

PERCEPTIONS OF RECEIVING EDUCATION SERVICES WHILE
INCARCERATED

TRACI STARNES

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The undersigned, approved by the Department Chair of Graduate Studies in Education
have examined a dissertation entitled:

PERCEPTIONS OF RECEIVING EDUCATION SERVICES WHILE
INCARCERATED

Presented by, Traci Starnes, a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education and hereby
certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.



Dr. Duke Jones, Advisor/Chair



Dr. Pam Hedgepeth, Committee Member



Dr. Duane Widhalm, Committee Member

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Traci Starnes, B.S., M.S.

Dr. Duke Jones Dissertation Advisor

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And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:17

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Abstract

Correctional facilities across the state of Missouri are trying to combat the ever-growing number of ex-offenders who return to prison within 2 years of release. To accomplish this, they have incorporated various programs to help guide offenders to making better choices once they're released. They've developed a state-level steering team to develop programs and encourage offenders to complete the programs. They've incorporated mandates regarding the GED/HSED program and are giving offenders another chance at life.

The aim of this study was to take an in-depth look at the education programs and to see how offenders perceive these programs and their effect on recidivism. It explored the GED/HSED program and interviewed offenders and staff members at two different facilities. It looked at the experiences, beliefs, and perceptions of participants and helped them to think post-release. It incorporated various literature and research from previous authors to connect the educational programs to recidivism. The findings concluded that the educational programs are perceived as beneficial and help to aide in the decline of recidivism.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

According to the National Institute of Corrections (2016), Missouri has the ninth-highest incarceration rate in the country with 518 people jailed per 100,000 residents. This incarceration rate is 17% higher than the national incarceration rate and is a 24% higher rate than those who are in prison for violent crimes. The Missouri Department of Corrections (MDOC; 2015) stated that 97% of currently incarcerated adults will be released back into society with the hope of not returning to prison. However, Missouri's current recidivism rate is 19.2%. This means that, in 2015, of the 27,000 released inmates, 5,184 of them will eventually return to prison.

With these statistics in mind, what are corrections facilities doing to help ensure that inmates are successful upon release? According to the U.S. Department of Education's (USDOE; 2017) Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education, as many as 90% of federal and state prisons offer education and training programs while people are incarcerated. Inmates who are enrolled in these programs are preparing for and earning the General Educational Development (GED) Diploma or the High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED), a college degree, or a technical trade to prepare themselves better for life after their release. Through the Missouri Division of Offender Rehabilitative Services (MDORS), offenders have the opportunity to earn their GED Diploma or HSED at 18 prisons and six treatment centers throughout the State of Missouri (MDOC, 2015). The MDORS is responsible for the development of treatment and service programs for offenders. These programs include offender health care (medical and mental health), sexual offender assessment and treatment, adult education

and workforce readiness, library services, substance abuse services, and Missouri Vocational Enterprises (MVE; MDOC, 2015).

Government Programs

Several mandatory laws (and statutes) were set in place regarding education in the corrections setting. The Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP; 2013) implemented a mandatory education policy by which inmates who do not have a high school diploma, or a GED Diploma are required to participate in literacy programs for a minimum of 240 hours or until they obtain their GED Diploma or HSED. At least 26 states have instituted mandatory education laws. The majority of these laws require adults who score below the 8th grade level to participate in educational programming for a specified period or until they meet a set achievement level (Tolbert, 2002).

The U.S. Congress passed, and President Bill Clinton signed the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act (VCCLEA) of 1994. The VCCLEA is considered the largest crime bill in the history of the country. It provided 100,000 new police officers, \$9.7 billion in funding for prisons, and \$6.1 billion in funding for prevention programs that were designed with input from experienced police officers (VCCLEA, 1994). In addition, the VCCLEA (1994) specified guidelines for various rehabilitative programs. Most of these programs were authorized for 6 years beginning October 1, 1994. Some programs were formula grants that were awarded to states or localities according to their population, crime rate, or a combination of factors. These programs included (but were not limited to):

- Brady implementation: Competitive grant program for states to upgrade criminal history records to permit compliance with the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of 1993.

- Byrne grants: Formula grant program for states to use in more than 20 law enforcement purposes, including state and local drug task force efforts.
- Community policing: Grant program to put 100,000 police officers on the streets in community policing programs.
- Community schools: Grant program administered by the Department of Health and Human Services for supervised afterschool, weekend, and summer programs for at-risk youth.
- Correctional facilities and boot camps: Grant program for state corrections agencies to build and operate correctional facilities, including boot camps and other alternatives to incarceration to ensure that additional space will be available to put (and keep) violent offenders incarcerated.

The VCCLEA (1994) included several other grant programs available to assist corrections departments across the country. Its provisions implemented many things, including a “three strikes” mandatory life sentence for repeat offenders.

To reduce recidivism, the FBOP is also designing reforms that focus on evidence-based rehabilitation strategies. The reforms target core behavioral issues that result in criminality and they are aimed at reducing the likelihood that inmates will reoffend while they are incarcerated or after their release (USDOJ, 2017). Some of the most intense reforms start with the arrival of the inmate at an FBOP facility and continuing until his or her return home.

The FBOP has embraced a corrections philosophy that reentry preparation must begin on the first day of incarceration (USDOJ, 2017). In 2016, the FBOP retained the American Institutes of Research, an independent social science research organization, to evaluate FBOP’s existing assessment tools and to propose improvements. With a planned

completion in the fall of 2017, the FBOP hopes that this evaluation will increase the effectiveness of correctional programs. This assessment will ensure (a) that the correct services are delivered to the correct inmates, (b) that the programs are aligned to the risk level and unique needs of each individual, and (c) that all services are delivered at the intensity and frequency necessary to reduce the likelihood of recidivism (USDOJ, 2017).

The RAND Corporation (RAND; 2013) indicated that (a) inmates who participate in correctional education programs have a 43% lower chance of returning to prison than those who do not, and that (b) every dollar spent on prison education saves four to five dollars spent on the cost of reincarceration. With help from the Bronner Group (2016), an educational consulting firm, the FBOP is building a semiautonomous school district within the federal prison system. The school district will offer programs for adult literacy and basic skills, high school diplomas, postsecondary education, and expanded opportunities for individuals with learning disabilities (USDOJ, 2017). Under this system, each new inmate will be assessed upon incarceration to determine his or her educational level and the type of instruction needed. Each “individualized education plan” will follow the inmate through his or her time in FBOP’s custody (USDOJ, 2017).

The FBOP is also launching a pilot program to determine the feasibility of a “blended” education model combining classroom instruction with online education. The online education will be provided through tablets customized for the prison environment. The pilot program will be launched in early 2017 and will be expanded to additional sites in the future (USDOJ, 2017).

The FBOP is also focusing on inmate job skills post release; therefore, it is expanding opportunities for occupational training. The FBOP is working to revitalize Federal Prisons Industries, the agency’s largest and most successful job training program

(USDOJ, 2017). The FBOP is also expanding access to critical national programs such as the Bureau Rehabilitation and Value Enhancement program and the Steps Toward Awareness, Growth, and Emotional Strength program, and is developing new national programs where programming gaps exist. The FBOP believes that recidivism can be reduced through evidence-based programming that targets criminogenic needs with courses in cognitive behavioral therapy (USDOJ, 2017). In May 2014, the FBOP issued new internal guidance prioritizing the use of cognitive behavioral therapy and other evidence-based treatment programs that proved to be effective in correctional settings (USDOJ, 2017).

