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## Sociodemographic Predictors of Correctional Adjustment Among Inmates of Selected Correctional Centres, Nasarawa State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This study examined Sociodemographic Predictors of Correctional Adjustment among Inmates of Selected Correctional Centres, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Employing a survey design, data were collected from a sample of 326 inmates which comprise of 222 (68.1%) Male, 104 (31.9%) Female, the age of the participants includes Less than 25 years, 174 (53.4%), 26–35 years 125 (38.3%), 36 above 27 (8.3%) while base on Marital Status, Single 174 (53.4%) Married 152 (46.6%). Participants were drawn using purposive sampling from three correctional centres: Medium Security Correctional Centre, Keffi (New site) and Medium Security Correctional Centre, Nasarawa. The instruments used included the Social Support Scale and Prisoner's Adjustment Scale (PAS), all demonstrating acceptable reliability coefficients. Two hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analyses, as well as one-way ANOVA, at a 0.05 level of significance. Results revealed that Perceived social support dimensions jointly influenced adjustment ( $R = .369$ ,  $R^2 = .136$ ,  $F(3, 322) = 16.882$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with informational support emerging as the only significant individual predictor ( $\beta = .246$ ,  $t = 2.742$ ,  $p = .006$ ). Demographic variables collectively explained 62% of the variance in adjustment ( $F(53, 272) = 8.380$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with age, marital status, and educational level showing significant effects. Based on these findings, it is recommended that correctional staff should prioritize providing informational support to equip inmates with necessary knowledge for adaptation.

**Keywords:** Sociodemographic, predictors, inmates, adjustments, correctional centres

### 1. Introduction

The adjustment process involves how incarcerated inmates respond to the distinct challenges of being in correctional centre, including coping with the correctional setting, managing their emotions, dealing with loss of freedom, facing social isolation, and navigating the intricate social hierarchy within the correctional centre. Gaining insight into the factors affecting this

adjustment is crucial for creating effective rehabilitation programs aimed at decreasing repeat offenses and encouraging positive results for individuals after their release (Haney, 2021; McGuire, 2021).

Adjustment in correctional centre includes various social and demographic mechanisms that help inmates handle the pressures of confinement. Effective adjustment is marked by the capability to control emotions, establish daily routines, and

participate in correctional activities, which can enhance mental health and overall well-being (Sykes, 1958; Gendreau et al., 2021). In contrast, inadequate adjustment can lead to heightened anxiety, depression, and behavioural problems, which may impede an inmate's settlement in the facility and further reintegration into society after release (Harris et al., 2022). The well-being of incarcerated individuals goes beyond just physical health; it also encompasses psychological stability, social functionality, and emotional resilience. It is vital to sustain well-being in a correctional setting, as inmates faced stressors such as the loss of autonomy, societal stigma, and strained personal relationships (Haney, 2020).

Adjustment, as defined by Whitney (2001), refers to an individual's consistent pattern of response to stress across various areas, including emotional, behavioural, and physical dimensions. Gate and Gersilds (1993) and Bakare (1990) view adjustment as the capacity of a person to navigate their new life circumstances and experiences to foster a more harmonious relationship with their environment or to feel comfortable within specific social settings. Adjustment within a correctional context entails that incarcerated individuals conform to the norms of their new societal environment, to be more adaptive, gain acceptance, and avoid legal repercussions.

According to Tafida et al. (2019), adjustment can be divided into categories of social and emotional adjustment. Social adjustment is understood as an individual's efforts to align with the standards, values, and needs of society (or prison) for acceptance, while emotional adjustment refers to an individual's ability to maintain emotional stability amid internal and external stressors necessitating acceptance and adaptation. A failure to adjust properly to the correctional environment might indicate that the inmate lacks adequate support from relevant parties (Tafida et al., 2019).

On the other hand, social support, which

encompasses the emotional, informational, and practical help offered by others, acts as a vital buffer against the stressors of incarceration (Cohen & Wills, 1985). In a correctional setting, social support can come from family members, peers, correctional staff, or outside organizations. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that inmates who feel they have a strong support system are better equipped to handle the difficulties of imprisonment (Haney, 2020).

