

Offender Management in Selected TDCJ Facilities in Houston Region III, TX, USA

Chukwunenye I. Okereke

Department of Sociology, Wiley University, Marshall, TX, USA

Email: chuokereke@yahoo.com

How to cite this paper: Okereke, C. I. (2026). Offender Management in Selected TDCJ Facilities in Houston Region III, TX, USA. *Advances in Applied Sociology*, 16, 469-488.
<https://doi.org/10.4236/aasoci.2026.167028>

Received: April 4, 2026

Accepted: July 24, 2026

Published: July 27, 2026

Copyright © 2026 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

The study examined Offender Management in 5 selected Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Facilities in Houston Region III, Texas. Primary information was obtained through FGDs and pre-coded questionnaire from 292 officers selected through simple random sampling methods. The officers were mostly of African-American racial origin (74.0%), married (57.8%) with 92.1 percent having 1 - 4 years correction work experience. A preponderant (32.1%) of the officers perceived the offenders learned criminal behavior. Emotional disturbance, conflict of conduct norms, disjunction between society's aspiration (goals) & the avenues (means) for attaining them were statistically significant (Mean > 3:00) factors perceived to determine offenders' behavior. Data showed that three-quarters (73.3%) of the officers affirmed that locking-up offenders in refractory cells and use of restraints scarcely harden the offenders. The use of reasonable force, informal resolution of conflicts, physical punishment, writing offenders up, hand and leg restraints, denial of privileges and denial of parole were significant (Mean > 3:00) factors for effective offender management. The research extended frontiers in knowledge and can pave way for change in treatment by educating Correction Officers (COs) on balancing negative views of offenders with professionalism.

Keywords

Offenders, Officers, Management, Learned Behavior, Facilities

1. Introduction

Observably, some Correction Officers say the Offenders are criminals, otherwise they would not be in jail; Offenders should be given severe punishment for their repugnant offences among others. On the other hand, some Offenders transfer their aggression to the Correction Officers, as if the later were the law enforcement officers (the Police) that arrested them or the Courts (the Judge) that prosecuted

and convicted them to jail. This is quite heuristic and has an attractive appeal for social inquiry. The author suspects a two-pronged perspective in Correction Officers' management of Offenders. An Offender, as used in this context, refers to an inmate in the penitentiary convicted for engagement in deviant behavior (activity/activities that contravenes the criminal law of the society). The "Offender management" refers to how the Correction Officers, who are the immediate supervisors of the Offenders in a chain of command in penitentiaries, handle the safety and security of the Offenders (inmates). First, during the pre-employment training, the Correction Officers (then as Cadets) were fossilized with several scary scenarios about Offenders and memorable quotes that includes: "Offenders are not your friend"; "The Offender has nothing to lose when you get into unethical and unprofessional behavior with him, but you will lose"; "Do not get intimate with an Offender"; "Report to your Supervisor if you see in your Jail Unit an Offender with whom you are familiar". With the above, the Officer is prejudiced against the Offenders who are stereotyped to constitute societal nuisance. Second, the Correction Officer during his routine job performance may become victim of sarcastic vituperation from an Offender(s), which may ultimately result thenceforth to an unfavorable attitude and treatment of Offenders.

In both instances above, the label "Offender" prefixed to the last name (surname) of the Deviant is considered a "self-fulfilling prophecy". This, however, is without consideration for the militating circumstances that could aggrieve him (the Offender) towards deviant acts while in jail, such as deprivation of liberty, lack of a "human face" treatment by over-zealous Correction Officer(s). Opportunity for negotiation of behavior of the Offenders in an interactive situation with Correction Officers appears largely absent as the Officers are instructed to be "firm, fair and consistent" in their conduct with the Offenders. While this is superficially good, it is obviously destructive when considered in detail. Such mechanical conduct of the bureaucratic virtuoso (the Correction Officer that sticks to the aforesaid instruction) could result to timidity and inability to improvise in an emergency and different situation¹.

The above *prima facie* suggests homogeneity in the treatment of Offenders as they are categorized as similar in behavior. Yet, Offenders are indicated to be heterogeneous in some respects: 1) the TDCJ Offenders are differentiated on racial lines, using Tags (White Tag for the All-White Offenders; Red Tag for the Asians, including Mexicans; Blue Tag for the Black race); 2) Offenders are differently classified based on the Offence they committed (G1, G2, G3, G4, G5) and Administrative Segregation (AD-Seg.) (a parallel term for Refractory Cell) (see **Appendix**) and treated differently. Specifically, Offenders in the TDCJ Administrative Segregation (AD-Seg) Custody are escorted by an Officer and are often on hand-restraint (Handcuff) whenever they go out of their housing area. Quite unlike other Offenders, they are denied recreation; going to chow (that is, Dining Hall for food);

¹Merton, Robert K. "Bureaucratic Structures and Personality" accessed Online on Jan 19, 2025 at <https://doi.org/10.2307/2570634>

are given food through a tray slot; protected from being seen by other Offenders while on the Hallway, by radio message sent for restriction of Offender traffic when they are going on the Hallway as well as other Offenders on the Hallway instructed to face away when they are on the Hallway. The author sees the above contradictions in theory and practice in TDCJ as snag to effective reformation/rehabilitation of Offenders.