The Residential Drug Abuse Program, one of the FBOP's most effective, recidivism-reduction programs, has been expanded recently to include additional programs for Spanish-speaking inmates, inmates with a dual mental health diagnoses, high security level inmates, and female inmates (USDOJ, 2017). The FBOP has also recently launched and has plans to expand a regional field trial offering the Medication-Assisted Treatment program for inmates who have a history of opioid dependence (USDOJ, 2017).

The FBOP is also helping inmates obtain government-issued identification prior to their release. Upon leaving the correctional facility, it is a challenge for men and women who do not have such documentation to secure employment and housing, to register for school, to open bank accounts, and to access other benefits (e.g., health care) that are critical to successful integration (USDOJ, 2017).

Funding

Demands for education from incarcerated prisoners have increased. In 2016, the USDOE (2017) received 200 college applications from prisoners, after which it released

to prisoners a list of colleges that offered need-based grants to prisoners. Also, in 2016, the Obama Administration chose 67 colleges and universities to pilot a program that would offer Pell Grants to incarcerated students. The program, called Second Chance Pell, would enroll 12,000 prisoners at more than 100 correctional institutions across the country. The program is geared toward prisoners who are likely to be released within the next 5 years (Wexler, 2016). Most of the colleges chosen will offer classes in person at the correctional facilities, while some colleges will offer online classes. Many colleges also plan to offer a range of support services and to tailor their instruction to local labor markets (Wexler, 2016). Although Congress placed a ban on Pell Grants for prisoners in 1994, the Obama Administration used *experimental authority* under the Higher Education Act of 1965 to support this pilot program (Wexler, 2016). John King Jr., the USDOE secretary during eighth year of the Obama Administration (2016–2017), stated that the bans would remain in place until Congress acted upon it.

Education funding in general is limited, so some people question the need to set aside money for these correctional education programs. Many people believe that the answers to whether the programs are needed can be found in the following statistics:

- Of all inmates in Missouri who are sentenced to prison, 97% will be released in the near future (MDOC, 2017).
- The USDOE (2009) reported that nationally nearly 700,000 convicted offenders are released back into society each year.
- Of released inmates from state prisons, more than two-thirds are arrested within 3 years of leaving prison, and nearly half are reincarcerated because they lack needed job skills, are burdened by a criminal record (making them

ineligible to be hired in many occupations) and have little support to make the transition back to society (Beck, 2000).

In March 2013, the USDOE (2017) and the USDOJ (2017) awarded three grants, totaling \$924,036 to adult education providers in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Kansas. The grants provided funds for innovative correctional education programs aimed at helping America's inmate population make a smooth reentry to society through education and workforce training. This grant was aimed to address the chronic issue of underemployment for ex-offenders and provide a more constructive use of time for those under community supervision, as well as to create an education continuum for bridging the gap between prison and community education and training programs (USDOE, 2017). The MDOC (2015) stated that in recent years offenders have taken advantage of the educational opportunities provided to them. In 2012, 1,671 offenders who were housed at institutions or treatment centers throughout the state obtained their GED Diplomas. In 2013, nearly 1,692 offenders obtained their HSED. This was the highest number of graduates in almost 5 years. In 2014, more than 1,750 offenders incarcerated obtained their HSED, topping last year's record number. On any given day, the classrooms in the MDOC (2015) facilities across the State of Missouri will have more than 8,000 students in class.

Ultimately, the overall goal of correctional education programs is to reduce recidivism by increasing the chances of employment for ex-offenders (Bayliss, 2003). Correctional education programs are intended to break the cycle of "catch-and-release" by providing inmates with more opportunities to develop the skills required to succeed in their workplaces and communities (USDOE, 2017, p. 3). Most inmates want to obtain employment upon release and, if they do, they will be less likely to recidivate. Education

“behind bars” presents an opportunity for the incarcerated to prepare for success upon release. Many varied administering entities operate correctional institutions in the United States, and many varied organizations are the providers of onsite, prison education programs. Various federal education programs have supported education in state and local prisons. Congress then created the Office of Correctional Education (OCE) through the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1984 to coordinate and improve these efforts to support educational opportunities in correctional settings (USDOE, 2017). Strong partnerships among education providers and correctional facilities create solid opportunities for prisoners to improve their lives upon entering society. Focusing on transitions into and out of the correctional facility, and on educational programs that lead to career pathways, are among the most important factors that enable people who have previously been incarcerated to continue their education and prepare for living-wage jobs (USDOE, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is the structure that holds or supports a theory of a research study (University of Southern California, Libraries, 2017). The theoretical framework for this study stems from two primary theories: behaviorism or social learning theory, and constructivism or self-efficacy theory. Incarceration results in a strong reaction from communities because the offenders lack attachments and social bonds, which further enable them to offend or engage in recidivistic behavior (Hirschi, 2004; Trudeau, Mason, Randall, Spoth, & Ralston, 2012). Correctional education programs provide an opportunity for offenders to encounter positive individuals, while learning skills that will be beneficial to them in the future (Jensen & Reed, 2006). These theories might provide effective means of designing rehabilitation programs in correctional

facilities, which should reduce the recidivistic behavior among inmates after they are released from incarceration (Moore & Morris, 2011; Ojo, 2012). The skills that the inmates learn in the correctional education programs will aid them in becoming self-sufficient upon release because they will provide them with tangible skills and the knowledge that will be useful in supporting themselves upon release from prison (Jensen & Reed, 2006).

The prison environment is conducive to studying behavior theory. Skinner (1974a) stated, "The human species like all other species is the product of natural selection. Each of its members is an extremely complex organism, a living system, the subject of anatomy and physiology" (p. 37). According to Skinner, learning is a function of change in overt behavior. Skinner stated that changes in behavior are the result of an individual's response to events (stimuli) that occur in the environment. When incarcerated, one will change whom one is simply to fit in, allowing one's environment to determine who one is. According to Bandura (1999), an offender might reach self-efficiency through contact with others who have overcome obstacles. In contrast, the reduction of self-efficiency occurs when the offender surrounds him or herself with people who fail (Bandura, 1999).

Once an offender is incarcerated at a corrections facility, rehabilitative programs play a vital role in preventing continued deviant behavior (Agnew, 2012; Ameen, 2012; Blomberg, Bales, Mann, Piquero, & Beck, 2012; Fitzgerald, 2011; Lowenkamp, Makarios, Latessa, Lemke, & Smith, 2010; Ojo, 2012). For instance, if an inmate were to be released into society after a felony conviction of theft and were to apply for a job, the employer might not hire the person because the employer might believe that the person would be likely to steal from new the place of business (Ameen, 2012). In turn, the

inmate might revert to recidivistic behavior to fulfill a societal requirement (Blomberg, et al., 2011). Rehabilitation programs in correctional facilities should teach each inmate how to build bonds, positive attachments, commitments, and beliefs in society (Hirschi, 2004; Moore & Morris, 2011; Ojo, 2012; Zembroski, 2011). Bandura's (1973) social learning theory provides methods for individuals to learn positive behaviors that contribute to achieving bonds and attachments to society.