According to Hogan et al., (2002), social support is the perception and actuality that one is cared for, has assistance available from other people and that one is part of a supportive social network. The supportive resources can be emotional (e.g. nurturance), tangible (e.g. financial assistance), informational (e.g. advice). Social support can be measured as the perception that, one has assistance available, the actual received assistance, or the degree to which a person is integrated in a social network. Support can come from many sources, such as family, friends, neighbours, co-workers, organizations, etc.

Social support as explained by this study is both material and emotional support. The material support refers to the form of assistance such as food, clothes and money given to an individual to cushion his or her difficult situations. On the other hand, emotional support is a kind of support such as solidarity, encouragement, love, suggestions as well as assurances that an individual receives from his or her significant others for better adjustment in strange situation or in stressful circumstances. In this study, the multiple social support comprises support from family, friends and significant others (co-workers, prison officers, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and Government).

Social support plays a crucial role in helping inmates adapt by diminishing feelings of isolation, boosting self-esteem, and offering practical help like legal assistance or financial aid. For instance, visits from family and friends have been associated

with lower rates of reoffending and better mental health outcomes (Blevins et al., 2021). Additionally, positive engagement with correctional staff can build a sense of trust and collaboration, which is vital for maintaining order within the institution and facilitating rehabilitation.

### Statement of the Problem

The challenging conditions within Nigerian correctional facilities have become a significant concern, fostering an environment that heightens the occurrence of mental health problems and maladaptive behaviours among inmates, complicating their abilities to adapt to their surroundings, undergo rehabilitation, and successfully reintegrate into society upon their release (Agomoh, 2020).

According to Loner (2019), these unfavourable conditions in correctional settings present inmates with considerable challenges that lead to maladjustments. Maladjustment pertains to the struggles individuals face when trying to adapt to the correctional setting, which can be expressed through various psychological, emotional, and behavioural difficulties. Inmates frequently suffer from increased anxiety, depression, and stress, stemming from the loss of freedom, social seclusion, and the often severe and unpredictable nature of the correctional environment. These adjustment challenges can result in maladaptive coping mechanisms such as aggression, substance abuse, or withdrawal and isolation, with some instances leading to suicide; these issues further complicate their abilities to adapt to the correctional and rehabilitative atmosphere. The ineffectiveness of coping strategies frequently obstructs their participation in rehabilitation programs, adversely affecting their mental health and raising the chances of recidivism after release (Haney, 2021; Gendreau et al., 2021).

Additionally, inmates' adjustment is affected by the unpleasant environmental conditions present in correctional facilities, which encompass insufficient functional healthcare

resources, educational and vocational training opportunities, and the presence of unqualified correctional staff, all of which impede inmates' coping skills and preparation for post-release life (Haney, 2018).

### Research Objectives

The following research objectives were achieved in this study:

1. To investigate the influence of Perceived social support (emotional support, informational support and instrumental support) on correctional adjustment among inmates of selected correctional centres in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.
2. To access the influence of Demographic variables (age, marital status, level of education, gender, family type) on correctional adjustment among inmates of selected correctional centres in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

### Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. Perceived social support (emotional support, informational support and instrumental support) will significantly influence correctional adjustment among inmates of selected correctional centres in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.
2. Demographic variables (age, marital status, level of education, gender, family type) will jointly and independently influence correctional adjustment among inmates of selected correctional centres in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

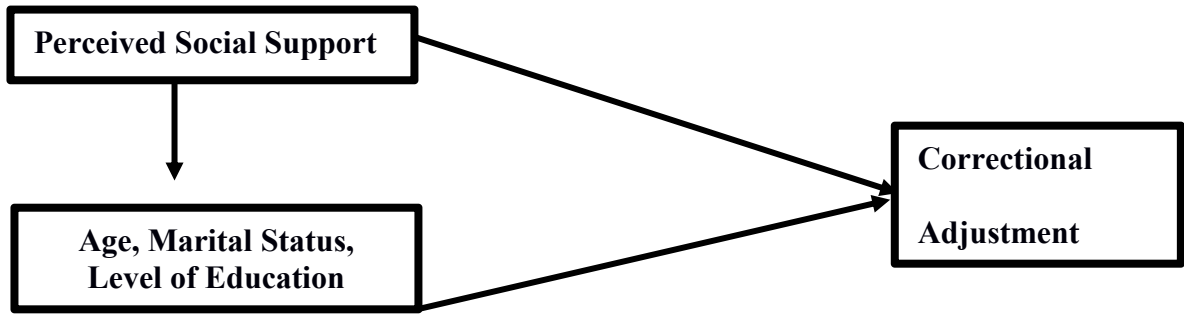
Moreover, the dynamic between inmates and correctional personnel can be strained, diminishing the likelihood of receiving positive social support and fostering amicable relationships within the correctional environment (Hochstetler, 2020).