The focus of this study was to examine management of prison inmates (Offenders) by Correction Officers, using 5 selected Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Facilities in Houston Region III, Texas as reference. Justification for this study derives from the author's hunch about inmates' (Offenders') behavior and the manner Correction Officers treat them, which though may not be likened to the riddle of the "Egg and Chicken" to determine the one that came first, but suggestive of an Achilles Heel—a missing link in adequate management of offenders. Specifically, the study shall,

- 1) explore how the Correction Officers perceive the Offenders;
- 2) examine the perceived factors that influenced Offenders' deviant behavior;
- 3) examine the manner Offenders are treated;
- 4) inquire about the prospects of recidivism of the Offenders.

2. Methods

2.1. Study Context

Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) was created in 1989, having evolved from Texas Department of Corrections (1957-1989); Texas Prison System (1866-1957) and Texas State Penitentiary (1848-1866). The Texas Prison System began as a single institution, located in Huntsville (known as the Huntsville Penitentiary). A major penal reform program in 1947 introduced modern agricultural production; encouraged Offenders to initiate industrial production and made for improvements in the physical facilities of the Jail Units. A Construction Division was created in 1948 to utilize labor services of Offenders for production of bricks and concrete for new building projects. It has been observed that prisons in Texas are authorized to engage in Industrial Programs for production of the materials needed in TDCJ Jail Units and for sale to outside agencies in Texas. It obviously provided Offenders with occupational skills training, which together with other TDCJ Rehabilitation Programs such as vocational training, work furlough programs and community services could assist Offenders secure job upon release and, thus, adjust effectively on entry into society. Other services available to TDCJ Offenders include legal services (through the Office of the General Counsel); education, recreation, religion, physiological and psychological health care. The Windham School District created in 1969 offers GED Certificates or high school diplomas to Offenders. Junior College and Senior College classes are available in TDCJ Jail Units.

2.2. Population

Correction Officers are the immediate supervisors of the Offenders (prisoners) as

they are the closest custodians of the Offenders. They are at the bottom-rung of the stratification structure of security staff in TDCJ.

Major

Captain

Lieutenant

Sergeant

Correction Officer

It has been observed that Correction Officers receive a 6-Week Pre-Employment Training at designated venues, during which they are engaged in classroom and field instructions for effective performance. They are among others trained for physical agility (the Physical Agility Tests [PAT_s]), Use of chemical agents (particularly Oleoresin Capsicum [OC], popularly called “Pepper Spray” and Orthochlorobenzalmalononitrile [CS], popularly called “Tear Gas”). On graduation, each of them is deployed to a Facility (Prison) where s/he receives 2 - 4 weeks On-the-Job Training (OJT) and later 1 - 2 weeks work shadowing as pre-requisite for effective performance as a Correction Officer.

2.3. Sampling and Sampling Technique

There was absence of an exact population of Correction Officers in TDCJ Jail Units as at the time of this Study, due perhaps to huge turnover of Correction Officers. The job is fraught with poor prospect for career growth and personal advancement; high level of exposure to insults and vulgar comments from Offenders; intrinsic risk of physical injury from Offenders and job insecurity. The Officers are easily sacked and or asked to resign. In similar vein, recruitment is done almost every 2 weeks. Information was obtained from 292 Correction Officers who came to the Rosharon Training Academy for Refresher Training on “Use of Weapons” in March-May, 2025. This is considered adequate based on constraints in finance, time and insufficient field-assistants for an extensive study of more population of the Correction Officers. All participants gave their informed consent for inclusion before they participated in the study.

Five Facilities that sent Officers were the surveyed population. These were Clemens, Terrell, Stringfellow, Ramsey and Darrington Facilities. A Sampling Frame, which in this context, was the Facility List containing Names of Officers for the Training was obtained. Eight Officers were selected from each Facility in a Cycle, through simple random method. For 8 Cycles (times the study was done), a total of 320 Officers were drawn into the survey population. Incidentally, 292 Officers obliged responses from the researcher, resulting to 91.3 percent response rate. The Officers attend the course once in a year, therefore, the likelihood of any Officer being sampled more than once is zero.

2.4. Research Instrument

A pre-coded questionnaire informed by the objectives of the study and specific

hypothesis was developed by the researcher and pretested on 4 Correction Officers to ensure the reliability of the research instrument and the validity of the responses. It was administered on 292 Correction Officers in 5 Selected Facilities in TDCJ Houston Region III. The closed-ended questions restricted the Officers to a checklist of alternative responses to questions, while the open-ended gave them sufficient leeway to express themselves in some detail. The latter enabled the researcher to tease out significant information not quite visible in existing scholarly works. This assisted to bridge gaps in knowledge as they became the serendipity component of this research. The questionnaire consisted four Sections. Section A was on Personal Data of the Correction Officer concerned; Section B dwelt on Perception of Offenders by Correction Officers; Section C enquired about perceived Factors that influenced Offenders' Deviant Behavior; and Section D concentrated on Treatment of Offenders. Three (3) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held with the Correction Officers. Each group consisted of 6 Officers, who were not given the questionnaire to enable comparison of the responses from the respondents with the discussion from the discussants. The researcher introduced the topic to the discussants, gave them sufficient latitude to express themselves and moderated the discussion. Significant statements were reported verbatim by the researcher.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Socio-Economic Characteristics

Table 1 shows that out of the total population of Correction Officer respondents in Houston Region III, with mean age 36.4 years, three-quarters (74.0%) were of African-American racial group. A preponderant 38.7 percent were married, but not living together with their spouse. An overwhelming proportion (79.0%), comprised 36.2 percent with High School Diploma as their highest level of educational attainment, and 42.8 person with a College Diploma. Most of them (92.1%) had 1 - 5 years work experience in Corrections.