Bruner's (1960) constructivist theory is a major theme in the theoretical framework. Bruner (1960) stated, "Learning is an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current/past knowledge" (p. 19). Jonassen (1996) proposed eight characteristics differentiating constructivist, learning environments:

1. Constructivist learning environments provide multiple representations of reality.
2. Multiple representations avoid oversimplification and represent the complexity of the real world.
3. Constructivist learning environments emphasize knowledge construction instead of knowledge reproduction.
4. Constructivist learning environments emphasize authentic tasks in a meaningful context rather than abstract instruction out of context.
5. Constructivist learning environments provide learning environments such as real-world settings or learning from case studies instead of from predetermined sequences of instruction.

6. Constructivist learning environments encourage thoughtful reflection on experience.
7. Constructivist learning environments enable context-dependent and content-dependent knowledge construction.
8. Constructivist learning environments support collaborative construction of knowledge through social negotiation, not competition among learners for recognition.

Social and cognitive constructivists would support each characteristic. However, these two strands of constructivism place a difference emphasis on each of the above eight characteristics. Current inmates have a wide range of past knowledge and the average level of tested abilities is a 6.0 grade level (MDOC, 2015); therefore, educators must be able to “mold” correctional students by using tools intended to engage and facilitate specific kinds of cognitive processing. Educators can construct a learning environment that supports collaborative learning and engages students to reflect on their responses. Cognitive tools can be used to fulfill a number of intellectual functions in helping learners to interact, and they can better represent the problem or task that the learners are performing.

Erikson (1968) introduced the theory of the eight stages of human development. Erikson believed that a person’s biological, environmental, and cultural influences affect individual behavior. Cultural influences play a significant role in life and the impacts of cultural and social norms are emphasized by the sociocultural perspective of those with an impact on the individual (Erikson, 1968). An individual’s environment and his or her biological and cultural influences affect his or her behavior; this process is referred to as nature versus nurture (Bandura, 1973; Erikson, 1968; Ormond, 1999). Erikson’s theory is

similar to the social learning theory whose proponents assert that behavior is learned through watching others (Bandura, 1973).

Whether one prefers the behavioral or social view of self-efficacy, it is true that people will adapt to their surroundings to survive. Within the prisons across the United States, individuals who thought that they would never be caught are detained and incarcerated. They must mold and adapt themselves to survive in a new environment.

Problem Statement

Prisons are intended not only to punish and debilitate criminal offenders, but also to rehabilitate them (Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner, 2003). By rehabilitating the inmates, society has hope of keeping them from recidivistic behavior and from returning to prison. In the state of Missouri, this rehabilitation can take the form of several different educational opportunities that offer a way for successful reentry into society. In regard to, inmates in the United States, 57% do not have a high school diploma or an HSED (Greenberg et al., 2003). With mandatory education now in place, offenders (who are not exempt) are now required to pursue a GED Diploma while confined (MDOC, 2015). However, determining how successful rehabilitative and educational programs are can be a problem that includes what more can be done to assist the inmates upon release. The State of Missouri has shown that 48% of offenders who leave prison without a GED Diploma or high school diploma will return to prison within 2 years, and that 37% of offenders who obtain a GED Diploma while in prison return within 2 years (MDOC, 2015). Correctional education programs receive limited funding; therefore, it is crucial to determine which programs are beneficial and which are not. The aim of this study was to determine which rehabilitative programs the offenders perceive to be most valuable post incarceration.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand the experience and perspective of ex-offenders regarding educational programs in a correctional setting. Inmates are offered a wide variety of educational programs while they are detained. The researcher focused on programs that included earning a GED Diploma, vocational training, and higher learning. The researcher focused on these programs to assess what is required to get into the programs, and to evaluate the different recidivistic rates associated with each program. Statistics involved with recidivism and the effect that education can have on the lives of inmates upon release were then examined. Through a qualitative inquiry of offenders, a determination was made regarding which correctional education programs offenders perceived as being effective in gaining employment, which programs they felt were ineffective, which programs they felt should be offered, and what academic and job skills they had prior to incarceration. A comparison of program preferences and offerings aided in gaining insight into the overarching research questions that formed the basis of this study and guided the creation of the survey questions. A great deal of research exists from the perspectives of experts in the field. Numerous studies have been conducted to determine the impact of correctional education on the reduction of recidivism. However, limited research exists on the offender's perspective of correctional education programs (Klein, Tolbert, Bugarian, Cataldi, & Tauschek, 2004). The offender perspective provides insight regarding what aspects of correctional education offenders perceive as beneficial upon release from prison. The offender perception provided a perspective on why some offenders participate in correctional education programs while others do not. The offender's outlook is needed to implement programs that align with the needs of the population. This study will provide insight for policymakers, administrators, educators,

and community members as they further their research into educational programs and the resources in the correctional setting.

Research Questions

In this study, the researcher examined the importance of educational experiences while people were incarcerated and how those experiences affected the inmates' rates of recidivism after they were released from prison. The researcher identified within the state of Missouri correctional facilities that offer basic adult education, vocational training, and HSED and GED Diploma programs to their inmates. The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are the perceptions, experiences, and beliefs of inmates regarding correctional education programs?
2. What is the perception of the impact of correctional education programs on post release employment?
3. What are the perceived benefits for participants who are earning an education while incarcerated?
4. What are the perceived barriers for participants who are earning an education while incarcerated?

Limitations

According to Patton (2003), a limitation is an aspect of the study over which the researcher has no control, and that has a negative impact on the study. This study was limited in the following ways:

1. Time constraints of the participants.
2. Recidivism by the offender could be the result of other external factors besides the lack of education.

3. The experiences of the program educators differ; therefore, these differences might have had an impact on the cognitive learning process that the student achieved.
4. The external support (spouse, mom, or dad) varied for each inmate; therefore, success rates might have been influenced by various factors.
5. This study will only have access to those offenders and staff members that the MDOC will allow. They will decide on the number of participants and which ones.

Delimitations

This study was delimited in the following ways:

1. This study was delimited to inmates of Ages 18--60 within facilities in the State of Missouri.
2. Only programs funded by the Missouri Department of Education were included in this study.
3. This study was delimited to adult education programs in prisons (jails or community corrections facilities).
4. The director of the facility ultimately controlled the selection process and decided whom he or she would permit to be interviewed.

Assumptions

The researcher made the following assumptions:

1. The participants cooperated fully throughout the study.
2. The documents and testing results detailing the education level of inmates were accurate, complete, and reliable.

3. The reasoning behind obtaining educational degrees or certificates was to ensure success upon release from prison.
4. All of the participants were literate (able to read, write, and speak in English), and they had the mental capacity to understand and answer the interview questions.

Design Controls

The researcher conducted a qualitative phenomenological study to answer the question, “Does education gained while incarcerated reduce the recidivism rate?” and to explore the actual perceptions of the inmates on rehabilitative programs during their incarceration. The researcher interpreted the informants’ responses to open-ended questions concerning their “actual” experiences of participating in the prison educational programs, which responses were reported anonymously so that no respondents were identifiable. The informants of the study included inmate students from a MDOC facility. The interview data provided new knowledge significant to inmate participants, correctional administrators, and community advocates for correctional education. The researcher selected 20 men and 20 women to interview so that the researcher was able to discover, understand, and gain insight into this subject. The researcher conducted interviews with inmates, educators, and administrators and requested their participation in focus groups to gather data.