Past studies by Tafida et al. (2019) examined the effect of social support on prison adjustment among inmates at Keffi prison in Nasarawa State. From a total of 600 inmates, the researchers randomly selected 125 participants using prison records, comprising 100 males and 25 females aged 18 and older. The study tested two hypotheses, and the results indicated that (a) social support variables collectively predicted general adjustment ( $R^2 = .31$ ;  $F = 27.40$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), social adjustment ( $R^2 = .16$ ;  $F = 11.75$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and emotional adjustment ( $R^2 = .35$ ;  $F = 32.39$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) among inmates; (b) material support was found to independently predict general, social, and emotional adjustment, while emotional support did not predict social adjustment. The findings were discussed in relation to existing literature, concluding that social support plays a significant role in inmates' adjustment.

Additionally, Pettus-Davis et al. (2016) explored the role of social support in the lives of prisoners, focusing on gender

differences in social support experiences among men and women being released from prison. Their multivariate regression analysis revealed that female inmates reported higher levels of positive and mixed social support compared to male inmates, who experienced more negative social support. However, no gender differences were found in anticipated social support. The researchers concluded that the higher rates of reported social support among female inmates were likely due to more frequent visits from loved ones compared to their male counterparts.

Research suggests that the adjustment of inmates is shaped by both individual psychological factors and broader social variables in general (Madson et al., 2022). Specifically, this study highlights the significance demographic variables and social support in promoting positive adjustment, yet these areas remain underexplored within Nigerian correctional settings.



**Figure 1: Research Model explaining interactions among the study Variables**

The research model illustrates how various independent variables influence correctional adjustment among inmates. It highlights the direct influence perceived social support and demographic factors such as age, marital status, and education level on correctional adjustment. These independent variables shape how inmates adapt to the correctional environment, either positively or negatively,

depending on their individual characteristics and experiences.

Demographic factors such as age, marital status, and level of education also exert a direct influence on correctional adjustment. Marital status can also play a role, as married inmates may receive emotional support from their spouses, which can contribute to a more positive prison experience. Education level further influences adjustment, as inmates with higher education may have better problem-

solving skills and a greater capacity to engage in constructive activities, while those with lower education levels may struggle with institutional demands and rules. The model emphasizes that these independent variables do not only interact with each other but also have direct effects on correctional adjustment.

### **Design**

This study employed a survey design which utilises standardised questionnaires to gather participants' opinions about the key variable of the study, this enables the researcher draw conclusions and the formulation of policies related to the topic. This design was deemed the most suitable for the research since the participants are already incarcerated.

### **Population, Sample and Sampling Technique**

The population of this research comprises of 1,254 inmates from Keffi and 1006 inmates in Nasarwa Correctional Custodian Centres, Nasarawa State with total population of 2,260. This is based on the records made available to the researcher. The socio-demographic characteristics (Age, marital status, family type, gender and Educational level) of the participants were considered when collecting data for this research.

The researcher utilised the Taro Yamane formula to determine the sample size. This is a common formula used in social sciences research to calculate the sample size based on a given population size and desired margin of error. The calculated sample size is approximately 339

### **Methods of Data Collection**

The study adopts four research instruments for collection of data. The instruments are described below

#### **Social Support Scale**

This instrument was designed by Tafida et al. (2019) it is a 24-item questionnaire designed to measure social support among prisoners. The instrument comprises of two

components: material support and emotional support. Twelve of the items (1,5,7,8,12,13,15,16,17,18, 19 and 23) measures the material support component which refers to the form of assistance such as food, clothes and money given to an individual to cushion his or her difficult situations. For example, item 1 of the scale reads thus “members of my family often visit me in the prison with food and clothes”. The other twelve items comprising of items 2,3,4,6,9,10,11,14,20,21,22 and 24 measures the emotional support component which refers to the kind of support such as solidarity, encouragement, love, suggestions as well as assurances that an individual receives from his or her significant others, An example of the emotional support component, item 2, read thus” my family always encourages me that I will overcome my situation”, The instrument was measured on a 5-point Likert type response options ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). All the items of the instrument had direct scoring, High scores on the instrument show that an individual is materially and emotionally supported whereas the low scores shows lower social support. The instrument yielded a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.80 indicating that the instrument has high reliability to measure social support.

