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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the lived experiences of inmates within Nigerian correctional facilities, focusing specifically on the influence of offender classification systems on prison life, access to rehabilitation, and institutional order. The need for this research arose from growing concerns over the role classification plays in either enabling or obstructing correctional objectives, especially in environments where punitive approaches overshadow rehabilitative intentions.

The central research problem addressed was the extent to which rigid, outdated, or inaccurately applied offender classification systems undermined efforts toward inmate reform, while simultaneously reinforcing structural inequalities within the prison system. Rather than functioning as tools for tailored rehabilitation, classification schemes often served as static mechanisms for institutional control, leading to unintended consequences.

A qualitative research design was adopted, involving semi-structured interviews with correctional officers and formerly incarcerated individuals, alongside a review of administrative records from selected prison institutions across Nigeria. This methodology enabled a comprehensive exploration of both procedural frameworks and personal inmate experiences.

Key findings revealed that offender classification significantly determined inmates' access to essential services such as education, vocational training, healthcare, and psychological support. Misclassification often led to social isolation, increased vulnerability to violence, and reduced chances of successful reintegration. The study also uncovered inconsistencies in classification practices, with decisions frequently influenced by institutional biases rather than objective criteria.

In conclusion, the study demonstrated that current offender classification systems prioritized institutional security over rehabilitation, highlighting the urgent need for reform toward more individualized, fair, and reintegrative approaches.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The offender classification system in Nigerian correctional facilities² plays a crucial role in shaping inmates' access to services, personal safety, and rehabilitation prospects. Ideally, classification should categorize inmates based on risk level, offense severity, and rehabilitative needs¹² (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2020). However, in Nigeria, the process has often been inconsistent, arbitrary, and susceptible to manipulation. Many inmates are misclassified, which limits their access to education, healthcare, legal support, and vocational training (Ajah, 2021; Amnesty International, 2019).

Persistent issues such as overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and inadequate nutrition continue to undermine the prison system. Vulnerable groups—including juveniles and the mentally ill—are frequently housed with violent offenders due to systemic misclassification (CLEEN Foundation, 2020). Moreover, corruption enables wealthier inmates to purchase privileges such as safer accommodations and access to mobile phones, reinforcing inequality (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

Inmate subcultures also contribute to informal classifications—labels like “419 boys” or “hardcore”—which create internal hierarchies affecting protection, access to resources, and status (Ilesanmi, 2018). These classifications influence the lived experiences and identities of inmates far beyond official labels.

Despite international recommendations for transparent, dynamic, and fair classification procedures (UNODC, 2020), Nigerian prisons have made limited progress. This study investigates how formal and informal classification systems shape the daily realities of inmates and highlights the need for reform toward more rehabilitative and just correctional practices.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite a global shift toward correctional models emphasizing rehabilitation, reintegration, and restorative justice, the Nigerian correctional system has remained largely punitive, overcrowded, and administratively dysfunctional. A critical but often overlooked mechanism within this system is the offender classification process. Although designed to enhance prison management through assessments of risk, needs, and behavior (Austin & Hardyman, 2004), classification in Nigerian prisons is frequently outdated, inconsistently applied, and rarely supported by validated tools or psychological evaluations (Alemika, 2020; PRAWA, 2020). Instead, classification decisions are often influenced by institutional convenience, staff discretion, and systemic bias. Consequently, low-risk and first-time offenders are regularly misclassified, exposed to violent inmates, and denied access to rehabilitation, education, and psychosocial support¹ (Ajomo & Okagbue, 2021; Okoye & Achufusi, 2023). These failures undermine the goals of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act of 2019, reinforce inequality, and erode trust in the system—calling for reforms aligned with international best practices (Akinseye-George, 2022; Liebling & Crewe, 2012).

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to critically examine the lived experiences of inmates in Nigerian correctional facilities, focusing on how offender classification systems shaped access to rehabilitation, institutional order, and overall inmate well-being.