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms are defined according to their usage in this study:

Experimental authority. Authority that allows the USDOE to waive certain federal rules for the benefit of experimentation.

General Educational Development Diploma. The GED Diploma is a test that the American Council on Education GED Testing Service developed to measure an individual's performance against the outcomes and concepts of a 4-year high school education (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MDESE], 2015).

High School Equivalency Diploma. The HSED is issued to those who have met the State of Missouri's eligibility criteria. This diploma is an alternative to the GED Test. The HSED requires students to take additional courses in civics, health, and employability (MDESE, 2015).

Incarcerated. To be incarcerated means that one is confined as in a prison (Merriam-Webster, 2015).

Inmate. To be an inmate is to be a prisoner, an incarcerated person, and a law offender who is confined as in a prison (Merriam-Webster, 2015). Will be used alternately with offenders and prisoners.

Offenders. To transgress the moral or divine law (Merriam-Webster, 2015). Will be used alternately with prisoners and inmates.

Recidivism. To be recidivistic is to relapse into criminal behavior upon release from prison (Merriam-Webster, 2015).

Summary

In Chapter 1, the researcher stated that 97% of currently incarcerated adults would be released back into society with the hope of not returning to prison (MDOC, 2015). Various educational programs have been incorporated into correctional facilities to support inmates while they are incarcerated. However, along with these programs, come factors that limit and control the rehabilitation that takes place. Chapter 2 is a

combination of literature that was deemed important to this study. It begins with the early history of corrections; the researcher then addresses corrections history in America. The review then moves to current correctional education, demographics, education, funding for programs, and recidivism. The literature review covered in Chapter 2 leads in Chapter 3 to the research methodology, data collection, and methods used to analyze the data. The findings and results of the study are presented in Chapter 4. Finally, in Chapter 5, the researcher presents the summary, conclusions, discussions of findings, and recommendations for practice and further research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The goal of the literature review is to familiarize the reader with the literature of previous research that is pertinent to this study. The strategy used to create the literature review began in consideration of the problem and purpose of the study. A thorough literature search that was relevant to the goals of this study was performed using several keywords. The following most commonly used keyword searches led to the organization of the full literature review: inmates and education, education and recidivism, how education affects inmates, and history of education and rehabilitation of inmates. The literature review information was obtained from scholarly books, corrections textbooks, peer-reviewed journal articles, Department of Corrections annual reports, master's theses, and dissertations that were found in online databases such as EBSCO Host and ProQuest. The searches for dissertations were used only to ensure the study's originality. The searches were also bound to peer-reviewed articles. To meet the study's completion date, initial searches were limited to works published during 2000 or later. Works published prior to 2000 were included in the search parameter when recent material was unsuccessful at providing a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

History of Corrections

The earliest-known comprehensive statements of prohibited behavior appear in ancient times in the Sumerian Law of Mesopotamia (3100 B.C.E.) and the Code of Hammurabi, developed by the King of Babylon in 1750 B.C.E. These written codes were divided into sections to cover different types of offenses and contained descriptions of the punishments to be imposed on offenders (Clear & Cole, 1990). Thus, criminal law was

focused on maintaining public order among people of equal status and wealth. Given the parties involved, the main criminal punishments were penance and payment of fines or restitution. Lower-class offenders without money received physical punishment at the hands of their masters (Clear & Cole, 1990). Little to no documentation is extant on the rehabilitation of offenders during these times. It was believed that the inmates were guilty, and that punishment would be the “cure” to their doing wrong. Little was done to help reform the inmates. This system of corrections held steadfast for many centuries.

In the Middle Ages (1100–1453) later period, the authority of government grew, and the criminal law system became more fully developed. Attempts to bring reform to prisons did not begin until the Protestant Reformation (1517–1648) with its emphasis on the importance of hard work and the sinfulness of sloth. The reformers began to urge that some means be found to provide work for the idle poor. Out of these concerns arose the “house of correction,” a detention facility that combined the major elements of a workhouse, poorhouse, and penal industry by both disciplining inmates and setting them to work. A law was passed in 1609, requiring each English county to provide houses of correction. These houses were expected to instill a habit of industry that would be more conducive to their inmates earning an honest livelihood (Clear & Cole, 1990). The inmates, who were primarily prostitutes, beggars, minor criminals, and the idle poor such as orphans and the sick, were to be disciplined and sent to work. The products made in the house of correction were to be sold on the market, so that the facility would be self-sufficient and not need government subsidy (Hirsch, 1992; Clear & Cole, 1990; Stokes, 2014). The purpose of the house of correction was for people who had committed a less serious crime to improve their behavior. Thus, began the first form of rehabilitation in the prison setting.

The events of the Industrial Revolution (1760–1840) and Napoleonic wars (1803–1815) brought about a great increase in the number of incarcerated people. For the first time, empty ships were used to house prisoners (Prison History, 2017). By the middle of the 1700s, Great Britain (United Kingdom in 1707) was inflicting capital and corporal punishment extensively, transporting large numbers of convicts to its colonies, especially Australia, and was facing the problem of overcrowded jails and houses of correction; however, crime continued its upward curve. Then, economic and social factors, particularly concerning labor, began to reshape the nature of penal sanctions. Concurrently, the revolutionaries in the American colonies, with their liberal ideas about the relationship between citizen and government, and their belief in human perfectibility, were setting the stage for a shift in penal policies (Clear & Cole, 1990).

During the Enlightenment (1685–1815), or the Age of Reason, new ideas from rationalism, the importance of the individual, and the limitations of government replaced traditional assumptions (Klasey, 2017). Revolutions occurred in America and France, and great advances were made in science. In addition, the Industrial Revolution was fully underway. Advances in scientific thinking led to a questioning attitude that emphasized observation, experimentation, and technological development (Clear & Cole, 1990). Enlightened thinkers in Britain, France, and other European countries questioned traditional authority and embraced the idea that humanity could be improved through rational change (Clear & Cole, 1990).

The Scientific Revolution (1544–1688) had a direct impact on social and political thought because it encouraged people to question established institutions, use the power of reason to remake society, and believe progress would ultimately bring about a just community (Clear & Cole, 1990). These ideas allowed people in America and Europe to

rethink the procedures used to determine guilt, the limits on a government's power to punish, the nature of criminal behavior, and the best ways to correct offenders. It was during this period that the classical school of criminology emerged. Criminology insisted on a rational link between the gravity of the crime and the severity of the punishment (Clear & Cole, 1990).

Before the 1800s, people believed that one of the best ways to maintain order was to intimidate the entire population by publicly punishing offenders (Clear & Cole, 1990). In addition to fines, five punishments were common in Europe during this time: galley slavery, imprisonment, transportation, corporal punishment, and death. Until the Late Middle Ages (1250–1500), prisons were used primarily for the detention of people awaiting trial, but for most offenders, incarceration provided punishments far greater than mere detention. Men, women, and children, healthy and sick, were locked up together. The strong preyed on the weak, there was no sanitation, and disease was epidemic. Authorities made no provision for the inmates' health. Often the warden viewed his job as a business proposition and sold food and accommodation according to charges he set (Clear & Cole, 1990).

