of prison inmates' mental health and well-being is an essential first step to addressing this important issue. Despite the high prevalence of depression among prison inmates, few cases are detected and

Such workshops are not present in the prisons, and where they are provided, they are comatose and most of this officers thereby try to use the inmates for their criminal purposes instead of reforming them. Other facilities such as recreational grounds are not also provided. This is one of the causes of the high rate of inhuman treatment of inmates in Nigeria[6].

6. **Lack of proper classification of inmates:** This is another cause of inhuman treatment and condition of inmates in Nigeria. Different classes of inmates are lumped together in prison cells. First time offenders and recidivists are locked up in the same cells thereby giving room for first offenders to be tortured and maltreated by the hardened criminals and to learn more sophisticated criminal ways of life from the recidivists[10].
7. **Overcrowding:** overcrowding which has now become a defining characteristics of the Nigeria correctional service, and which in many ways leads to the dehumanization of inmates. Overpopulation of the correctional service lead to a deplorable physical and emotional state of inmates, it is a known fact that people tend towards one form of anti-social behavior or another when they are hurdled together in small unconducive areas. The need for more prisons cannot be overemphasized. Due to all the dehumanization attribute that comes with overcrowding of the prison one cannot be surprised that the prison has become a killing ground, or at best crucibles for criminal hardening rather than reform arenas that it should. Overcrowding also leads to diseases which are being suffered by inmates and insufficient medical attention and treatment to treat this inmate and also underfeeding of inmates are also due to overcrowding and underfeeding leads to several health issues[11].

treated. Prison staff may not recognize depression as a mental disorder, and the mental health care available is generally poor. Inadequate mental health and social care not only affects prison inmates' well-being, but may also impact recidivism and health outcomes upon release. Prison inmates should be screened routinely for depression and other less-commonly recognized mental health conditions, and appropriate treatment made available[9]. In Nigeria specifically, human rights watchdogs have

attributed the high rate of mental disorders among prison inmates to overcrowding and lack of privacy, violence, enforced solitude, lack of meaningful activity, isolation from social networks, insecurity about future prospects and inadequate mental health services. Several studies of the prevalence of mood disorders in Nigerian prisons have also identified associated factors, including: demographic characteristics (age, marital status, living situation prior to imprisonment); medical history (current medical complaints, co-morbid physical illness, personal and familial history of mental disorder, self-reported mental health) [34]; frequency of visits to prisoners; duration and status of imprisonment (prison term length, trial status); and prison conditions and services (self-reported ratings of prison accommodation, feeding and healthcare)[34]. Human rights watchdogs have described correctional facilities conditions in the country as harsh, appalling and damaging to the physical and mental health of inmates. Correctional facilities are overstretched and overcrowded, with many holding three times their designated capacities. There are

reports of Nigerian prison inmates sleeping two to a bed or on the floor in filthy cells, with poor sanitation and food and medication in short supply. Prison inmates are routinely tortured, beaten and abused and female inmates especially face the threat of rape. Inmates have also been denied contact with families and friends unless they can afford to bribe prison guards[35]. Medical treatment of Nigerian prison inmates is grossly inadequate. It is generally acknowledged that there is a very low rate of identification and treatment of mental disorders. Prison inmates with mental disorders are in some cases incarcerated with the general prison population and little effort is made to provide mental health care. Inhuman treatment of inmate leads to poor mental health of inmates; it affects their physical, psychological and mental wellbeing and other negative outcomes, such as suicide, violence and victimization in correctional facility. And it also increases the risk of reoffending or recidivism after release. Inhuman treatment of inmates and condition of detention is one of the main causes of recidivism due to lack of rehabilitation and reformation[4].