#### **Prisoner's Adjustment Scale (PAS)**

This instrument was developed by Tafida et al. (2019). The 32-item scale had two components described as “social adjustment and emotional adjustment. Fourteen items 1,3,5,7,8,17,19,20,21,26,27,29,30 and 18 measured social adjustment which taps information on the effort made by an individual to cope with standards, values and needs of a society in order to be accepted. For example, item 7 of the instrument that measured social adjustment read thus “I participate actively in religious activities”. Eighteen items made up of items 2,4,6,9,10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, and 32 measured the emotional adjustment component, which taps a



respondent's ability to maintain emotional equilibrium in the face of internal and external stressors that warrant acceptance and adaptation. For example, item 2 of the emotional adjustment read thus "staying in the prison environment makes me angry". The 32 items of the instrument were measured on a five point Likert type response options ranging from Very Much unlike Me (1) to Very Much Like Me (5). All the items on the components of the instrument had direct scoring. High scores on each of the components of the instrument indicate that an individual is socially and emotionally adjusted to the prison environment, while low scores indicated poor adjustment levels. The instrument reported a reliability coefficient of 0.83 indicating a high reliability of the instrument.

0.05 level of significance using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS – 27).

### **Procedure**

The researcher obtained letter of introduction from the department of Psychology, Nasarawa State University Keffi to the State Comptroller of Correction by the researcher prior to the administration of the questionnaires. The administration of the questionnaire was done at both the Keffi and Nasarawa Correctional Custodian Centres in Nasarawa State, where the participants were purposively drawn. Additionally, verbal consent from prospective participants were obtained after a brief explanation of the research purpose. Those who consented were administered the questionnaire with assurances of anonymity and confidentiality regarding their responses. Participants were also informed that they have the right to withdraw at any point if they feel inclined to discontinue the exercise.

### **Techniques for Data Analysis**

Demographic variables were be analysed using descriptive statistics which includes frequency table and percentage. Multiple linear regression was used to analyse the first hypotheses 1, while analysis of variance was used for hypothesis 2 all at

## Data Presentation and Analysis

**Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Demographic	Category	Frequency	Percent
Correctional Centre	M.S.C.C. Nasarawa	147	45.1
	M.S.C.C. Keffi (New)	179	54.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Gender	Male	222	68.1
	Female	104	31.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Age	Less than 25 years	174	53.4
	26–35	125	38.3
	36 above	27	8.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Marital Status	Single	174	53.4
	Married	152	46.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Family Type	Nuclear	167	51.2
	Extended Family	99	30.4
	Single Family	60	18.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Educational Qualification	Below secondary school	168	51.5
	NCE/ND	68	20.9
	Degree/HND	59	18.1
	Post Graduate	31	9.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4.1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The result shows that the majority (54.9%) of respondents were from the Medium Security Correctional Centre, Keffi (New site), while 45.1% from the Medium Security Correctional Centre, Nasarawa Correctional Centre. In terms of gender, most respondents were male (68.1%) compared to female (31.9%). Age distribution indicates that more than half (53.4%) were below 25 years, 38.3% fell within 26–35 years, while only 8.3% were 36 years and above.

Marital status reveals that a slight majority were single (53.4%) compared to 46.6% married. Regarding family type, the nuclear family dominated (51.2%), followed by extended (30.4%) and single-parent families (18.4%). Finally, education levels show that most respondents (51.5%) had below secondary school education, while others had NCE/ND (20.9%), Degree/HND (18.1%), and Postgraduate (9.5%).