Punishment has been a crucial part of humanity throughout the ages. Punishment could vary in the forms of public humiliation, whipping, or death. However, people believed the one constant that some sort of punishment should follow a crime. As the centuries have progressed, so has the thought behind the punishment. Research and literature now show that over time the theories behind rehabilitation have progressed. This section covered corrections in ancient Middle Eastern history, and medieval to modern European history. The History in America section reviews corrections history and philosophy in America.

History in America

In 1682, with the arrival of William Penn, Pennsylvania adopted "The Great Law," which was founded on humane Quaker principles and emphasized hard labor in a house of corrections as punishment for most crimes. Death was reserved for premeditated murder. The Quaker Code lasted until 1718, when the Anglican Code replaced it, which was already in force in other colonies (Clear & Cole, 1990). The Anglican Code listed 13 capital offenses; larceny was the only felony not punishable by death. Whipping, branding, mutilation, and other corporal punishments were prescribed for other offenses. Fines were also issued. This code continued throughout the colonies until the War of Independence (Clear & Cole, 1990). The colonies seldom used institutions for confinement. Instead, they used banishment, fines, death, and other forms of punishment. Jails held people awaiting court action or those unable to pay their debts. Only rarely were convicted offenders jailed for their whole sentences. The stocks, whipping post, or gallows were the places for punishment. Punishments were public spectacles because rubbing the noses of offenders in the community context was an essential part of the process of ripping and healing, which criminal justice was supposed to embody (Clear & Cole, 1990).

Within 30 short years, America's rural population had more than doubled, and the urban population had more than tripled. Colonial life had been oriented toward the local community; everyone knew everyone else, neighbors helped one another as needed, and the local clergy and elite maintained social control. This rapid growth meant that social problems could no longer be handled locally. Responsibility of the poor, insane, and criminal became the province of the state and its institutions (Clear & Cole, 1990).

Social progress was thought possible through reforms to match the dictates of “pure reason.” The emphasis shifted from the assumption that deviance was part of human nature to a view that crime was caused by forces in the environment. Thus, the punitive colonial penal system that was founded on retribution was held to be incompatible with the idea of human perfectibility. Reformers argued that if Americans were to become committed to a humane and an optimistic ideal of human improvability, they had to remove barbarism and vindictiveness from the penal codes and had to make reformation of the criminal the primary goal of punishment (Clear & Cole, 1990; Dunn, 2014). According to Wood (1992), Pennsylvania led the way with new legislation seeking “‘to reclaim rather than destroy,’ ‘to correct and reform the offenders,’ rather than to simply mark or eliminate them” (p. 193). Several states added incarceration with hard labor as an alternative to public punishments such as whippings and the stocks (see also Clear & Cole, 1990).

America gave the world its first penitentiary, an institution that was created to reform offenders within an environment designed to focus their full attention on their moral rehabilitation. An important element in the early American prisons was inmate labor. New York officials saw inmate labor not only as a way to reform prisoners, but also as a way to finance prison operations. The use of the penitentiary reflected a major shift in correctional practice away from brutal public punishments that had once occurred with some regularity (Coley & Barton, 2006).

The penitentiary was conceived as a place where criminal offenders could be isolated from the bad influences of society and one from another. Although the inmates engaged in productive labor, they could reflect on their past misdeeds, repent, and be reformed. The reformers hoped that, although offenders were being punished, they would

become penitent, see the error of their ways, and wish to place themselves on the right path. They could then reenter the community as useful citizens (Coley & Barton, 2006). By the middle of the century, the American penitentiary had become popular among other countries. The concept was incorporated in various locations throughout the world.

In 1790, a law specifying that an institution be established in which “solitary confinement to hard labor and a total abstinence from spirituous liquors will prove the most effectual means of reforming these unhappy creatures” (Clear & Cole, 1990; McKelvey, 1977) was established. To implement this new legislation, the existing three-story Walnut Street Jail in Philadelphia was expanded to include a penitentiary house for the solitary confinement of hardened and atrocious offenders. It was here at the Walnut Street Jail where Clergyman William Rogers offered instruction to inmates. This would later be deemed as some of the first records of education while incarcerated (Chlup, 2005).

High recidivism led many at this time to question whether reformation was possible. Research continuously showed that the penitentiary looked good on paper but lacked the solid foundation and proper education of the administration to implement successfully rehabilitation of the inmates. This time in corrections development was according to trial and error. When something went wrong instead of trying to correct the error, it was simply tossed aside, and people went back to what they knew—excessive punishment and a lack of rehabilitation.

By the mid-1800s, reformers had become disillusioned with the penitentiary. Neither the American systems nor any of their imitators achieved rehabilitation or deterrence. This failure was seen as resulting from poor administration rather than from a weakness of the basic concept. Within 40 years of their construction, penitentiaries had

become overcrowded, understaffed, and minimally financed. Discipline was lax, brutality was common, and administrators were viewed as corrupt (Clear & Cole, 1990). Wines and Dwight (1867, as cited in Clear & Cole, 1990) found that, after visiting 18 prisons and houses of correction, none of them viewed reformation of its inmates as a primary goal or deployed resources to further reformation.

In 1870, the National Prison Association (NPA, the predecessor of the American Correctional Association, as noted in Clear & Cole, 1990) embodied a new spirit of reform. The association advocated a new design for penology: that prison operations should stem from a philosophy of inmate change, with reformation rewarded by release. The first reformatory took shape in 1876 when Zebulon Brockway (King, 2009) was appointed superintendent at the New York facility. He believed that diagnosis and treatment were the keys to reform and rehabilitation. He questioned each new inmate to explore the social, biological, psychological, and “root causes” of the offender’s deviance. An individualized work-and-education treatment program was then prescribed. Inmates adhered to a rigid schedule of work during the day, followed by courses in academic, vocational, and moral subjects during the evening. Inmates who did well achieved early release. In sum, this system placed “the prisoner’s fate, as far as possible, in his own hands” (Coley & Barton 2006; Clear & Cole, 1990).

By 1900, the reformatory movement had spread throughout much of the Nation. However, when World War I began in 1914, the movement was already declining. Many times, the educational and rehabilitative efforts took a backseat to the traditional emphasis on punishment. By this time, it was difficult to distinguish between inmates whose attitudes had changed and those who merely lived by prison rules. It was

discovered that being a good inmate was the way to win parole, but this did not mean that the prisoner had truly reformed (Clear & Cole, 1990).