Table 1. Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, correction officers (N = 292).

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Age (in years)		
20 - 24	3	1.0
25 - 29	12	4.1
30 - 34	85	29.1
35 - 39	109	37.3
40 - 44	61	21.0
45 - 49	22	7.5
Average Age	36.4 years	

Continued

Marital Status		
Single	84	28.8
Married		
Living with Spouse	56	19.1
Not Living with Spouse	113	38.7
Separated	39	13.4
Race		
White	7	2.4
Asian	39	13.3
African-American	216	74.0
Native American	16	5.5
Native Hawaiian	14	4.8
Highest Level of Education		
High School Diploma/GED	106	36.2
College Diploma	125	42.8
Bachelor's	58	20.0
Master's	3	1.0
No. of Years in the Agency		
1 - 2	113	38.7
3 - 4	156	53.4
5+	23	7.9

3.2. Perceptions about the Offenders

Statistics in **Table 2** show that a preponderant 32.1 percent of the Correction Officer respondents perceived the prison inmates (Offenders) as persons that deliberately learnt deviant behavior; 26.1 percent perceived Offenders as feeble-minded fellows; 20.4 percent perceived them as persons with deep-seated emotional disturbance; 13.0 percent perceived them as “born criminals” that cannot be reformed; while 8.4 percent perceived Offenders as individuals responding to social values of their group. In brief, 59.5 percent of the Officers perceived the Offenders as having bio-psychological problem, while 40.5 percent perceived the Offenders as responding to social forces.

Cesare Lombroso and the Neo-Lombrosians (Anderson, 2024; Gibson & Rafter, 2006; Delisi, Beaver, Vaughn, & Wright, 2009; Eysenck, 1964) described a criminal as a biological freak: a throwback to an earlier and more primitive form of man, with at least 5 of certain identifiable features (called Stigmata) that include deviation in head size from the type common to race and region from where one came; symmetry of face; excessive dimension of the jaw and cheek bones; eye defects and peculiarities; abnormal dentition; ear of unusual size and occasionally very small

or standing out from the head like that of the chimpanzee; nose twisted, upturned or flattened; lips fleshy, swollen or protruding; punches in the cheek; anomalies of hair, marked by characteristics of the hair of opposite sex. In contrast, [Goring \(1913\)](#) after an extensive study found no distinction between several long criminals and non-criminals. Also, theoretical arguments on mesomorph and its predisposition to criminal behavior have been debunked accordingly. [Taylor, Walton, and Young \(1973\)](#) have explained that mesomorph is a factor of physical activities not gene (biology), citing that lower-working class children are by virtue of their diet, continual manual labor, physical fitness and strength more likely to be mesomorphic.

Table 2. Perception of offenders by correction officers (N = 292).

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Perception of most Offenders in the Facility		
“Born Criminals” that cannot be reformed	37	13.0
“Feeble-minded” Fellows that could not appreciate the effect of their Behavior	76	26.1
Persons with deep-seated emotional disturbance	60	20.4
Persons that deliberately learnt Criminal Behavior as a Profession	94	32.1
Individuals responding to social values of their Group	25	8.4
Are there Different Laws for the Rich and for the Poor		
Yes	77	26.4
No	192	65.6
Don’t Know	23	8.0

Psychological theorists (involving learning theories; intelligence theories; personality theories; theories of psychopathy; and cognitive & social development theories) have assumptions that focus on the individual or internal processes or both ([Moore, 2005](#)). Antisocial and criminal behaviors are explained by the blunted functioning of physiological measure of heart rate and skin conductance ([Choy, Raine, & Hamilton, 2018](#); [Portnoy & Farrington, 2015](#)). Specifically, as the physical and mental state is disturbed by the blunted physiology, the individual feels extremely uncomfortable and desires to do something (notwithstanding whether legal or illegal) to relieve himself from the state of discomfort. Put simply, indulging in criminal behavior leads to higher arousal level that reduces the discomfort. Also, [Delisi, Beaver, Vaughn, and Wright \(2009\)](#) have argued that a particular genotype, DRD₂ (Dopamine genes) when combined with having a criminogenic father increases the risk for serious delinquency and violent behaviors. Goddard’s thesis on “feeble-mindedness”, with premise that the mentally retarded is unable to appreciate the consequences of his behavior or the meaning of the law ([Dennert, 2021](#)) has no attractive appeal, particularly as the invention and use of Intelligent Quotient (IQ) Test showed that criminals are very intelligent. In brief, Marshall

Clinard as well as Sociologists criticize psychological theories for ignoring social and cultural factors in the explanation of crime, but rather focus on childhood experiences.

Human behavior, such as crime, has been reported by several scholars (that included Wilcox & Cullen, 2018; Felson & Clarke, 1998; Miethe & Mier, 1994) to be caused by internal or external forces acting on individuals. Correspondingly, the social environment is crucial in both the development of criminal behavior and its control, such that criminalization is a “learning process”: a criminal learns crime, just like others learn a trade through training and association with others. It has its “School”, its special idioms, techniques and even professional relationships². In support, Tottenham et al. (2011) and Follan and Minnis (2010) explained that a social environment that was un-healthy or abnormal or criminalistic may lead to crime, as it ultimately produces “Character defects” and “maladjusted personality”. This is typified in early adversity and childhood maltreatment, which could result to neurobiological and behavioral problems in the individuals. As summarized by a Correction Officer,

Some of these inmates are from broken homes. They were brought up by their useless mothers and don't know their fathers, That's the reason they misbehave and respect nobody.