## Hypothesis Testing

Below are the result of the hypotheses tested

### Hypothesis One

There will be a significant influence of Perceived social support (emotional support, informational support and instrumental support) on correctional adjustment among inmates of selected correctional centres in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

**Table 2 Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the influence of Perceived Social Support on Correctional Adjustment among Inmates**

DV	Predator	R	R <sub>2</sub>	F	df	95%CI	$\beta$	t	p
Correctional Adjustment	Constant	.369	.136	16.882	3,322				.000
	Emotional Support	.099				[-.266, 1.026]	.099	1.158	.248
	Informational Support	.246				[.231, 1.404]	.246	2.742	.006
	Instrumental Support	.064				[-.266, .860]	.064	1.039	.300

Table 2 presents the multiple regression analysis conducted to examine the joint and individual influence of perceived social support dimensions (emotional, informational, and instrumental support) on correctional adjustment among inmates. The overall model was statistically significant,  $R = .369$ ,  $R^2 = .136$ ,  $F(3, 322) = 16.882$ ,  $p < .001$ , indicating that the three forms of social support collectively explained 13.6% of the variance in correctional adjustment. When examined individually, informational support emerged as a significant predictor of correctional adjustment ( $\beta = .246$ ,  $t = 2.742$ ,  $p = .006$ , 95% CI [.231, 1.404]). This suggests that inmates who perceived higher levels of informational support (e.g., guidance, advice, or practical knowledge) were more likely to adjust effectively in the correctional environment. On the other hand, emotional support ( $\beta = .099$ ,  $t = 1.158$ ,  $p = .248$ , 95% CI [-.266, 1.026]) and instrumental support ( $\beta = .064$ ,  $t = 1.039$ ,  $p = .300$ , 95% CI [-.266, .860]) did not significantly predict correctional adjustment. Although these forms of support may play a role in inmates' lives,

their influence was not strong enough to reach statistical significance in this model. The findings suggest that informational support plays a more critical role in helping inmates adjust than emotional or instrumental support. This aligns with prior studies emphasizing that access to relevant information, guidance, and problem-solving strategies can enhance resilience and adaptation in structured environments such as correctional centres. The result concludes that perceived social support significantly influences correctional adjustment among inmates, with informational support being the strongest predictor. Emotional and instrumental support, while relevant, did not show a statistically significant influence.

### Hypothesis Two

There will be a significant influence of Demographic variables (age, marital status, level of education, gender, family type) on correctional adjustment among inmates of selected correctional centres in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. This hypothesis was tested using univariate analysis of variance presented in table 3

**Table 3 One-way ANOVA showing the influence of Demographic variables (age, marital status, level of education, gender, family type) on correctional adjustment among inmates**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	$\eta^2$
Corrected Model	106207.785 <sup>a</sup>	53	2003.920	8.380	.000	.620
Intercept	999450.373	1	999450.373	4179.546	.000	.939



Gender	191.275	1	191.275	.800	.372	.003
Age	6000.722	2	3000.361	12.547	.000	.084
MaS	1443.506	1	1443.506	6.037	.015	.022
Fam_T	587.906	2	293.953	1.229	.294	.009
ELQ	2773.443	3	924.481	3.866	.010	.041
Gender * Age	97.723	1	97.723	.409	.523	.002
Gender * MaS	793.935	1	793.935	3.320	.070	.012
Gender * Fam_T	1112.610	2	556.305	2.326	.100	.017
Gender * ELQ	1573.258	2	786.629	3.290	.039	.024
Age * MaS	2248.611	2	1124.305	4.702	.010	.033
Age * Fam_T	2841.878	2	1420.939	5.942	.003	.042
Age * ELQ	7809.113	4	1952.278	8.164	.000	.107
MaS * Fam_T	22274.012	2	11137.006	46.573	.000	.255
MaS * ELQ	2031.308	3	677.103	2.832	.039	.030
Fam_T * ELQ	2961.554	5	592.311	2.477	.032	.044
Gender * Age * MaS	.000	0	.	.	.	.000
Gender * Age * Fam_T	.000	0	.	.	.	.000
Gender * Age * ELQ	.000	0	.	.	.	.000
Gender * MaS * Fam_T	8.833	1	8.833	.037	.848	.000
Gender * MaS * ELQ	2175.114	2	1087.557	4.548	.011	.032
Gender * Fam_T * ELQ	545.703	2	272.852	1.141	.321	.008
Age * MaS * Fam_T	339.688	1	339.688	1.421	.234	.005
Age * MaS * ELQ	6389.052	3	2129.684	8.906	.000	.089
Age * Fam_T * ELQ	165.757	1	165.757	.693	.406	.003
MaS * Fam_T * ELQ	4737.144	2	2368.572	9.905	.000	.068
Gender * Age * MaS * Fam_T	.000	0	.	.	.	.000
Gender * Age * MaS * ELQ	.000	0	.	.	.	.000
Gender * Age * Fam_T * ELQ	.000	0	.	.	.	.000
Gender * MaS * Fam_T * ELQ	.000	0	.	.	.	.000
Age * MaS * Fam_T * ELQ	.000	0	.	.	.	.000
Gender * Age * MaS * Fam_T *	.000	0	.	.	.	.000
ELQ						
Error	65043.065	272	239.129			
Total	2931803.000	326				
Corrected Total	171250.850	325				