The Progressives, most of who came from upper-status backgrounds, were optimistic about the possibility of solving the problems of modern society. They believed that society could rehabilitate criminals through individualized treatment. They thought that it was necessary to know the life history of each offender and then to devise a treatment program specific to that individual. This meant that correctional administrators would need the discretion to diagnose each criminal, prescribe treatment, and schedule release to the community (Clear & Cole, 1990). The Progressives fought for changes in correctional methods. They pursued two main strategies: (a) improve conditions in social environments that seemed to be breeding grounds for crime, and (b) rehabilitate individual offenders. By the 1920s, the Progressives had succeeded in gaining wide acceptance of three portions of their program:

- **Probation.** This is the concept of trying to rehabilitate a convicted criminal without sending him or her to jail. This alternative to incarceration fit nicely into the Progressive scheme. It recognized individual differences and allowed offenders to be treated in the community under supervision (Clear & Cole, 1990).
- **Indeterminate Sentences.** Although the sentences were called “indeterminate,” state legislatures nearly always set a minimum and maximum term within which the correctional process of rehabilitation could operate.
- **Parole.** This reward was expanded greatly during the Progressive period. By the mid-1920s, more than 80% of felons sentenced in the major industrialized states left prison via parole (Clear & Cole, 1990).

The reforms of the Progressives were highly criticized. However, many of the methods that they used for corrections (e.g., probation, indeterminate sentences, and parole) are used today (Clear & Cole, 1990). The Progressives understood society as a whole system with interchanging parts. They believed that anything could be fixed with a good education, a safe environment, and an efficient workplace.

Progressive reform was founded on the idea that criminals could be rehabilitated through treatment. However, it was not until the 1930s that serious attempts were made to implement what became known as the medical model of corrections. Under the banner of the newly prestigious social and behavioral sciences, the emphasis of corrections shifted to treating criminals as people whose social, psychological, or biological deficiencies had caused them to engage in illegal activity (Clear & Cole, 1990). One early proponent of the medical model was Howard Gill, who became the superintendent of the Norfolk State Prison Colony, in Massachusetts, in 1927. Gill tried to create a “community” of inmates within secured walls. He helped to design Norfolk Prison in the style of a college campus, staffed not only with guards, but also with professionals who provided treatment programs such as educators, psychiatrists, and social workers. Inmates wore ordinary clothing, not prison garb, and participated with staff on advisory councils that addressed matters of community governance. Thus, prisons were to become something similar to mental hospitals, rehabilitating and testing the inmate for readiness to reenter society. The essential structural elements of parole, probation, and the indeterminate sentence were already in place in most states; therefore, incorporating the medical model required merely adding classification systems to diagnose offenders, and treatment programs to reform them. Group therapy, behavior modification, shock therapy, individual

counseling, psychotherapy, guided group interaction, and many other approaches all became part of the “new penology” (Clear & Cole, 1990).

During the 1960s and 1970s, American society experienced the civil rights movement, the War on Poverty, and resistance to the Vietnam War (Clear & Cole, 1990). Americans also challenged government institutions that addressed education, mental health, juvenile delinquency, and adult corrections. Then, under President Johnson, the President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (1967) reported the following:

Crime and delinquency are symptoms of failures and disorganization of the community The task of corrections, therefore, includes building or rebuilding social ties, obtaining employment and education, securing in the larger senses a place for the offender in the routine functioning of society. (p. 58)

This analysis was consistent with the views of community corrections advocates who felt that the goal of the criminal justice system should be the reintegration of offenders into the community. Proponents argued that corrections should turn away from psychological treatment in favor of programs that would increase the offenders’ opportunities to become successful citizens (Clear & Cole, 1990). This program was invented to help offenders in the transition from prison to the community by aiding them in the processes of finding jobs and staying connected to their families and the community.

As the political climate changed in the 1970s and 1980s, and with the crime rate at historic levels, legislators, judges, and officials responded with a renewed emphasis on a crime control model of corrections. By 1980, the problem of crime and the best way to deal with convicted offenders had become an intense political issue. The punitive ethos of the 1980s and 1990s appeared in the emphasis on dealing more strictly with violent

offenders, drug dealers, and career criminals (Coley & Barton, 2006; Clear & Cole, 1990). It was also reflected in the trend toward intensive supervision of probationers, and detention without bail of accused people thought to present a danger to the community. The death penalty was also reinstated in 37 states; judges were required to impose mandatory penalties for people convicted of certain offenses or of having extensive criminal records. By the end of the century, the effect of these “get tough” policies showed in the record number of prisoners, the longer sentences they served, and the size of the probation population (Clear & Cole, 1990).

Clear and Cole (1990) stated that rehabilitation takes a “back seat” to punishment in most places around the world. Rehabilitation takes effort and interest. Many times, the administrators of the corrections departments believed that the inmates were not worth their time and effort. Therefore, they were eager to punish the inmates, rather than to help rehabilitate them. As history has proven, many times societies begin with “good intentions,” but end in doing what is quicker and easier. Most people agree that criminals must be taken off the streets, but they do not agree on how to keep them off the streets.

Corrections in America Today

Of the more than 700,000 people American prisons who are release each year, 40% of the released inmates end up back in prison within 3 years, and 96% of incarcerated offenders will one day be released (RAND, 2013). In Missouri alone, the state releases an average of 19,595 inmates each year (MDOC, 2017). According to the USDOE’s (2017) Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE), correctional education is a fundamental component of rehabilitative programming offered in juvenile justice confinement facilities, most American prisons, and many jails and detention centers. Correctional populations are overrepresented, and many inmates have

below average levels of educational attainment. Education “behind bars” presents an opportunity for the incarcerated to prepare for success upon release. The OCTAE went on to say that a wide variety of administering entities operate correctional institutions in the United States, and a wide variety of organizations are the providers of onsite prison education programs (USDOE, 2017).

Kirshstein and Best (1996) found that inmates who participated in correctional education programs had lower recidivism and were one third less likely to be reincarcerated as nonparticipants (Weissman, Gregor, Gainsborough, Kief, Leone & Sullivan, 2008). In the State of Missouri, it was determined that 43% of offenders who leave prison without a HSED or high school diploma return to prison within 2 years. Thirty-one percent of offenders who obtain a HSED in prison return to prison within 2 years (MDOC, 2017). The National Research Council (2014) stated,

Many people enter prison with educational deficits and could benefit from education while incarcerated. Literacy rates among prisoners generally are low and substantially lower than in the general population. Over the past 40 years, the percentage of prisoners having completed high school at the time of their incarceration fluctuated between about one-quarter and more than one-third for state prison inmates, with higher rates for those housed in federal facilities. (p. 2)

The MDOC found that 69% of offenders who had never had full-time employment returned to prison with 2 years of being released, whereas 23% of offenders who had had full-time employment returned to prison within 2 years. Weissman et al. (2008) stated that education is a fundamental right that should be afforded to everyone, whether incarcerated or living in the free world. The United States’ commitment to providing education to incarcerated persons has varied throughout history depending on

whether prison reform trends have prioritized punishment or rehabilitation (Weissman et al., 2008).

A state's approach to corrections and the communication between the correctional components can have a large impact on the state's correctional education program (Linton, 2001; Wese-Mitchell, 2014). For example, a decentralized system can lead to inconsistencies in the education offered to offenders and might duplicate efforts. A state's correctional education program is also shaped by its own governing structure, which can be separate from the governing structure of corrections (Tolbert, 2002). Although a central office within the MDOC administers the majority of state correctional education programs, other states administer correctional education through central offices that operate either through the Missouri Department of Education or independently. The MDORS is responsible for the development of treatment and service programs for offenders. These programs include offender health care (medical and mental health), sex offender assessment and treatment, adult education and workforce readiness, library services, substance abuse services, and MVE (MDOC, 2017).