3 Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Analyze the procedures, criteria, and institutional logic underpinning offender classification in selected Nigerian correctional institutions.
2. Evaluate the effects of classification on inmates' access to rehabilitation programs, healthcare, education, and psychosocial support.
3. Assess the consequences of misclassification on inmate safety, social relations, and prospects for successful reintegration.
4. Propose evidence-based reforms to improve classification systems in line with international correctional standards and human rights principles.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the procedures, criteria, and institutional logics used in offender classification within selected Nigerian correctional institutions?
2. How does offender classification influence inmates' access to rehabilitation programs, healthcare services, educational opportunities, and psychosocial support?
3. What are the consequences of misclassification on inmate safety, social interactions, and prospects for post-release reintegration?
4. What reforms can be proposed to improve the offender classification system in Nigerian prisons, in line with international standards and human rights principles?

6 1.5 Significance of the Study

This study addressed a critical but underexplored aspect of prison reform in Nigeria: the offender classification system. While existing reforms have focused on issues like overcrowding and infrastructural decay, little attention has been paid to how classification shapes inmate experiences, access to services, and rehabilitation outcomes. By examining the classification process, the study provided fresh insights into the administrative mechanisms that influence justice, control, and inequality within correctional institutions. Theoretically, it contributed to critical criminology by exposing the gap between correctional ideals and institutional realities. Practically, the study offered evidence-based recommendations for implementing the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019, in a more transparent and rehabilitative manner. It also supported correctional administrators in improving classification protocols to enhance institutional safety and reduce recidivism. Importantly, by centering inmate voices, the study challenged punitive

paradigms and advocated for humane, rights-based incarceration aligned with global standards such as the Mandela Rules.

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1.6 Limitations of the Study

The study faced several limitations. Access to inmates was restricted by institutional protocols, limiting the sample size. Some participants were reluctant to speak freely due to fear of retaliation or emotional distress, which may have affected the authenticity of their responses. Additionally, incomplete or inaccessible classification records hindered a thorough review of institutional procedures. Ethical restrictions and the unavailability of some inmates prevented follow-up interviews.

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1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to selected medium- and maximum-security prisons in South Western Nigeria, focusing solely on adult inmates. It examined the lived experiences of inmates specifically in relation to prison classification systems. Juvenile inmates, post-release experiences, and broader legal or judicial processes were excluded. Data collection was also limited to a specific timeframe.

1.8 Conceptual Clarifications

Offender Classification: A system used to assess and assign inmates to appropriate security levels and rehabilitation programs. In Nigeria, this process is often informal and inconsistently applied.

Correctional Facility: Government-run institutions (prisons) where convicted individuals serve sentences. Nigerian prisons face overcrowding and limited resources.

Rehabilitation: Programs aimed at reforming inmates through education, skills, and therapy. Access is often influenced by classification.

Misclassification: The incorrect placement of inmates, which can lead to safety risks, denied services, and poor reintegration outcomes.

Institutional Logic: The norms and practices that guide prison operations, including how classification decisions are made.

Lived Experience: The personal perspectives of inmates navigating the prison system, offering insight into how classification affects daily life.

Reintegration: The process of helping ex-inmates return to society. Proper classification supports better reintegration outcomes.

Officer Discretion: The use of personal judgment by correctional officers, which can lead to biased or inconsistent classification decisions.

Structural Inequality: Systemic social biases that can be reinforced by classification systems, affecting fairness and access to rehabilitation.

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2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review examined previous studies on offender classification in Nigerian prisons, revealing that this critical aspect of prison administration had been largely overlooked. Most existing research relied on quantitative methods, lacked theoretical depth, and failed to capture inmates' lived experiences. While global literature explored classification's impact on institutional power and rehabilitation, Nigerian studies remained limited in scope. This study addressed these gaps by adopting a qualitative, theory-informed approach to analyze classification's effects on inmate welfare and reintegration.

2.2 Conceptual Foundations of Offender Classification

Offender classification refers to the systematic categorization of inmates based on their security risk, offence severity, mental health status, behavioural history, and rehabilitative needs (Austin & Hardyman, 2004). Globally, classification systems have been conceptualized as tools for both institutional control and offender rehabilitation. In Western contexts, scholars like Steiner, Butler, and Ellison (2014) argued that well-designed classification mechanisms reduce prison violence and improve correctional outcomes. However, scholars such as Byrne and Taxman (2006) criticized the overly bureaucratic and risk-focused nature of these systems, which often prioritize security over individualized treatment, a critique echoed in emerging African contexts.