(FGD, Male Correction Officer, Aged 35 - 39 yrs).

According to Jeffery (1956), Thorstein Sellin observed that the difference between a criminal and a non-criminal is that they are responding to different conduct norms. Explicitly, Taft (1956) remarked that “the criminal underworld gang is dependent upon a normal upper world (that is, without the normal upperworld, the underworld gang cannot operate) and some of its values reflect those approved in normal social groups”. Typically, crime in America has been observed to be a form of exploitation resulting from other forms of exploitation not defined as crime. As a result, crime could be interpreted as “retaliation”. Merton³ had espoused that there are symptoms of failure and disorganization of the society as well as of the individual Offender. These failures are seen as depriving Offenders of contact with the institutions responsible for assuring development of law-abiding conduct, such as sound family life, good schools, employment, recreational opportunities, desirable companions among others.

It has been observed that 20th Century Scholars underscored that the South (that is, Southern part of United States, that include Texas) has a tendency for personal and societal violence; they enjoyed soldiering and regularly resolved inter-personal disputes with violence in unusual degree (May, 2006). The South has often been celebrated as a region that stressed so-called masculinity traits; a region de-

²Tarde, Gabriel. “Crime as Learned Behavior—Introduction to Criminology”.

<http://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/criminologyin%E2%80%A6/gabriel-tarde-openoregon.press-books.pub/gabriel-tarde/>

³Merton, R. K. “Social Structure and Anomie”, accessed Online on Jan 19, 2025 at

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2084686>

marked by violence, hard-nosed football ... a proclivity toward the military⁴. Nevertheless, the circumstance that pre-empted such traits is largely over-looked in analysis. The introduction of Jim Crow Laws to Southern United States in late 19th and early 20th Centuries to enforce racial segregation (May, 2006), in defiance to the 14th Amendment that granted African-Americans equality with the White alongside the associated lynching, used as an extra-legal form of punishment (Folmsbee, 1949; Du Bois & Wells, 1929) most likely toughened individuals in the South to resist torture, humiliation and in-human treatment. Notwithstanding the foregoing, together with the widespread myth of “Criminals are different kinds of people than we are” projected by the stereotypical images from mass media describing an Offender as abnormal, insane, immoral, sub-human and with other unprinted adjectives, there is a growing consensus among sociology scholars that deviant behavior is determined by the political elites (Thio, 1973; Brezina, 2000) and has no biological or psychological undertone.

On whether there is “One Law for the Rich” and another for the Poor, a preponderant 65.6 percent said “No”, compared with 26.4 percent that said “Yes” and 8 percent that were undecided. Those that negated difference in the Law pointed at the US Constitution as the Supreme law of the country rooted on the “Rule of Law”. On the other hand, respondents that affirmed difference in Law drew attention to omnibus laws (Federal and State Laws, Common [Case] Laws and Administrative Regulations) with selective applications to persons in the United States.

Crosby and Brazelton (2017) have argued that it is well known that African-American men are unfairly treated when encountering the United States’ Criminal Justice System, due to systemic racial and class biases that foster frameworks of inequality from arrest to sentencing. Correspondingly, MacMullan (2022) reiterates that race remains a divisive issue in the United States and feigning ignorance over its existence by presenting the façade of racial blindness, invariably blocks attempts to right the wrongs. In support, Moore (2005) wrote that Columbia University was being defined by some students as a “White Space”. It was not only a racialized space where non-Whites were perceived as intruders and unwelcome, but also an institutional space where White privilege was reproduced. Explicitly⁵, Native American teens are twice as likely to be subjected to bullying in School as compared to “White” teens. They have the lowest graduation rates than any ethnic group; they are more likely to be killed and injured by the Police, compared to any other ethnic group. Native American teens are twice as likely to be incarcerated after minor crimes as compared to teenagers of any other ethnicity. Their propensity to commit suicide is higher than that of any other ethnic group. They appear to be targeted for discrimination by law enforcement.

⁴Burton, Orville V. “Fatherhood”, accessed Online on Jan 19, 2025 at https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469616728_bercaw.30

⁵Perpetuating Prejudices: The Ongoing Struggle faced by Native Americans. <http://www.muwekma.org/blog/2023/june/perpetuating-prejudice-the-ongoing-struggle-faced-by-native-americans.html>

The foregoing is an apt description of systemic racism and reveals, unequivocally, racial/ethnic groups relations in the United States. Significantly, Merton⁶ espoused that the American Society specifies a Value (Materialism), which is the “American Dream” and conventional means to achieve the American Dream (that includes acquisition of education, requisite skills and competencies for work, creativity among others), but closes the vocational gateway against some people. This certainly makes it difficult/frustrates efforts of those people to achieve the “American Dream”, therefore, creating avenue for a deviant action of selecting either or a combination of “Innovation”, “Ritualism”, “Retreatism” or “Rebellion”.

In **Table 3**, all the respondents affirmed having heard, “Offenders are not your Friend”. An overwhelming proportion said this made them avoid intimacy with the Offenders. Almost all (94.9%) said Offenders had used derogatory words, such as “fuck yeah”, “mother fucker”, “nigga” against them, compared to 5.1 percent that said such words have not been used against them. In response to such vulgar words, a discussant commented as thus:

An inmate was cursing me out and demonstrating with obscenities—sexual pose. I used my OC on him and immediately initiated ICS (Instant Command System).