***a. R Squared = .620 (Adjusted R Squared = .546)***

Table 3 shows the results of a one-way ANOVA examining the influence of demographic variables (age, marital status, level of education, gender, and family type) on correctional adjustment among inmates. The overall model was statistically significant,  $F(53, 272) = 8.380$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .620$  (Adjusted  $R^2 = .546$ ), indicating that the demographic variables collectively explained about 62% of the variance in correctional adjustment, which is a large effect size ( $\eta^2 = .620$ ). Looking at the individual predictors: Age had a statistically significant effect on correctional adjustment,  $F(2, 272) = 12.547$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .084$ ,

showing a moderate effect size. This means that younger and older inmates differed in their level of adjustment, with younger inmates tending to adjust less effectively. Marital status was significant,  $F(1, 272) = 6.037$ ,  $p = .015$ ,  $\eta^2 = .022$ , although the effect size was small. This suggests that being single or married influenced inmates' adjustment to some degree. Educational qualification was also significant,  $F(3, 272) = 3.866$ ,  $p = .010$ ,  $\eta^2 = .041$ , indicating that inmates' level of education had a meaningful influence on their adjustment, with those having higher education levels likely showing better adjustment. Gender did not

significantly predict correctional adjustment,  $F(1, 272) = .800$ ,  $p = .372$ ,  $\eta^2 = .003$ , suggesting that male and female inmates adjusted similarly. Family type was not significant,  $F(2, 272) = 1.229$ ,  $p = .294$ ,  $\eta^2 = .009$ , indicating little difference between nuclear, extended, or single-parent family backgrounds in terms of adjustment.

Interaction effects were also tested. Significant interactions were observed between gender and education ( $p = .039$ ), age and education ( $p < .001$ ), marital status and family type ( $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .255$ , large effect), marital status and education ( $p = .039$ ), family type and education ( $p = .032$ ), age  $\times$  marital status  $\times$  education ( $p < .001$ ), and marital status  $\times$  family type  $\times$  education ( $p < .001$ ). These results suggest that correctional adjustment is shaped not only by individual demographics but also by how these characteristics interact with one another. The findings conclude that age, marital status, and level of education significantly influenced correctional adjustment among inmates, while gender and family type did not have significant independent effects. However, several interaction effects, particularly between marital status and family type (large effect,  $\eta^2 = .255$ ), further highlight that the combined impact of demographics plays a critical role in shaping inmates' adjustment. Overall, the analysis demonstrates that demographic factors are important predictors of inmates' ability to adapt within correctional centres.

## Discussion of Findings

The first hypothesis investigates the influence of Perceived social support (emotional support, informational support and instrumental support) on correctional adjustment among inmates of selected correctional centres in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The multiple regression analysis revealed that perceived social support dimensions—emotional, informational, and instrumental support—jointly accounted for 13.6% of the variance in correctional

adjustment among inmates in selected correctional centres in Nasarawa State, Nigeria ( $R = .369$ ,  $R^2 = .136$ ,  $F(3, 322) = 16.882$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This finding underscores the collective importance of social support in facilitating inmates' adaptation to the correctional environment. However, when examined individually, only informational support significantly predicted correctional adjustment ( $\beta = .246$ ,  $t = 2.742$ ,  $p = .006$ ), while emotional and instrumental support did not show significant effects. This suggests that practical guidance, advice, and knowledge provided to inmates may be more critical for their successful adjustment than emotional comfort or tangible aid alone.