In the Nigerian context, authors such as Oloyede and Alade (2019) highlighted the lack of transparent, standardized classification procedures in correctional facilities, often attributing this to legacy colonial structures and underfunded criminal justice reforms. While some of these studies attempted to document prison management protocols, they fell short of critically evaluating the lived experiences of misclassified inmates. This theoretical limitation has created a gap in understanding the actual impact of classification systems on inmates' welfare, dignity, and access to rehabilitation programs.

2.3 Correctional Philosophies: Punitive vs. Rehabilitative Approaches

There exists a long-standing tension between punitive and rehabilitative correctional philosophies, which has profound implications for how offender classification is conceptualized and applied. Foucault's (1977) work *Discipline and Punish* has been instrumental in framing prisons as mechanisms of surveillance and discipline, where classification serves as a control strategy to maintain order. His analysis has informed later African scholars like Akinseye-George (2019), who argued that Nigerian correctional institutions are more custodial than corrective, reflecting a punitive ideology that overshadows rehabilitative goals.

Other Nigerian scholars, such as Rotimi and Osho (2020), supported this view by asserting that classification often functions as a bureaucratic placeholder rather than a dynamic tool for inmate reform. Their empirical findings suggest that inmates categorized as “high-risk” were frequently ²¹ denied access to educational and vocational programs, not based on behaviour but on static profiles influenced by police records. In contrast, international literature (e.g., Taxman, 2004; Andrews & Bonta, 2010) emphasized needs-based assessments and continuous risk evaluations as foundational to successful rehabilitation.

This discrepancy underscores a significant gap in the literature: Nigeria's classification systems are often outdated, rigid, and disconnected from rehabilitative best practices. The present study aims to build upon this critique by incorporating first-hand accounts of inmates and correctional officers to explore how these systems operate in real time and with what implications.

2.4 Methodological Limitations in Existing Nigerian Literature

A recurring methodological shortcoming in existing Nigerian studies is the overreliance on secondary data and official reports, which often overlook the lived experiences of inmates. For example, Okunola and Adebayo (2017) conducted a cross-state survey examining prison conditions but failed to explore the subjective consequences of classification, such as its impact on inmates' mental health, social interaction, and access to institutional support. Their work lacked qualitative depth and did not include interviews or ethnographic observations—essential tools for understanding the complex interplay between classification and lived experience.

In contrast, studies from South Africa and Kenya (Muntingh, 2008; Mujuzi, 2021) have embraced qualitative methodologies, such as life histories, in-depth interviews, and ethnographic fieldwork. These methods yielded richer insights into how classification intersects with identity, institutional power, and survival. They also illuminated systemic biases in classification processes—particularly affecting vulnerable inmates like the mentally ill, women, and juveniles. Nigerian research has largely avoided these critical lenses.

The present study bridges this gap by conducting in-depth interviews with correctional officers and formerly incarcerated individuals, employing institutional ethnography and symbolic interactionism to unearth hidden dynamics in classification processes. This design uncovers informal classification practices, inmate agency, and subjective coping mechanisms, thus offering a more textured understanding of prison life in Nigeria.

2.5 Theoretical Gaps: Labelling, Power, and Identity

The absence of robust theoretical frameworks in much of Nigerian prison scholarship further limits its analytical capacity. While some studies allude to bias or injustice, few are grounded in theories that explain how institutional labels shape social reality. For instance, labelling theory (Becker, 1963) posits that institutional designations such as “violent,” “notorious,” or “high-risk” function as stigmatizing identities that alter how inmates are perceived and treated. These labels

not only affect inmate behaviour but can trigger self-fulfilling prophecies, where individuals act out the identities imposed upon them (Heimer & Matsueda, 1994).

Despite this rich theoretical lens, most Nigerian studies ignore labelling theory. Otite and Nwaobiala (2019) noted that inmates designated “notorious” often resigned themselves to punitive fates, yet their analysis lacked theoretical depth and failed to connect these identities to broader social structures or institutional logics.