(FGD, Correction Officer, Male, Aged 35 - 39 years).

Also, another discussant retorted thus:

Lieu (Lieutenant) often deals with these inmates. The other day, an inmate cursed his mother, he hit the inmate with his fist and later sprayed OC on him.

(FGD, Correction Officer, Male, Aged 30 - 34 years).

In terms of whether locking-up of offenders in Refractory Cells (such as Administrative Segregation [AD-SEG]) and use of restraints could harden the offenders, about three-quarters (73.3%) said “No”, compared to 24.0 percent that responded “Yes” and 2.7 percent that were ambivalent. The preponderant reason for the use of restraints is to ensure security of offenders. This is widely known to the offenders and scarcely hardens them towards criminal tendencies/behavior. Statistics show 64.7 percent have used reasonable force (including chemical agent—Oleoresin Capsicum [OC]) to elicit compliance of an offender to an Order, while 35.3 percent have not used OC. Among those that have Used Force, 60.8 percent used it occasionally, while 39.2 percent regularly use force. According to a discussant,

I would exhaust my OC on any inmate that messes up. They are criminals and that's why they are in prison.

(FGD, Correction Officer, Male, Aged 35 - 40 years).

In English Prisons (that include United States), despite the ostensible efforts to improve prison life, ...staff—prisoner relationships are more detached, and staff members seem more unresponsive and more inclined to punish (Dirkzwager & Kruttschnitt, 2012). This contrasts with data above that showed that the Correction Officers (COs) gravitated towards retribution, deterrence and incapacitation

⁶Merton, Robert K. “Social Structure and Anomie”, accessed Online on Jan 19, 2025 at <http://www.doi.org/10.2307/2084686>

of the Offenders. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) regularly applies the appropriate section in PD: General Rules of Conduct and Disciplinary Action Guidelines for Employees and PD; 24: Administrative Separation to discipline COs that deviate from the policies and procedures.

Greineder (2013) argues that the perception of COs has been linked to an inmate's willingness to participate in rehabilitation. Also, Farkas (1999) explained that COs no longer express a punitive attitude toward inmates and generally support rehabilitation programs, notwithstanding the more punitive sentiment among the public. Whereas the foregoing may be a "safety measure" adopted by the COs to avoid loss of their job, it creates a pseudo-impression of negligence to promote public safety and safeguard victims' rights, while transitioning offenders to a successful reentry into the society. This is typified in instances where the victims and their relatives expect the offender to be severely punished and incarcerated for a long prison term. The corollary may be an increase in criminal behavior and acceptance of prison as haven.

Statistics showed that in Kentucky, offenders preferred serving a One-year imprisonment than accepting alternative sanction outside prison (Flory, May, Minor, & Wood, 2006). Also, a study of 1031 adult male subjects convicted in Texas in 1993 showed that most of them did not feel they would be stigmatized as a result of their convictions (Benson, Alarid, Burton, & Cullen, 2011). Data showed that 92.1 percent of the respondents got the desired result of eliciting compliance from the offenders, while 7.7 percent did not get. As explained by a discussant:

There is this inmate in our Restricted Housing Unit that always pour his excreta on officers. He loudly complains against being in the Restricted Housing (deprived of his property and wearing a "Suicide Gown"). The OC has been used on him twice within a Week, yet he targets officers with his excreta and urine. The problem is that O1 (Senior Warden) instructed against our use of the OC for such act. The inmate should be a psyche patient.

(FGD, Correction Officer, Male, Aged 30 - 34 years).

The Agency (TDCJ) warned Correction Officers not to be "Offender-Friendly", in terms of getting too intimate with offenders by discussing their personal issues with offenders; discussing offenders' friends and relatives with them. Table 3 reveals that almost all (96.9%) of the respondents have heard about Correction Officer(s) in their respective Facilities being intimate with offenders. As summarized by a Correction Officer discussant:

There are female Correction Officers in my Unit (Facility) that are Offender-Friendly. They bring out inmates of their choice from the Cell and stay close with him discussing for pretty long time. They even inform the inmates about the Officers that dislike them—the Offenders. This makes the concerned inmates to exhibit "attitude" towards the Officers reported.

(FGD, Correction Officer, Male, Aged 30 - 34 years).

Among Correction Officer respondents that confirmed existence of "Offender-Friendly" Officers, 64.0 percent have an unfavorable attitude towards the behav-

ior, while 36.0 percent were ambivalent. According to a discussant,

Being in prison is no big deal here. Some of the officers have relative(s) who had been in prison, therefore, “Offender is not your Friend” doesn’t mean much to them. They bring stuff for the inmates, which may include Contraband.

(FGD, Correction Officer, Male, Aged 34 - 34 years).

Table 3. Treatment of offenders.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Have you heard, “Offenders are not your friend”? (N = 292)		
Yes	292	100.0
No	0	0.0
Offenders used derogatory word on Officer (N = 292)		
Yes	277	94.9
No	15	5.1
Do you think locking-up of Offenders could harden the Offenders? (N= 292)		
Yes	70	24.0
No	214	73.3
Don’t know	8	2.7
Have you ever used Force including OC on an Offender? (N = 292)		
Yes	189	64.7
No	103	35.3
How often have you used OC on an Offender? (N = 189)		
Regularly	74	39.2
Occasionally	115	60.8
Rarely (Scarcely)	0	0.0
Did your Use of Force get a positive behavior change in the Offender? (N = 189)		
Yes	174	92.1
No	15	7.9
Have you heard about some Correction Officers in your Facility getting too intimate with Offenders? (N = 292)		
Yes	283	96.9
No	9	3.1
Attitude towards Officers getting intimate with Offenders (N = 283)		
Favorable	0	0.0
Unfavorable	181	64.0
Undecided	102	36.0
Have you ever got intimate with an Offender? (N = 283)		
Yes	52	18.2
No	231	81.8

Table 4 shows a 5-point Linkert Scale analysis of respondents' perception on the influence of certain factors on offender's deviant behavior.