As of 2000, 91% of state prisons had some type of educational program (Roder, 2009). Correctional education programming consists of a variety of forms of instruction, including the following forms:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE), which includes instruction in basic math and reading comprehension for individuals who test below a high school level.
- English as a second language instruction.
- Secondary education to work toward a high school diploma or preparation for the GED Test.

- Vocational training to develop skills needed for a particular occupation or industry.
- College courses.

The type of education programs available varies by state and by institutions within states. ABE and secondary education are more commonly offered than postsecondary education or training (Roder, 2009).

In addition to education and training programs, many states operate prison industries that offering inmates an opportunity to work in a particular industry while incarcerated (Roder, 2009). The potential does exist for prison systems to structure the prison industry programs so inmates learn critical job skills and make connections to prospective employers (Roder, 2009).

Strengthening correctional education requires that states commit to the needed resources to address the inmates' needs, and that the wardens and superintendents of prisons encourage and enforce attendance in educational programs (Roder, 2009). The fact that most inmates will be released from prison one day, and that many lack the basic education and job skills needed to succeed in the economy, supports state investment in strengthening correctional education (Roder, 2009).

Demographics of Inmates

In 2003, the total number of adults in the United States who were on probation, in jail or prison, or on parole was approaching 6.9 million (Coley & Barton, 2006). This number represents an overall increase of 274% since 1980 (Coley & Barton, 2006, pp. 5–31). In 2004, 1.3% of men in the United States were incarcerated. The comparative figures for Black, Hispanic, and White men were 4.9, 1.7, and 0.7%. Among men of Ages 25 to 29, nearly 13% of Black men were incarcerated, compared to nearly 4% of

Hispanic men and nearly 2% of White men (Coley & Barton, 2006). Among the more than 2.1 million people incarcerated in the United States as of June 30, 2004, an estimated 576,000 were Black men between Ages 20 and 39. The data for female prisoners show similar racial and ethnic differences, although the rates are much lower than for the men (Coley & Barton, 2006; Harrison & Beck, 2005). In the state of Missouri in 2016, 34% of inmates were Black, less than 1% were “unknown,” less than 1% were Native American, less than 1% were Asian, almost 2% were Hispanic, and 63% were White non-Hispanic (MDOC, 2016).

A shocking reality and constant among the studies is the percentage of inmates with less than a high school education. In the studies researched, this percentage is always about 40%. Overall, Black and Hispanic state prison inmates had much lower levels of educational attainment than White inmates had. Fifty-three percent of Hispanic and 44% of Black inmates had not graduated from high school nor had they earned a GED Diploma, compared to 27% of White inmates (Coley & Barton, 2006). Another similarity found is the literacy levels among inmates. When compared to the average literacy of the population, inmate literacy levels were lower, sometimes by several grade levels.

According to the MDOC (2015), on any given day there will be more than 8,000 students in their classrooms. The staff at the corrections department performs full diagnostic screenings on inmates to determine whether they are as follows:

- Under 22 and suspected of special needs.
- Over 22 or under 22 and not suspected of special needs.
- Under 22 and special needs identified *recidivists*.

- All offenders identified short-term treatment by courts, parole and probation, or 120-day shock.
- E (Education Needs) Scores, M Scores, P Scores, C Scores, V (Vocational Needs) Scores, MH (Mental Health) Scores.

Using the screenings, inmates are then placed into classes: ABE, special education, Title I, adult education and literacy, or postsecondary education. They are then instructed on a personalized basis, according to their prescription sheets. Currently, the student population in the MDOC education department consists of

- 13% female students,
- 87% male students,
- students of an average age of 32 years,
- an average level of self-reported school completion as 10th grade, and
- a large number of students with learning disorders.

Behavior of Inmates

The amount of time that an inmate is incarcerated has risen exponentially in the last few decades. According to Bloom (2012), inmates who were released in 2009 spent on average of more than nine additional months behind bars than those inmates who were incarcerated for the same crime in 1990. Criminologists have argued that this extended time promotes crime, and does not deter it, as represented within the social learning theory. Bloom (2012) also stated that the longer someone is detained the likelier they are to become institutionalized. Once inmates are institutionalized, they are no longer able to function normally in society. They lose proper socialization skills and coping abilities to handle the stresses and pressures that they will encounter once they are released. Many

times, they cannot get a job or assistance in finding somewhere to live. They then turn back to crime because it is all that they know; thus, they complete the vicious cycle.

By placing typically low-level, nonviolent criminals in the same vicinity of high-level, violent inmates, new behaviors and characteristics begin to emerge in the nonviolent criminals. The social learning theory states that a person will act according to learned behaviors from their environment and peers (Schneider, Gruman, & Coutts, 2012). The nonviolent inmates will change their way of thinking and behaviors to fit in with the more aggressive and violent inmates.

Skinner (1938) coined the term *operant conditioning*; it means roughly changing of behavior by the use of reinforcement given after the desired response. With this conditioning, Skinner identified three types of responses or *operants* that could follow behavior:

- Neutral operants: responses from the environment that neither increase nor decrease the probability of a behavior being repeated.
- Reinforcers: Responses from the environment that increase the probability of a behavior being repeated. Reinforcers can be either positive or negative.
- Punishers: Responses from the environment that decrease the likelihood of a behavior being repeated. Punishment weakens behavior.

Positive reinforcement strengthens a behavior by providing a consequence that some individuals find rewarding. A negative reinforcement is the removal of an unpleasant reinforcer. Skinner (1938) also defined *punishment* as the opposite of reinforcement because it is designed to weaken or eliminate a response rather than to increase it.

Operant conditioning can be used to explain a wide variety of behaviors in the corrections setting. Inmates begin as neutral operants and, over time, their skills and behavior begin

to shape. As they receive the reinforcers or responses from their environment, the behaviors either increase or decrease and are either positive or negative.

In the corrections setting, the administrators and guards have taken the behavior modification theory of Skinner (1938), adapted it to fit their environment, and called it the “Token Economy” (Psychologyisanywhereanytime, 2017). In this technique, certain rules are made explicit, and behaving appropriately is rewarded with tokens. Certain poor behavior is often followed by a withdrawal of these tokens. The tokens can be traded in for desirable things such as candy, cigarettes, games, movies, and so on. This has been found to be very effective in maintaining order in sometimes-difficult environments (Psychologyisanywhereanytime, 2017).

Society has struggled for years to discover ways that might help to change an offender’s behavior. Scientists discovered that humans could learn new behavior in the same way that other animals learn behavior in the laboratory. Changing a criminal’s behavior takes time and commitment, but it is not impossible for him or her to learn normal behavior. By merging the two theories—the social learning theory and behaviorism—behavior can be stimulated and promoted to affect the quality of behavior every day. Van Voorhis (2007) stated that, if prisoners could learn appropriate behaviors in prison through operant conditioning, they would maintain their new learned behaviors in real life. Van Voorhis also stated that the social learning theory is the predominant approach to offender therapy at present.

Recidivism

A recidivist is a person who is released from prison and who later commits another crime or reoffends (e.g., violates parole; California Innocence Project, 2017). Policy makers across the country are realizing that the recidivism rates in their states are

not declining. Rather, in most cases, the rates are increasing or remaining stagnant.