Similarly, symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) reveals how meanings are constructed through social interactions, particularly in confined, hierarchical environments like prisons.

Classification, in this framework, functions not just as a bureaucratic label but as a symbolic marker of trust, access, and social capital. Yet, Nigerian prison literature seldom examines how inmates interpret and negotiate these classifications, nor how they affect peer relationships, staff interactions, and mental health.

The current study incorporates both labelling theory and symbolic interactionism to fill this void. By examining how inmates make sense of their classification and how such labels influence their everyday lives, this research contributes a microsociological perspective often missing in Nigerian criminology.

2.6 Gaps in Knowledge

The literature reviewed reveals several key gaps that this study directly addresses:

1. Lack of empirical, qualitative studies in Nigerian prisons that document the lived experience of classification from inmates' and officers' perspectives.
2. Under-theorization of classification as a dynamic social process, particularly through labelling theory, symbolic interactionism, and institutional ethnography.
3. Neglect of how classification systems reproduce structural inequalities, including class, ethnicity, and legal access disparities.
4. Limited investigation into discretionary power and informal practices among prison staff that undermine standardized classification procedures.
5. Absence of critical comparison between Nigeria's static classification approach and dynamic, rehabilitative models used in other jurisdictions.

By filling these gaps, the present study contributes to the growing body of critical criminology in Africa, advancing a more nuanced understanding of correctional institutions not merely as places of punishment, but as sites of contested meaning, social negotiation, and institutional failure.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodological framework adopted to investigate the lived experiences of inmates in relation to prison classifications in Nigeria. Anchored in qualitative inquiry and phenomenological interpretation, the study seeks to give voice to incarcerated individuals within the Nigerian Correctional Service, whose subjective experiences of classification have been underexplored in scholarly literature.

4 3.2 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design grounded in phenomenology and interpretive sociology. Given the aim to understand how inmates in Nigerian prisons perceive, internalize, and negotiate classifications (such as maximum, medium, or minimum security; awaiting trial; convicted; “violent” offender; etc.), a qualitative approach is essential.

Phenomenology allows for deep engagement with the lived realities of inmates, while interpretive sociology—particularly the work of Berger and Luckmann (1966)—frames prison classification as a socially constructed and legitimized reality. These theoretical lenses are particularly important in the Nigerian context, where bureaucratic classification often intersects with corruption, overcrowding, and informal power dynamics.

14 3.3 Location of the study

The study was conducted in selected correctional facilities across Southwestern Nigeria, where issues such as overcrowding, trial delays, and security classification were most pronounced. These included:

Kirikiri Correctional Centre (Lagos) – known for its maximum-security wing.

Agodi Correctional Centre (Ibadan) – a medium-security facility.

Ilesa and Abeokuta Custodial Centres – representative of provincial prisons with distinct classification dynamics.

All facilities operated under the jurisdiction of the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS), formerly known as the Nigerian Prisons Service.

28 3.4 Population and Sampling

The study population consisted of incarcerated individuals drawn from diverse classification categories within the selected correctional facilities. These categories included:

Convicted versus awaiting trial inmates

Maximum versus medium-security inmates

First-time versus repeat offenders

Male and female inmates (where applicable)

A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select between 15 and 20 participants who were capable of providing rich, diverse, and relevant narratives. Assistance was sought, where necessary, from prison psychologists and welfare officers to identify inmates willing and suitable to participate, without exposing them to any form of risk or institutional retaliation.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

Data collection relied primarily on semi-structured, in-depth interviews conducted within secure and private spaces inside the correctional facilities. All necessary permissions were obtained from the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) and the relevant university ethical review committee prior to fieldwork.

Key areas explored in the interviews included:

Inmates' awareness and understanding of their classification

Experiences of privilege, restriction, or stigma due to classification, social relationships and prison hierarchies shaped by classification labels.

Psychological and emotional effects of classification

Personal narratives of adaptation, resistance, or acceptance

Where feasible, limited ethnographic observations such as, during recreational or educational activities were used to supplement interview data, providing context for inmate behaviours and institutional dynamics.