Emotional disturbance, possibly during Childhood; Conflict of conduct norms (the value system of the Offender's society being at odds with that of United States); and Disjunction between society's aspiration (goals) and society's avenue (means) for getting the goals were statistically significant factors (Mean > 3:00). Correspondingly, the existence of "abnormal experience" resulting to maladjusted personalities (Follan & Minnis, 2010), bitter experiences of enslavement and "the black codes" of Jim Crow Laws fossilized in memories via story-telling and History books (Smythe, 1948) as well as personal experience resonate segregation, discrimination and social injustice that should be resisted.

Merton's exposition on the inherent structural inability of the specified aspect of the American Culture (Norm) to effectively direct human conduct in the attainment of "American Dream", cannot be over-emphasized. The worrisome concern, rather, is on the conflict of conduct norms. Are the Offenders largely immigrants? Even at that, are they ignorant of the laws and practices in the United States? This may appear heuristic. Given that peer effects on individuals predisposed toward a given behavior tend to be larger than peer effects on individuals without such a predisposition (Li & Guo, 2016) and the fact that many offenders express guilt and shame about their criminal activities (Matza & Sykes, 1961), prima facie suggests their commitment to the dominant social order. This relatively obviates their ignorance of the requirements of law in the United States.

Statistics in **Table 5** show a 5-point Linkert Scale analysis of respondents' perception on how certain factors are important in effective Offender management. Use of reasonable Force; Informal resolution of grievance; physical punishment; Writing Offenders up for a disciplinary action; Hand and leg restraint (handcuffing and leg cuffing); Denial of privileges; and Denial of Parole were statistically significant factors (Mean > 3:00). Reduction of Diet (reduced meal) and subjection of offenders to hard manual labor were statistically not significant (Mean < 3:00). In support, it is clearly established under the 8th Amendment of the United States Constitution that prison officials are obligated to provide inmates with nutritionally adequate meals on a regular basis⁷ as proper nutrition in prisons is a human right⁸.

Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to provide answers to **Table 4** and **Table 5** while one sample t-test statistics (population t-test or t-test of significant difference between sample and population mean) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Decision Rule: A mean score of 3.00 and above indicates agree, while below 3.00 indicates disagree.

⁷9th Circuit References 8th Amendment and Nutrition. Legal and Liability Risk Management Institute. https://www.llrmi.com/articles/legal_update/jail_nutrition/

⁸Beyond the Food: How Prison Nutrition Policy Contributes to Lasting Chronic Disease. <https://sites.brown.edu/publichealthjournal/2023/05/02>

Table 4. (12) To what extent would you agree that Offender's deviant behavior was influenced by the following items.

S/N	Item Statements	n	ΣX	$\bar{X}$	S	S ²	Remarks
A	Possession of Certain Features (Eye defects; Nose twisted, Upturned and Flat); Lips fleshy, swollen; anomalies of hair; abnormal dentition	292	864	2.96	0.777	0.603	Disagree
B	Intellectually Challenged	292	730	2.50	1.129	1.275	Disagree
C	Emotional Disturbance, possibly during Childhood	292	981	3.36*	1.275	1.626	Agree
D	Conflict of Conduct Norms (the Value System of the Offenders' Society being at odds with that of American Society)	292	1101	3.77*	1.045	1.092	Agree
E	Learning Crime as a Trade, through training and association with Others	292	867	2.97	1.043	1.088	Disagree
F	Disjunction between Society's aspiration (goals) and Society's avenues (means) for getting the goals	292	875	3.00*	1.138	1.296	Agree
Cluster/Pooled Mean				18.55			
Mean of Item Means				3.09*			

Sample Size (n), Summation (ΣX), Mean Score ($\bar{X}$), Standard Deviation (S), Variance (S²); An asterisk (*) indicates that respondents' perceptions are above average, as their mean scores are greater than the criterion value of 3.00 on a 5-point scale.

This implies that emotional disturbance, possibly during Childhood; Conflict of Conduct Norms; and Disjunction between Societal Goals and Avenues for getting the Goals were agreed by the respondents as factors influencing Offender's deviant behavior.

Table 5. (21) To what extent would you agree each of the following items as an important element of effective Offender Management?

S/N	Item Statements	n	ΣX	$\bar{X}$	S	S ²	Remarks
A	Use of Reasonable Force	292	1013	3.47*	0.950	0.903	Agree
B	Informal Resolution of Grievance	292	1034	3.54*	0.999	0.998	Agree
C	Physical Punishment (Physical Molestation)	292	1096	3.75*	0.897	0.805	Agree
D	Writing Offenders Up for a Disciplinary Action	292	975	3.34*	1.105	1.221	Agree
E	Reduction of Diet (Reduced Meal)	292	742	2.54	1.134	1.287	Disagree
F	Hand and Leg Restraints	292	1085	3.72*	0.944	0.891	Agree
G	Denial of Privileges	292	1165	3.99*	0.101	0.010	Agree
H	Denial of Parole	292	1194	4.09*	0.517	0.267	Agree
I	Subjection of Offender to Hard Manual Labor	292	632	2.16	0.592	0.351	Disagree
Cluster/Pooled Mean				30.60			
Mean of Item Means				3.40*			

Sample Size (n), Summation (ΣX), Mean Score ($\bar{X}$), Standard Deviation (S), Variance (S²); An asterisk (*) indicates that respondents' perceptions are above average, as their mean scores are greater than the criterion value of 3.00 on a 5-point scale.

