

## Perception of Personnel of Correctional Centers on Influence of Guidance Services on the Behaviour of Inmates at the Minna Centers, Niger State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*This study examined the Perception of Personnel of Correctional Centers on the Influence of Guidance Services on the Behaviour of Inmates at the Minna Centers, Niger State. Two objectives, two research questions, and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study aimed to determine how correctional personnel perceive the role and effectiveness of guidance services in shaping inmates' behaviour within correctional settings. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised 369 correctional personnel (232 males and 137 females) drawn from the Old and New Correctional Centers in Minna, Niger State. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling table, a sample size of 186 personnel (111 males and 75 females) was selected through a simple random sampling technique to ensure fair representation of all departments and genders. Two instruments were used for data collection: the Perception of Guidance Services Questionnaire (PGSQ) and the Perceived Influence of Guidance Services on Inmates' Behaviour Scale (PIGSIBS). The study concludes and revealed that educational and vocational guidance services significantly influence inmates' attitudes and behavioural outcomes in correctional facilities. Educational guidance promotes compliance with institutional rules and fosters discipline and responsibility, while Vocational guidance reduces aggression by engaging inmates in productive skill acquisition programs. The study recommends that correctional authorities integrate educational guidance into rehabilitation programs, expand and resource vocational training opportunities, strengthen, and ensure continuous rehabilitation follow-up and aftercare services to facilitate successful reintegration and minimize reoffending.*

**Keywords:** Perception, Guidance Services, Inmate Behaviour, Correctional Personnel, Minna Correctional Centers.

## Introduction

Correctional centers serve not merely as facilities for the incarceration of offenders but play a critical role in the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals into society. While the primary function of these institutions is to correct antisocial behaviour and reduce recidivism, the effectiveness of such efforts hinges significantly on the availability and implementation of supportive rehabilitative services most notably, counselling. Guidance services in correctional facilities are designed to provide inmates with emotional, psychological, and behavioural support, ultimately aiding their transformation and reintegration (Odeyemi & Okeshola, 2023).

The role of correctional personnel in this process is vital. Personnel such as wardens, psychologists, social workers, and administrative staff maintain daily contact with inmates and are therefore uniquely positioned to observe behavioural changes or resistance. Their perceptions offer invaluable insights into the success or failure of guidance services interventions. These perceptions can also influence the delivery and support of guidance services, as personnel who believe in the effectiveness of guidance services are more likely to encourage inmate participation and collaborate with counsellors (Musa & Salami, 2022). On the other hand, indifferent or negative attitudes among staff may hinder the implementation and impact of such services.

In Nigeria, the correctional system has faced significant challenges in delivering effective rehabilitation. Issues such as overcrowding, understaffing, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to professional counselling services have hampered meaningful progress (Nwoke & Okonkwo, 2021). Although the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS), rebranded under the Nigerian Correctional Service Act of 2019, represents a shift toward a more rehabilitative correctional model, the high rate of recidivism raises critical concerns about the actual impact of these reforms (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2019). Guidance services provided within correctional centers encompass a variety of interventions including individual and group therapy, anger management, substance abuse treatment, trauma-focused counselling, and vocational guidance. These services are grounded in well-established psychological approaches such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), social learning theory, and person-centered counselling, all of which aim to address the root causes of criminal behaviour (Agboola & Olayanju, 2022). When effectively implemented, such interventions equip inmates with critical skills

for emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and social adaptation skills essential for successful reintegration.