#### **Theoretical Foundation**

The study adopted the general strain theory as its theoretical foundation. The General Strain theory was propounded by Robert Agnew in 1992[36]. General strain theory explains that when people experience strain, they may respond with crime in order to alleviate the strain and related emotions. According to GST, strains are events and conditions that are disliked. This can take two general forms: objective strain and subjective strain[36]. Objective strain is an event or condition that is disliked by most people. Subjective strain, on the other hand, is an event or condition that is disliked by the person experiencing it. Because not everyone evaluates events and conditions the same (not everyone sees divorce, e.g., as a strenuous event) subjective strains are seen as being stronger predictors of crime. Of these two types of strain, there tend to be three forms the strain comes in: losing something of value,

being treated in an adverse or negative way by others, and not been able to achieve one's goals[36]. As the objective and subjective strain distinction indicates, not all strains are considered equal. Indeed, the most criminogenic strains are those that are perceived as high in magnitude, believed to be unjust, associated with low control, and that create pressure or incentive to engage in criminal coping. The greater magnitude, the more sense of injustice, the less feeling of control, and the greater pressure are all likely to produce negative emotional states such as anger, fear, and sadness. Negative emotion create pressure for corrective action, and crime is one form of corrective action. According to GST, different emotions have different impacts on criminality. For example, anger is more likely to lead to violent crime, whereas envy is more likely to lead to property crimes (e.g., theft).

#### **Method**

##### **Study Design, Study Frame and Sample Size**

The study adopted the use of descriptive survey research. Descriptive survey research seeks to portray in detail the characteristics of individual, groups, areas and situation while defining a frequency of a certain phenomenon under study. It

aimed to identify the relationship between studied variables. Ponto[37] describes survey research as research that involves the collection of data from a sample that has been chosen to represent a population to which the findings of the data analysis

can be generalised. The reason of using descriptive survey design is to identify frequencies, trends, correlations and characteristics of the population. The study area was in Abakaliki Correctional Centre, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. It is the capital of Ebonyi state. It is one of the 13 local governments in Ebonyi state and one of the 774 local government councils in Nigeria. The researcher's choice of Abakaliki Correctional Centre as the study was due to high level of inhumane treatment of inmates resulting to recidivism among the citizens. Abakaliki

is the capital city of Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The entire population of Abakaliki was 223,000 according to the 2022 Census, from which a sample size of 400 was selected using Taro Yamen[38] formula for sample determination.

### Data Collection and Setting

The instrument for data collection were questionnaire and In-depth interview (IDI). The questionnaire was used in collecting quantitative data. A combination of cluster and purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting the four correctional facilities in Abakaliki which includes;

Abakaliki Prison Service, Abakaliki Prison Barracks, Junior Prison Quarters and Nigeria Prison Service. Data were processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages and tables were used for data analysis.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

**Table 1: Respondents' responses on the opinions on causes of inhumane treatment of inmate in Abakaliki correctional institution.**

1	ITEMS	S A	A	D	S D	Mean	Remark
S/N							
1	Inmate in the correctional facility are often treated in an inhumane way as a result of inadequate funding.	132	186	42	40	3.02	Accepted
2	The available facilities and equipment provided in the correction home are of poor quality and not conducive for inmates thereby resulting to inhumane treatments.	203	131	44	22	3.29	Accepted
3	Overcrowding or excessive admission of inmates in a particular cell room triggers inhumane treatments of inmates.	213	142	33	12	3.39	Accepted
4	Lack of professionalism of the prison official adopting torture and other improper correction technique contributes to inhumane treatments of inmates.	129	194	31	46	3.02	Accepted
5	There is low provision for adequate medication tools and treatment of inmates when unhealthy.	130	210	41	19	3.13	Accepted

### Source: Field Survey, 2023

Keywords: SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), D (Disagree), S D (Strongly Disagree). Table 1 shows that a majority 213 (3.39%) is of the opinion that overcrowding and excessive admission of inmates is triggered to an inhumane treatments while 129 (3.02%) of the respondents opined that lack of professionalism by prison official also result to inhumane treatment of inmates. The findings agreed

with the data from the in-depth interview. One of the staff officials said:

Overcrowding and excessive admission are the major causes of inhumane treatment of inmates in Correctional Centre. *The number of inmates admitted far outweighs the cells provided to harbour them. It is quite unfortunate (Male, 47 years, Staff, Abakaliki).*



Another official who was moved with tears said:

*In her affirmation, only God will help and deliver us. This is so disturbing and more like a*