This implies that with the exception of reduction of diet (reduced meal) and subjection of Offenders to hard manual labor, all the measures stated in **Table 5**

above were agreed by the respondents as important elements of effective offender management.

Offenders in the TDCJ Facilities have access to televisions. They watch programs of their choice; enjoy regular access to in-door games (Scrabble, Chess, Dominos among others provided by TDCJ) and out-door games (Basket Ball, Volley Ball and Hand Ball provided by TDCJ); enjoy free nutritious Meals; free laundry of their Prison Clothes; not subjected to tedious manual labor; and do not pay taxes. The foregoing makes the offenders relaxed and comfortable. **Table 6** shows that 48.2 percent of the respondents think the relaxed environment of the offenders could make them become “Jail Birds” (Recidivists), compared to 37.0 percent with a contrary view and 14.8 percent that were ambivalent to the question. However, 43.8 percent think the Offenders could be rehabilitated. The preponderant reason given by the respondents is that the unanticipated bitter lessons of being incarcerated, together with participation in education programs and skills acquisition, a moral behavior has been grafted upon the, otherwise, criminal lifestyle of some of the offenders. According to **McCloskey (1978)**, offenders in prisons are subjected to severe curtailment of their liberties, solitary confinement, sometimes severely restricted from contact with spouse, children, relatives and friends; sometimes exposed to assault and rape among others that altogether humble, humiliate and deprive the prisoner of his/her individuality in the prison system.

A slightly larger proportion (50.4%) of the respondents are pessimistic that the offenders could be rehabilitated. The overwhelming reason given was that criminality was ingrained in the offenders. Correspondingly, there is considerable evidence that prison may amplify criminal behavior rather than limiting it. Put simply, there is agreement that prison experience breeds crime itself. Evidence shows that incarceration increases the probability of further engagement in criminal behavior, particularly as it is analogous to a Child in family and peer group, with capacity to shape attitudes, values, behavior, and patterns among others.

Table 6. Prospect of recidivism of the offenders.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Could availability of recreational facilities make Offenders “Jail Birds” (Recidivists)? (N = 292)		
Yes	141	48.2
No	108	37.0
Don’t Know	43	14.8
Could Offenders be effectively Rehabilitated? (N = 292)		
Yes	128	43.8
No	147	50.4
Don’t Know	17	5.8

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

A preponderant proportion (66.4%) of the Correction Officer respondents in

TDCJ Houston Region III were aged 30 - 39 years, with an overwhelming proportion (74.0%) of African-American racial group and 92.1 percent between 1 - 4 years correction work experience locking-up of offenders in refractory cells and the use of restraints are generally perceived by the respondents to ensure security of the penitentiary, but appears to be relatively sabotaged by the impropriety of some Correction Officers that contravene the instruction to desist intimacy with the offenders. The comfortable environment of the penitentiary, which 48.2 percent of Officers affirmed has tendency to promote recidivism, is permitted by the 8th Amendment of the American Constitution. Concerted emphases should be placed on integrity of the Correction Officers. Periodic continuous performance improvement monitoring and evaluation of the officers should be considered to ensure competence on the job and balance their negative views with professionalism.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- Anderson, L. (2024). *Deviance: Social Constructions and Blurred Boundaries* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Benson, M. L., Alarid, L. F., Burton, V. S., & Cullen, F. T. (2011). Reintegration or Stigmatization? Offenders' Expectations of Community Re-Entry. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 39, 385-393. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2011.05.004>
- Brezina, T. (2000). Are Deviants Different from the Rest of Us? Using Student Accounts of Academic Cheating to Explore a Popular Myth. *Teaching Sociology*, 28, 71-78. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1319424>
- Choy, O., Raine, A., & Hamilton, R. H. (2018). Stimulation of the Prefrontal Cortex Reduces Intentions to Commit Aggression: A Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled, Stratified, Parallel-Group Trial. *The Journal of Neuroscience*, 38, 6505-6512. <https://doi.org/10.1523/jneurosci.3317-17.2018>
- Crosby, D., & Brazelton, S. R. (2017). The Disadvantages of African American and Somali Men in the US Criminal Justice System. *Spectrum: A Journal on Black Men*, 6, 99-120. <https://doi.org/10.2979/spectrum.6.1.05>
- DeLisi, M., Beaver, K. M., Vaughn, M. G., & Wright, J. P. (2009). All in the Family. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 36, 1187-1197. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854809342884>
- Dennert, J. W. (2021). "Henry Hebert Goddard (1866-1957)". Embryo Project Encyclopedia, School of Life Sciences, Arizona State University.
- Dirkzwager, A. J. E., & Kruttschnitt, C. (2012). Prisoners' Perceptions of Correctional Officers' Behavior in English and Dutch Prisons. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 40, 404-412. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2012.06.004>
- Du Bois, W. E. B., & Wells, I. B. (1929). *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889-1918*. National Association for the Advancement of Color People (NAACP).
- Eysenck, H (1964). *Crime and Personality*. Routledge & Kegan Paul
- Farkas, M. A. (1999). Correctional Officer Attitudes toward Inmates and Working with Inmates in a "Get Tough" Era. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 27, 495-506. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0047-2352\(99\)00020-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0047-2352(99)00020-3)