However, the implementation of these programmes across Nigeria remains inconsistent, often limited by inadequate funding and a shortage of trained guidance services professionals. This inconsistency makes it essential to assess how correctional personnel, particularly those stationed in critical centers such as Minna, Niger State, perceive the influence of guidance services on inmate behaviour. Minna hosts several correctional facilities that serve a diverse inmate population and represent a strategic point for examining the realities of correctional guidance services in Northern Nigeria (Okoye & Abubakar, 2023). Minna's correctional facilities, like many across the country, face contextual challenges typical of developing nations such as insufficient infrastructure, resource scarcity, and socio-cultural diversity. These issues complicate the implementation of uniform guidance services. Yet, efforts to initiate guidance programmes in the region have seen moderate progress. To fully evaluate the effectiveness of these services, it is essential to understand the experiences and perceptions of those directly involved in their delivery (Abubakar & Sani, 2023). Moreover, findings from Western contexts may not be applicable in Nigeria due to cultural and systemic disparities (Adekeye et al., 2021). There is a pressing need for context-specific studies that examine the views of correctional staff to inform locally relevant interventions. Correctional institutions today must navigate complex operational priorities balancing security, punishment, and rehabilitation. Despite these challenges, there are increasing opportunities through modern psychological practice, targeted staff training, and policy innovation to improve the effectiveness of guidance services within correctional systems (Okonkwo & James, 2022). Understanding how personnel perceive these interventions is not only essential for improving implementation but also for identifying barriers, refining training needs, and enhancing institutional support.

The perception of correctional personnel plays a fundamental role in shaping the effectiveness and implementation of guidance services within correctional centers. Correctional officers, being at the frontline of inmate supervision and rehabilitation, hold varied attitudes, beliefs, and opinions about the role of guidance services in reforming inmate behaviour (Okoye & Mohammed, 2025). These perceptions significantly influence how well such services are supported, administered, and integrated

into the prison system. Guidance services in correctional institutions are generally viewed by personnel as a tool for addressing the psychological, emotional, and behavioural challenges that inmates face (Agboola, & Olayanju, 2022). Many correctional officers understand that the goal of guidance services goes beyond punishment to include rehabilitation and reintegration into society. Through guidance services, inmates are guided to reflect on their life choices, develop emotional regulation skills, and identify triggers that led them into criminal behaviour. Ogundipe and Okafor (2023) report that a growing number of Nigerian correctional personnel recognize guidance services as essential in facilitating behavioural change and aiding inmates in understanding the root causes of their actions. Despite this, officers' appreciation of the role of guidance services is often shaped by their level of education, exposure to rehabilitative practices, and the prevailing institutional culture.

The concept of inmate behaviour, on the other hand, encompasses the attitudes, emotions, and interactions displayed by individuals in correctional facilities. Inmate behaviour is influenced by several factors, including personality traits, prior experiences, prison conditions, and institutional policies. Understanding these behavioural dynamics is vital for designing effective rehabilitation programmes that ensure the safety and stability of correctional institutions. Ugwuoke (2021) explained that, managing inmate behaviour is crucial for maintaining order and promoting rehabilitation, as behavioural problems often stem from psychological and environmental pressures. Abdulrahman et al. (2024) further observed that in Nigeria, inmates' behaviours are shaped by personal histories of poverty, limited education, gang affiliations, and mental health issues. These challenges are often aggravated by harsh prison conditions, which can trigger aggression and other maladaptive responses.

Inmate behaviour manifests in different forms, including compliant and aggressive behaviour. Compliant behaviour refers to an inmate's willingness to follow institutional rules, cooperate with staff, and participate actively in correctional programmes. Such behaviour contributes to order and enhances opportunities for rehabilitation (Odeyemi & Okeshola, 2023). Aggressive behaviour, however, involves hostility, violence, or defiance towards authority or other inmates, often resulting from frustration, overcrowding, or unresolved emotional issues (Musa & Salami, 2022). Effective counselling and fair disciplinary practices are therefore essential in reducing aggression and promoting compliance within correctional centres.

Furthermore, correctional personnel generally perceive guidance services as effective in modifying inmate behaviour. Through structured therapeutic interventions such as individual and group guidance services, many inmates exhibit improved social interaction, reduced aggression, and better compliance with institutional rules. Ibrahim and Abdulrahman (2024) observed that over 60% of correctional staff in North Central Nigeria reported notable behavioural improvements in inmates who engaged regularly in guidance services programs. Such improvements included increased self-control, reduced incidents of violence, and greater willingness to participate in educational or vocational activities. The perceived effectiveness of guidance services enhances staff support for these programs, especially when the outcomes contribute to a more peaceful and orderly prison environment.