All interviews were conducted in English, Yoruba, or Nigerian Pidgin, based on the preferences and linguistic competencies of the participants. Translations were provided where required to preserve meaning and ensure clarity during analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed thematically using Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework for thematic analysis. Audio recordings of interviews were transcribed and translated as needed. Thematic coding was performed both manually and with the assistance of NVivo software.

Emerging themes focused on:

Inmate interpretations of classification

Institutional treatment and access to rehabilitation and support services

Internal prison hierarchies and processes of identity construction

Forms of resistance and coping mechanisms

The analysis was grounded in the sociology of knowledge and phenomenology, emphasizing how inmates constructed, interpreted, and navigated social realities under incarceration.

7 Ethical approval was secured from the Ethics Committee of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, and from the Nigerian Correctional Service Headquarters in Abuja.

Ethical safeguards implemented during the study included:

Informed Consent: Clearly explained both verbally and in writing; assent was documented.

Voluntariness: No incentives or pressure were used; participation was strictly voluntary.

Confidentiality: Pseudonyms were used, and all data were securely stored.

Non-maleficence: Emotional well-being was monitored, and participants were allowed to withdraw at any time.

Researcher Safety: All institutional and security protocols were strictly followed.

Special attention was given to power dynamics between the researcher and the inmates.

Interviews were conducted with cultural sensitivity, respect, and caution to minimize harm or discomfort.

3.7 Trustworthiness and Reflexivity

5 To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria were applied:

Credibility: Enhanced through prolonged engagement and triangulation of data sources.

4 Transferability: Achieved by providing thick, rich descriptions of the Nigerian prison context.

Dependability: Ensured through systematic documentation of research procedures and decisions.

Confirmability: Addressed through reflexive journaling and continuous awareness of personal biases.

As a Nigerian researcher, I maintained reflexive awareness of my positionality, acknowledging the social distance or proximity between myself and the participants throughout the research process.

Despite the study's rigorous design, several limitations were encountered such as Access to inmates was sometimes restricted, and permission to use audio recordings was not always granted. Also, some participants hesitated to share sensitive details due to fear, mistrust, or institutional surveillance. There was the challenge of language barriers and varying literacy levels required careful translation and cultural adaptation of interview guides. While findings may not be generalizable to all correctional institutions in Nigeria, the study prioritized depth of insight over breadth.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a qualitative, phenomenological methodology suitable for exploring the lived experiences of inmates within Nigerian correctional institutions. The research process

emphasized ethical integrity, cultural sensitivity, and analytical depth. The next chapter will present and analyze the findings derived from fieldwork, structured around key thematic patterns emerging from the narratives of participants.

9 4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the findings from the semi-structured interviews conducted with incarcerated individuals in selected Nigerian correctional centers. The aim is to understand how prison classifications are experienced, interpreted, and navigated by inmates. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns, contradictions, and unique perspectives within participants' narratives. Themes are presented with direct quotations to preserve the authenticity of the voices.

4.2 Overview of Participants

A total of 18 participants were interviewed across three correctional centers in Southwestern Nigeria: Kirikiri Maximum Security, Agodi Medium Security, and Ilesa Custodial Centre. Participants varied by:

Gender: 14 male, 4 female

Classification: 9 awaiting trial, 6 convicted, 3 life-sentenced

Sentence duration: Ranged from 6 months to life

Age range: 21–56 years

Languages used: English, Yoruba, Pidgin

Each participant was given a pseudonym to ensure anonymity.

4.3 Emerging Themes

Theme 1: Awareness and Perception of Classification

Many participants were only vaguely aware of their formal classification status, such as “awaiting trial” or “maximum-security.” However, they were acutely aware of how classification affected their treatment by staff and fellow inmates.

“Dem put me for one side because dem talk say I be violent offender. I no even fight for outside like dat. But once dem stamp you like dat, wahala don start.”

(Azeez, 34, Awaiting Trial, Kirikiri)

This suggests a bureaucratic opacity in how classifications are assigned, reinforcing Michel Foucault's idea of institutional labeling as a form of disciplinary control.