In contrast, the no significant effects of emotional and instrumental support in this study are consistent with some prior research suggesting that while these forms of support are beneficial, their impact on behavioural and institutional adjustment may be less direct or moderated by other factors. For instance, Smith and Lee (2023) reported that emotional support contributed to psychological well-being but was not a strong predictor of rule compliance or behavioural adjustment over time. Likewise, Al-Masri and Wilson (2022) found that instrumental support, such as housing and employment assistance, was more influential in post-release community adjustment than during incarceration itself. These findings suggest that emotional and instrumental support may play more substantial roles outside the prison environment or in conjunction with other psychosocial resources.

Moreover, Johnson and Patel (2024) emphasized that emotional support is crucial for reducing depression and anxiety among female inmates, which indirectly facilitates adjustment by improving mental health. However, their study also noted that emotional support alone might not translate into observable behavioural changes within the correctional facility. This nuance may explain why emotional support did not significantly predict correctional adjustment

in the current study, which focused on behavioural and institutional adaptation rather than solely psychological outcomes. It is possible that emotional support's benefits manifest more strongly in inmates' internal states rather than in measurable adjustment behaviours.

The second hypothesis states that demographic variables (age, marital status, level of education, gender, and family type) will significantly influence correctional adjustment among inmates of selected correctional centres in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The findings of the present study indicate a significant influence of demographic variables on correctional adjustment among inmates in selected correctional centres in Nasarawa State, Nigeria, supporting the stated hypothesis. The overall model was statistically significant, explaining approximately 62% of the variance in correctional adjustment, which is a large effect size. Specifically, age, marital status, and level of education were significant predictors, while gender and family type were not.

The significant influence of age on correctional adjustment, with younger inmates showing poorer adjustment, aligns with recent empirical evidence. For instance, Smith et al. (2022) found that younger inmates often face greater challenges in adapting to prison environments due to less developed coping mechanisms and social skills, which can hinder their adjustment. Similarly, Johnson and Lee (2023) reported that older inmates tend to have better psychological resilience and social support networks, facilitating smoother adjustment processes.

In addition, Marital status was found to significantly influence correctional adjustment among inmates, suggesting that being married or single influences inmates' coping and adaptation. This finding is consistent with the work of Martinez and Brown (2021), who demonstrated that married inmates often benefit from emotional support

from spouses, which positively influence their psychological adjustment. Conversely, single inmates may lack such support, leading to increased adjustment difficulties.

Educational qualification emerged as a meaningful predictor, with higher education levels associated with better correctional adjustment. This is supported by studies conducted by Chen et al. (2022), who found that education enhances inmates' problem-solving skills and self-efficacy, which are critical for effective adjustment in correctional settings. Education also provides inmates with hope and motivation for post-release reintegration, further promoting positive adjustment.

In contrast, gender and family type did not significantly influence correctional adjustment in this study. This finding is in line with the study by Osei and Mensah (2021), who reported no significant gender differences in prison adjustment, suggesting that male and female inmates may experience similar challenges and coping strategies. Additionally, family type was not a significant factor, which may indicate that the immediate family structure has less impact on inmates' adjustment compared to other demographic factors.

## Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that perceived social support and demographic variables significantly influence correctional adjustment among inmates in selected correctional centres in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Specifically, inmates with Informational support emerged as the most critical dimension of perceived social support, highlighting the importance of guidance and practical knowledge in facilitating inmates' adaptation. Additionally, demographic factors such as age, marital status, and educational level significantly affect inmates' adjustment, with younger, single, and less educated inmates facing greater challenges. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of correctional adjustment, shaped by individual

psychological resources, social support systems, and socio-demographic characteristics.

The results emphasize the need for correctional policies and rehabilitation programs that holistically address these factors to improve inmates' well-being and reduce maladjustment. Overall, this study contributes valuable insights for developing comprehensive strategies aimed at promoting positive correctional adjustment and reducing recidivism in Nigerian correctional centres.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this studies, the following recommendations are made.

1. Correctional staff and counsellors should provide consistent and accessible informational support, including guidance on institutional rules, educational opportunities, and post-release planning, as these will significantly aids inmates' adjustment.
2. Forensic psychologist should develop tailored interventions to address the specific needs of younger inmates, single individuals, and those with lower educational attainment, who are at higher risk of maladjustment.
3. Psychologist and correctional officers should encourage Family involvement and marital support programs to strengthen emotional support networks that contribute positively to inmates' psychological well-being and adjustment.
4. Correctional policies should integrate comprehensive social support systems that combine emotional, instrumental, and informational assistance to address the holistic needs of inmates.

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