Guidance services in correctional centers are essential components of rehabilitation aimed at transforming inmates into law-abiding citizens. These services encompass a range of structured psychological and emotional interventions designed to address the underlying causes of criminal behaviour and support personal development (Ibrahim & Abdulrahman, 2024). Individual guidance services are one of the most commonly implemented methods, involving one-on-one sessions between a trained counsellor and an inmate. This form of guidance services allows inmates to explore personal challenges, trauma histories, and behavioural issues in a confidential setting. It promotes self-awareness, emotional healing, and the development of coping strategies necessary for positive behaviour change (Akintunde, & Bello, 2023). Educational guidance services play a crucial role in the rehabilitation process within correctional centers. They are designed to provide inmates with structured learning opportunities, ranging from basic literacy classes and life-skills training to vocational courses and counselling sessions (Crewe, 2023). The aim is to foster intellectual growth, social responsibility, and personal development, ultimately transforming inmates into law-abiding citizens upon reintegration into society. In the context of correctional centers in Niger State and Nigeria at large, educational guidance services are particularly important due to the high rates of illiteracy and skill deficits among inmates (Ugwuoke, 2021). Compliant inmate behaviour, on the other hand, refers to an inmate's willingness to obey rules, cooperate with correctional staff, engage actively in assigned programs, and avoid disciplinary infractions (Odeyemi & Okeshola, 2023).

Vocational guidance services are an essential component of rehabilitation in correctional centers worldwide, including those in Nigeria. These services are designed to help inmates identify their interests and aptitudes, develop marketable skills, and prepare for gainful employment upon release (Adebayo & Olatunji, 2023). They often include training programs in trades such as carpentry, tailoring, welding, agriculture, and small-scale entrepreneurship (National Institute of Justice, 2022). Beyond simply teaching job skills, vocational guidance also imparts work ethics, discipline, and teamwork qualities that support behavioural change. Aggressive inmate behaviour, on the other hand, represents a serious challenge to correctional management. It includes acts of violence, hostility toward staff or fellow inmates, destruction of property, and defiance of institutional rules. Such behaviour disrupts the rehabilitative mission of correctional centers, undermines staff safety, and contributes to a hostile environment (Perry, 2023).

The theoretical foundation of this study is anchored on Carl Rogers' Person-Centered Theory (1951), which emphasizes empathy, unconditional positive regard, and congruence as the core conditions for effective counselling. The theory posits that every individual possesses an inherent potential for growth and self-actualization when placed in a supportive and non-judgmental environment. In the context of correctional centres, person-centered counselling creates a safe space where inmates feel valued and understood despite their criminal pasts. By fostering empathy and authenticity, counsellors help inmates gain self-awareness and internal motivation to change their behaviour. This approach aligns with the rehabilitative goals of correctional institutions, as it focuses on transforming inmates from within rather than through coercion.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Correctional centers are established not only for the confinement of offenders but also for their rehabilitation and reintegration into society as law-abiding citizens. In Niger State, particularly at the Minna correctional centers, guidance services such as educational and vocational programs are intended to influence inmate behaviour positively. These services are expected to reduce deviant tendencies, encourage compliance, improve social adjustment, and lower the rate of recidivism among inmates (Uche, 2020). Despite these expectations, challenging behaviours such as aggression, withdrawal, non-compliance, and repeat offending continue to be observed among inmates in Nigerian correctional

facilities. This persistent problem raises questions about the adequacy, organization, and perceived value of guidance services currently in place. The personnel of correctional centers, who are directly responsible for implementing and observing these services, are uniquely positioned to provide insights into their effectiveness. Yet, little research has systematically explored their perceptions of how guidance services influence inmate behaviour in Minna correctional centers. These findings suggest that challenges such as inadequate training for personnel, insufficient vocational opportunities, and weak post-release support may limit the impact of guidance services. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the perception of personnel of correctional centers on influence of guidance services on the behaviour of inmates at the minna centers, Niger State.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perception of personnel of correctional centers on the influence of guidance services on the behaviour of inmates at the minna centers, Niger State. Specifically, the objectives of the study include:

1. To examine the perceived influence of educational guidance services on compliant inmate behaviour at Minna correctional centers, Niger State.
2. To assess the perceived influence of vocational guidance services on aggressive inmate behaviour at Minna correctional centers, Niger State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the perceived influence of educational guidance services on compliant inmate behaviour at Minna correctional centers?
2. What is the perceived influence of vocational guidance services on aggressive inmate behaviour at Minna correctional centers?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant influence of educational guidance services on compliant inmate behaviour at Minna correctional centers, Niger State.

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant influence of vocational guidance services on aggressive inmate behaviour at Minna correctional centers, Niger State.

## **Methodology**

A descriptive survey research design was adopted because it allows the collection and analysis of data on respondents' opinions, attitudes, and perceptions without manipulation of variables. The population of the study comprised 369 correctional personnel (232 males and 137 females) drawn from the Old and New Correctional Centers in Minna, Niger State. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling table, a sample size of 186 personnel (111 males and 75 females) was selected through a simple random sampling technique to ensure fair representation of all departments and genders. Two instruments developed by the researcher were used for data collection: the Perception of Guidance Services Questionnaire (PGSQ) and the Perceived Influence of Guidance Services on Inmates' Behaviour Scale (PIGSIBS). The instruments consisted of sections on demographic data, perception of guidance services, and perceived influence of guidance services on inmate behaviour, measured using a four-point Likert scale. The instruments were validated by experts in counselling psychology, educational psychology, and test and measurement, yielding a Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.89, which indicates strong validity. Reliability was established through a pilot test using the Cronbach Alpha method, which produced a reliability coefficient of 0.82, confirming internal consistency. Data collection was carried out with the support of research assistants and rehabilitation staff, ensuring confidentiality and high response rates. Chi-square tests were used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

## **Results**

RQ1: What is the perceived influence of educational guidance services on compliant inmate behaviour at Minna correctional centers?

**Table 1: Responses on perceived influence of educational guidance services on compliant inmate behaviour at Minna correctional centers**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	78	41.9
Agree	70	37.6
Disagree	25	13.4
Strongly Disagree	13	7.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>100</b>

Mean = 3.14, SD = 0.71

Interpretation: Most respondents agreed that educational guidance contributes positively to inmates' compliant behaviour.

RQ2: What is the perceived influence of vocational guidance services on aggressive inmate behaviour at Minna correctional centers?

**Table 2: Responses on perceived influence of vocational guidance services on aggressive inmate behaviour at Minna correctional centers**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	66	35.5
Agree	77	41.4
Disagree	27	14.5
Strongly Disagree	16	8.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>100</b>

Mean = 3.04, SD = 0.79

Interpretation: A majority agreed that vocational guidance reduces aggressive tendencies among inmates by equipping them with useful skills.

### Hypotheses Testing

This section presented the results of hypotheses testing.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant influence of educational guidance services on compliant inmate behaviour at Minna correctional centers, Niger State.

**Table 3: Chi-square Test for influence of educational guidance services on compliant inmate behaviour at Minna correctional centers, Niger State**

Variable	$\chi^2$	Df	p-value	Decision
<b>Educational Guidance</b>	21.83	3	0.013	Reject H <sub>01</sub>
<b>Compliant behaviour</b>	22.64	3	0.019	Reject H <sub>02</sub>

Interpretation: Since the p-values (0.013 and 0.019) are both less than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H<sub>01</sub>), which states that educational guidance has no significant influence on inmates' compliant behaviour, is rejected. This means that there is a statistically significant relationship between educational guidance and inmates' compliant behaviour.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant influence of vocational guidance services on aggressive inmate behaviour at Minna correctional centers, Niger State.