- Felson, M., & Clark, R. V. (1998). *Opportunity Makes the Thief: Practical Theory for Crime Prevention. Police Research Series. Paper 98*. Research Development Statistics.
- Flory, C. M., May, D. C., Minor, K. I., & Wood, P. B. (2006). A Comparison of Punishment Exchange Rates between Offenders under Supervision and Their Supervising Officers. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 34, 39-50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2005.11.004>
- Follan, M., & Minnis, H. (2010). Forty-Four Juvenile Thieves Revisited: From Bowlby to Reactive Attachment Disorder. *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 36, 639-645. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2214.2009.01048.x>
- Folmsbee, S. J. (1949). The Origin of the First "Jim Crow" Law. *The Journal of Southern History*, 15, 235-247. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2197999>
- Gibson, M., & Rafter, N. (2006). *Cesare Lombroso—Criminal Man*. Duke University Press.
- Goring, C. D. (1913). *The English Convict: A Statistical Study*. HMS.
- Greineder, B. (2013). Correctional Officers' Perception of Sexual Offenders in the United States: A Qualitative Analysis. *International Journal of Criminal Justice*, 8, 24-35.
- Jeffery, C. R. (1956). The Structure of American Criminological Thinking. *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science*, 46, 658-672. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1139378>
- Li, Y., & Guo, G. (2016). Peer Influence on Aggressive Behavior, Smoking, and Sexual Behavior. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 57, 297-318. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022146516661594>
- MacMullan, T. (2022). *Habits of Whiteness: A Pragmatist Reconstruction, American Philosophy* (2nd ed.). Indiana University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv21ptrsv>
- Matza, D., & Sykes, G. M. (1961). Juvenile Delinquency and Subterranean Values. *American Sociological Review*, 26, 712-719. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2090200>
- May, R. E. (2006). Fighting South. In C. R. Wilson (Ed.), *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture: Myth, Manners and Memory* (Vol. 4, pp. 68-70). University of North Carolina Press.
- McCloskey, H. J. (1978). Crime and Punishment: Deviance and Corrective Social Therapy. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 15, 91-98.
- Miethe, T. D., & Mier, R. F. (1994). *Crime and Its Social Context*. State University of New York Press.
- Moore, W. L. (2005). *Reproducing Racism: White Space Elite Law Schools and Racial Inequality*. Rowman and Little Field.
- Portnoy, J., & Farrington, D. P. (2015). Resting Heart Rate and Antisocial Behavior: An Updated Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 22, 33-45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2015.02.004>
- Smythe, H. H. (1948). The Concept "Jim Crow". *Social Forces*, 27, 45-48. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2572458>
- Taft, D. R. (1956). *Criminology*. MacMillan.
- Taylor, I., Winston, P., & Young, J. (1973). *The New Criminology*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Thio, A. (1973). Class Bias in the Sociology of Deviance. *The American Sociologist*, 8, 1-12.
- Tottenham, N., Hare, T. A., Millner, A., Gilhooly, T., Zevin, J. D., & Casey, B. J. (2011). Elevated Amygdala Response to Faces Following Early Deprivation. *Developmental Science*, 14, 190-204. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7687.2010.00971.x>

Wilcox, P., & Cullen, F. T. (2018). Situational Opportunity Theories of Crime. *Annual Review of Criminology*, 1, 123-148.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-criminol-032317-092421>

Appendix

SECTION C: PERCEIVED FACTORS THAT INFLUENCED OFFENDERS' DEVIANT BEHAVIOR

(12) To what extent would you agree that Offender's deviant behavior was influenced by the following items:

Items	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(a) Possession of certain features (e.g., Eye defects; Nose twisted, upturned and flat); lips fleshy, swollen; anomalies of hair; abnormal dentition (teeth)					
(b) Mentally-retarded					
(c) Emotional Disturbance, possibly during Childhood					
(d) Conflict of Conduct Norms (the value system of the Offender's Society being at odds with that of American Society)					
(e) Learning Crime as a trade through training and association with Others					
(f) Disjunction between Society's aspiration (goals) and Society's avenues (means) for getting the goals					

(21) To what extent would you agree on each of the following items as an important element of Effective Offender Management?

Item	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(a) Use of reasonable Force					
(b) Informal Resolution of Grievance					
(c) Physical Punishment (physical molestation)					
(d) Writing Offenders Up for a Disciplinary Action					
(e) Reduction of Diet (reduced meal)					
(f) Hand and Leg Restraint (Handcuffing and Leg Cuffing)					
(g) Denial of Privileges					
(h) Denial of Parole					
(i) Subjection of Offender to Hard Manual Labor					

(22) Offenders in the TDCJ Jail Units have access to Televisions and they watch programs of their choice; enjoy regular access to In-door Games (Scrabble, Chess,

Dominos among others) and Out-door Games (Basket Ball, Volley Ball and Hand Ball); enjoy free nutritious Meals; free laundry of their Prison Clothes; have absence of tedious manual labor etc. These make them relaxed and comfortable.

[a] Do you think the above could make the Offenders become Jail-Birds (return to the Penitentiary), by committing another crime in the main Society when released in order to return to the Penitentiary? -----(a) Yes (b) No (c) Don't Know