*hell, there is a great problem in the country. (Female staff, 38 years, Abakaliki).*

**Table 2: Respondents' responses on the effect of inhumane treatment on inmates in Abakaliki correctional centre**

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
1	Harsh treatments on inmates does affect their wellbeing both physically and psychologically.	223	122	35	20	3.37	Accepted
2	Inmates in some cases does feel sad and stressed when treated harshly.	152	185	39	24	3.87	Accepted
3	The constant maltreatment of inmates increases their feelings of depression and hopelessness.	141	173	35	51	3.01	Accepted
4	When inmates are treated in a harsh manner and tortured, it does makes them less violent.	48	31	202	119	2.02	Rejected
5	Does harsh manner in treatment of inmates makes them tough and as such returns back to the society as a changed person.	37	29	154	180	1.81	Rejected

**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

Keywords: SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), D (Disagree), S D (Strongly Disagree)

Table 2 shows that a majority 223 (33.7%) of the respondents are of the opinion that harsh treatments does pose a negative effect on their psychological and physical wellbeing while 141 (3.01%) of the respondents opined that it increases their feelings of depression and hopelessness. The findings corroborates with the data from the in-depth interview guide. One of the respondents stated thus:

*Looking at the situation, you may agree with me that harsh treatments has not only affected the psychological and physical wellbeing, but also deprived them of their fundamental human rights.*

Another respondent who look despaired had this to say:

*Look me nah, any hope again? We don finish for this place, everything is taken away from us. Life go ever better after leaving here to go back to the society! Fear dey catch me oo!*

**Table 3: Respondents' responses on whether inhumane treatment result to recidivism of inmates**

S/N	ITEMS	S A	A	D	S D	Mean	Remark
1	Is it possible for ex-convict to go back to the world of criminality if not reintegrated properly while in the correction home?	211	137	29	23	3.34	Accepted
2	The way inmates are treated in the correctional institution does not have anything with their behaviours when they goes back to the society.	33	39	163	165	1.85	Rejected
3	Most inmates who relapse into crime upon entering back to the society is caused by improper correction while serving terms.	223	144	19	14	3.44	Accepted
4	Inhumane treatment of inmates as it regards to their welfare and wellbeing often results them into going back to crime.	207	155	17	21	3.37	Accepted
5	The way inmates are ill-treated does not help sharpen their behaviours, other than hardening their heart.	199	141	32	28	3.28	Accepted

**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

Keywords: SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), D (Disagree), S D (Strongly Disagree)

Table 1 shows that a majority 223 (3.44%) of the respondents opined that inhumane treatments of inmates has the possibility of relapsing back into criminality while 33(1.85%) of the respondents rejected saying it has nothing to do with their attitudinal behaviour. One of the respondents said:

*I can tell you in my humble submission that inhumane treatment does not only have the possibility of going back to crime, but has also hardened the hearts of most of them giving the circumstances they were handled. They are determined to continue in their bad ways in as much as they are let go.*

**Table 4: Respondents' responses on the possible measures to curb inhumane treatment and recidivism among inmates in Abakaliki correctional institution**

S/N	ITEMS	S A	A	D	S D	Mean	Remark
1	If necessary actions are taken, inhumane treatments of inmates will be curbed.	215	146	23	16	3.40	Accepted
2	If inhumane treatments of inmates are addressed, there will be decline of ex-inmate going back to crime upon release.	192	149	33	26	3.27	Accepted
3	If all required amenities and equipments needed for effective treatment of inmates are provided, inhumane treatments will be eradicated and recidivism will decline.	156	187	29	28	3.18	Accepted
4	If overcrowding in the correctional institution is stopped, inmates will be conducive and treated well.	143	188	36	33	3.10	Accepted
5	The adequate provision of food, water and medication items will make inmates to be well treated and reduce the likelihood of going back to criminality again.	200	135	40	25	3.28	Accepted
6	The abolition of torture and other ill-treatment on inmates will give them sense of belongingness and reduce relapsing into crime upon release.	131	189	33	47	3.01	Accepted

**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

Keywords: SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), D (Disagree), S D (Strongly Disagree)