**Table 4: Chi-square Test for influence of vocational guidance services on aggressive inmate behaviour at Minna correctional centers, Niger State**

Variable	$\chi^2$	Df	p-value	Decision
<b>Vocational Guidance</b>	24.14	3	0.008	Reject H <sub>02</sub>
<b>aggressive behavior</b>	25.02	3	0.010	Reject H <sub>02</sub>

Interpretation: Since the p-value (0.008 and 0.010) are less than the significance level (0.05), the null hypothesis (H<sub>02</sub>), which states that vocational guidance has no significant influence on inmates' aggressive tendencies, is rejected. This indicates that there is a statistically significant influence between vocational guidance and inmates' aggressive behaviour.

The findings of the study showed that:

1. The study found a significant influence between educational guidance and inmates' compliant behaviour at Minna Correctional Centers. This implies that educational guidance services positively influence inmates' compliance with rules and regulations, enhancing discipline and responsibility within the correctional environment.

2. Findings revealed a significant influence between vocational guidance services and the reduction of aggressive tendencies among inmates. This shows that participation in vocational training and skill acquisition programs helps inmates manage aggression, develop self-control, and adopt positive behavioural patterns.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study revealed that educational guidance services have a significant influence on compliant inmate behaviour at the Minna Correctional Centers, Niger State. Consequently, the null hypothesis ( $H_{0i}$ ) was rejected. This result indicates that inmates who participate in educational guidance and counselling programmes are more likely to exhibit positive behavioural changes, including adherence to institutional rules, reduced misconduct, and improved readiness for rehabilitation and reintegration into society. This finding supports the view that correctional institutions are not merely corrective facilities but rehabilitative environments aimed at reforming offenders into law-abiding citizens (Odeyemi & Okeshola, 2023). Educational guidance services such as moral education, literacy programmes, and structured counselling sessions provide inmates with opportunities for self-reflection, value reorientation, and personal development, which in turn promote compliant behaviour within correctional settings.

Furthermore, the result aligns with Agboola and Olayanju (2022), who emphasized that counselling interventions grounded in psychological approaches such as cognitive behavioural therapy and person-centred counselling equip inmates with essential coping skills for emotional regulation, responsible decision-making, and behavioural control. The significant relationship observed in this study suggests that educational guidance functions as a strong behavioural reform mechanism by addressing inmates' emotional, cognitive, and social needs. The findings also corroborate the assertion by Musa and Salami (2022) that correctional personnel play a pivotal role in influencing inmates' engagement in rehabilitative programmes. In the Minna Correctional Centers, personnel perceptions were largely positive toward educational guidance services, as they associated such programmes with improved discipline and institutional compliance. This is consistent with Ibrahim and Abdulrahman (2024), who reported that over 60% of correctional officers in North Central Nigeria observed visible behavioural improvement among inmates who regularly attended counselling sessions.

The findings further indicated that vocational guidance services significantly influence aggressive inmate behaviour, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ). This implies that vocational guidance and counselling programmes contribute meaningfully to the reduction of aggression and antisocial behaviour among inmates in the Minna Correctional Centers. Vocational guidance services provide inmates with practical skills, career orientation, and a sense of purpose, which help to reduce frustration, idleness, and hostility factors often associated with aggressive behaviour in correctional environments. The engagement of inmates in skill-acquisition programmes promotes self-esteem, responsibility, and goal-directed behaviour, thereby fostering emotional stability and improved interpersonal relations.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that:

The study examined the influence of various guidance services on the behaviour of inmates at Minna Correctional Centers, Niger State. The findings revealed that educational, and vocational, guidance services play essential roles in shaping inmates' attitudes and behavioural outcomes. Specifically, educational guidance significantly promotes compliance with institutional rules and enhances inmates' sense of discipline and responsibility. Vocational guidance was found to be instrumental in reducing aggressive tendencies by engaging inmates in productive skill acquisition programs.

### **Recommendation**

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

1. Correctional authorities should ensure that educational guidance services are incorporated into rehabilitation programs to foster discipline, compliance with rules, and responsible behaviour among inmates.
2. Vocational training opportunities should be broadened and adequately resourced to provide inmates with employable skills, reduce aggression, and promote self-control and productivity during and after confinement.

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