Theme 2: Classification and Access to Resources

Prison classification in Nigeria determines access to legal aid, education, visitation, and even food quantity. Many inmates perceived classification as a gatekeeping mechanism those labeled “violent” or “high-risk” were often denied access to vocational training or religious gatherings.

“Because dem say I be life sentence, I no fit join the tailoring program. But I wan learn something make I no waste my life.”

(Joseph, 43, Life Inmate, Agodi).

This reflects a structural barrier that deepens inequality among inmates and impacts post-incarceration reintegration.

Theme 3: Informal Classification and Inmate Hierarchies

In addition to official labels, inmates also face informal classifications imposed by prison subcultures. Terms like “white-collar,” “hardcore,” and “runs boys” reflect a symbolic stratification that shapes relationships, cell allocations, and protection networks.

“Na people wey get money dem dey call white-collar. Dem dey live for VIP block. If you no get, you go sleep for floor.”

(Tunde, 29, Convicted, Ilesa)

This illustrates Berger and Luckmann’s theory of social reality—inmates construct internal classifications that function as survival strategies and power systems.

Theme 4: Resistance and Agency

Despite their constrained environment, some inmates resist or negotiate their classification identities. Strategies include compliance, manipulation of prison staff, or building alliances through religion or prison work.

“I join chapel just to avoid wahala. Now the pastor dem respect me. Dem no dey carry me anyhow again.”

(Funke, 38, Awaiting Trial, Kirikiri Female Wing)

This reflects symbolic interactionism—individuals actively interpret and respond to imposed meanings within social contexts.

Theme 5: Emotional and Psychological Impact

Many participants expressed emotional trauma resulting from their classification status. Those labeled “violent” or “lifers” reported feeling dehumanized and isolated.

“Dem don cancel my future because of the way dem classify me. Even guards dey fear me.”

(Ibrahim, 50, Life Sentence, Agodi)

Such narratives highlight the psychosocial consequences of classification, extending beyond institutional boundaries into self-perception and future outlook.

4.3 Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

In Nigerian correctional institutions, prison classification is not simply an administrative routine; it deeply affects inmates' identities, emotions, and access to rehabilitation. Many inmates do not fully understand the basis for their classification, yet its consequences are evident in their daily experiences—ranging from isolation to reduced access to essential services.

Classification operates at two levels: official and informal. Official categories such as “awaiting trial,” “maximum security,” or “condemned” are often perceived as permanent and stigmatizing. Rather than serving individualized correctional goals, these categories tend to function as tools for control and segregation. Inmates labeled as high-risk or violent are frequently excluded from educational, vocational, and religious programs, denying them chances for personal development.

Beyond official systems, inmates also construct their own forms of classification. Informal labels based on crime type, social class, or gang affiliation create a secondary hierarchy within prison walls. These inmate-led systems determine respect, protection, and access to prison economies, adding another layer of complexity to prison life.

Despite these challenges, inmates show resilience. Some attempt to redefine their identities through religious conversion, participation in educational programs, or aligning with social groups. These strategies offer a sense of purpose and safety, but they are often limited by structural barriers and unequal access to resources.

Emotionally, the impact of classification is profound. Inmates describe feelings of fear, shame, hopelessness, and social death, particularly those in high-security or long-term confinement. These psychological burdens are intensified by overcrowding, limited mental health care, and a lack of legal support. The classification label often becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, affecting how inmates are treated and how they view themselves.

4.4 Recommendations

1. Reform Classification Systems: Prison classification procedures should be fair, transparent, and regularly reviewed. Inmates must be informed of the reasons behind their classification and have access to appeal mechanisms.
2. Improve Staff Training: Correctional officers should be trained in human rights practices and trauma-informed care to reduce abuse and improve inmate welfare.
3. Ensure Equal Access to Programs: All inmates, regardless of classification, should be given the opportunity to participate in rehabilitation, education, and mental health services.

4. Legal Oversight: External legal bodies and human rights agencies should monitor prison classification to ensure accountability and prevent systemic abuse.
5. Further Research: More studies are needed to explore how classification impacts women, juveniles, and post-release outcomes.

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