Table 4 shows that a majority 200 (3.28%) of the respondents opined that adequate provision of food, water an medication will reduce inhumane treatment

and recidivism while 131 (3.01%) of the respondents opined that total abolition of inhumane treatments of inmates will definitely enhance proper correction of inmates as they will be decline in the level of recidivism. The finding is in tandem with data from the in-depth interview. One of the respondents noted with dismay, special treatments given to some inmates. She maintained thus:

*Most of the children of the big men are not treated like criminals, rather they receive special treatments of the same crime committed by the*

*ordinary man in the street. How do you justify that? Naija, I weep! (Female, 54 years, Prison Staff, Abakaliki).*

Another respondent looking disgruntled by the idea as he said:

*Life no balance at all, na true talk ooo! See my fellow man, na king him be for this place for the same offense way me commit. God, we dey your hands! (Male, 41 years, Inmate, Abakaliki).*

### CONCLUSION

With respect to the analysis and discussion of the research findings, the conclusion is reached that inhumane treatment of inmates leads to recidivism. It compliments the need for a better corrective approach in order to stop recidivism. The rise in recidivism has been driven by an ever-increasing violence and ill treatment of inmates while in custody, bad living conditions, force feeding, and equally underfeeding, lack of trained prison staffs, incommunicado detention, no medical attention, body searches, bad cell conditions etc. On the other hand, the inhumane treatment of inmates equally has led to an upsurge in the rate of crime and more hardened criminals, leading to an unsafe society, prison congestion due to relapse, and also leading to a slim chance of the offender to accept rehabilitation and reformation in the future. Inhumane treatment that inmates receive in prison equally makes them more hardened than they were as star criminals, leading to the occurrences of more felonious and heinous crimes. The aim of our correctional institution is to transform and reform offenders so that they can be able to reintegrate into society after

the completion of their prison term. However, the reformative role which our correctional center are supposed to play, has not been possible because firstly, the prison population and congestion has made it cumbersome for inmates to go through the process of rehabilitation effectively within the prison. Secondly, the inhumane and degrading treatment the offenders are being subjected to has contributed to dehumanizing them and the lack of rehabilitation facilities makes our correctional institution incapable of refining inmates. Thus, in order to move our correctional facilities to a better standard and reposition it so it produces the corresponding results expected from any correctional facility. The government has to show through financial support and other necessary supports that they are taking consistent action to ensure that our prisons are decongested. This will in turn ensure that our correctional center are devoid of inhumane practices and are meeting up to the standard of other correctional facilities around the world that are being reputed as good correctional center.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Our Correctional center officials and our correctional system should treat the Nigerian inmates in a manner that conforms with the rights they have been guaranteed under the Nigerian Correctional Act, the ACJA Act and the Nigerian Constitution.
2. The government should make provision for the construction of more correctional centers to tackle the problem of overcrowding in our prisons. The government should set up a special team of officials, who will be in charge of ensuring that the number of inmates accommodated in each correctional facility

does not exceed the maximum capacity that each prison can take.

3. More Non-Governmental Organizations and humanitarian agencies should be set up and have the specific mandate to look out for the rights and interests of inmates who are being incarcerated within our correctional facilities.

4. The government should allocate a special budget for our correctional center and refurbish the structure of our prisons so it can be modernized. The budget should cover the feeding, health care for inmates, provision of sanitary workers who will be employed to clean up the cells regularly and the

provision of facilities that would aid to rehabilitate and improve the welfare of inmate

5. The government should make provision for a special hospital to be set up close to the correctional facilities in every state specifically for inmates in our Nigerian correctional facilities.

6. Our correctional institution should adopt a new system where the inmates awaiting trial are allocated special badges or uniforms for the purpose of identifying the reason why they are awaiting trial and how long they have been awaiting trial.

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**CITEAS: Francis Ogonnia Egwu, Chidi Philip Okorie, Aleke Jude Uchechukwu and Pius Elot Etan (2024). Assessing the Treatment of Inmate and Recidivism in Abakaliki Correctional Centre, Ebonyi State-Nigeria. *IAA Journal of Arts and Humanities* 11(2):8-21**  
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