Offenders constitute one of the most undereducated and underemployed groups in the American population (Clear, Cole, & Reisig, 2013). Nearly two-thirds of prisoners have failed to graduate from high school; two-fifths do not even have a GED Diploma (Clear et al., 2013). In many systems, all inmates who have not completed eighth grade (one in seven inmates) are assigned full time to the prison school. Many programs provide remedial help with the skills of basic reading, English, and mathematics. They also permit prisoners to earn a GED Diploma (Clear et al., 2013).

The Pew Center on the States (2008) reported that incarceration levels had risen to a point to where 1 in 100 American adults were behind bars. The Pew Center on the States (2011) found another troubling aspect: 1 in 31 adults in the United States is either incarcerated or on probation or parole. In an effort to elevate the discussion about recidivism, community betterment groups are prompting policy makers to dig deeper into the factors that affect the rate of returning to prison, and into effective strategies for reducing it. Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal (as reported in the Pew Center on the States, 2011) stated,

Without education, job skills, and other basic services, offenders are more likely to repeat the same steps that brought them to jail in the first place This is a problem that needs to be addressed head-on. We cannot say we are doing everything we can to keep our communities and our families' safe if we are not addressing the high rate at which offenders are becoming repeat criminals.

(pp. 527–559)

Providing inmates with a true identity within society and building their relationships has proven to be an effective measure contributing to successful reintegration (Cullen, 1994).

Offenders, like other citizens, require the feeling of “connectedness” so that they can feel a part of the whole and not feel ostracized. Such “connectedness” could be felt through relationships within the community, including relationships among friends, family, teachers, and employers (Benson, 1997). Bazemore (1998) realized the importance of relationship building and recommended that, if new programs are created, they must be centered on escalating the prisoners’ abilities and strengthening their relationships; otherwise, the programs would fail. Bazemore (1998) discovered that inmates with active contacts in the free society were more amenable to correctional programs than are isolated prisoners or frequent repeaters.

Nally, Lockwood, Knutson, and Taiping (2012) collected data from the Indiana Department of Corrections’ (IDOC) Education Division in conjunction with the IDOC’s Research and Planning Division and assessed post release measures of education and recidivism. Nally et al.’s dataset contained several factors from their examination of post release recidivism and employment of 6,561 male and female offenders between Ages 20–50. The dataset included factors such as offender demographical characteristics (i.e., gender, race, age, and education), legal characteristics of offenders (e.g., legal reason for return to IDOC, or recidivism status), and employment-related characteristics of offenders (e.g., job classification or income). Unlike previous studies, Nally et al. (2012) included the offender’s employment data, if employed, to evaluate accurately the relationship between correctional education and both post release employment and recidivism.

Nally et al.’ (2012) primary focus was to examine (a) the effect of correctional education on offender’s recidivism; (b) the effect of correctional education on the offender’s employment; and (c) the relationship of offender’s education, employment,

and recidivism (Nally et al., 2012). The results indicated that the recidivism rate was 82.3% among offenders who had an education below high school, but only 63.8% among offenders who received correctional program education courses or had a high school diploma or GED Diploma (Nally et al., 2012). Less-educated offenders were more likely to become repeat offenders after their release from incarceration. Inmates without an education beyond the elementary level or inmates who opted out of receiving an educational course during incarceration encountered more challenges in finding a job upon their release. Those who participated in educational courses during incarceration were employed for a longer period upon release from incarceration and they refrained from recidivistic behavior (Nally et al., 2012).

Over the 5-year period post release, Nally et al.'s (2012) results showed that offenders who did not attend correctional education programs during incarceration were approximately 3.7 times more likely to become recidivists upon release from the IDOC custody compared to offenders who did participate in correctional programs. Those in the study group, had recidivism rates of 29.7%. The comparison group's rates of recidivism were approximately 67.8%. Nally et al.'s (2012) results indicated that correctional education programs during incarceration serve as a valuable method in reducing recidivism among offenders upon release.

The Metropolitan Transition Center Institute and Correctional Education Association (2006) conducted a study in which they examined the effect of education on recidivism rates. The researchers studied two groups of inmates: inmates who participated in educational programs, and inmates who did not participate in any educational programs. The researchers discovered the following findings:

- Participants in correctional education programs had a 48% rate of rearrest, while the nonparticipants had a 57% rate.
- Participants had a 27% rate of reconviction, while nonparticipants had a 35% rate.
- Participants had a 21% rate of reincarceration, while nonparticipants had a 31% rate.
- Participants were more likely to remain employed, and at a higher wage, than nonparticipants.

MTC Institute and Correctional Education Association concluded that increased funding for correctional education would provide inmates with a greater chance at rehabilitation and a smaller likelihood of returning to criminal behavior upon release.

Esperian (2007) conducted a study of incarceration in Colorado and found that recidivism rates of women who participated in vocational programs had a reoffending rate of 8.75%. Women who completed their GED Diploma had a 6.71% chance of being repeat offenders, and those who participated in neither a vocational nor an academic program had a 26% chance of recidivism (Bednarowski, 2010). Therefore, it is more profitable for correctional facilities to receive funding towards educational programs for inmates because these programs reduce recidivism and eliminate the costs associated with long term overcrowding (Esperian, 2010; Graffam, Shinkfield, & Lavelle, 2014; Lockwood, Nally, Ho., & Knutson, 2012; Nally et al., 2012). Overall, educated offenders are more likely to obtain employment. This can deter them from committing crimes because of societal or financial strains (Graffam et al., 2014; Iorizzo, 2012; Nally et al., 2012).

Regarding the Missouri Reentry Process (MRP), the MDOC (2016) reported to the governor that the recidivism rate was at 43.9% for all releases and 36.9% for first time releases. The MRP continues to work with partners to enhance reentry efforts to make certain that offenders are better prepared to reintegrate into the community and to be more successful.

The MRP has implemented a variety of initiatives to ensure the successful release of inmates and to reduce their recidivism rates. Some of the initiatives include, but are not limited to the following:

- A steering team that provides consultation on best practices for many states throughout the years.
- The Missouri Puppies for Parole program that helps to find suitable homes for unadoptable dogs, while teaching offenders about compassion and altruistic behavior.
- An expansion of the community teams across the state to help overcome barriers of reintegration for ex-offenders.
- A partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor Apprenticeship Program to qualify 50 positions and to collaborate with the Fathers' Support Center in St. Louis through which they are able to identify high-risk-high-need offenders who require secure training and certification for employment.
- A partnership with the Missouri Highway Patrol for the written CDL exam.
- A partnership with the State Technical College of Missouri to secure industry recognized employment credentials.

- A partnership with the Missouri Department of Economic Development to secure the National Career Readiness Certificate prior to release and to provide appropriate career training services.
- A partnership with the MDESE to pilot a program for offenders with disabilities.

Researchers have debated and studied the impact of correctional rehabilitation and treatment programs on recidivism (Banse, Koppehele-Gossel, Kistemaker, Werner, & Schmidt, 2013; Calley, 2012; Kroner & Yessine, 2013; May & Brown, 2011; Penner, Viljoen, Douglas, & Roesch 2014). The proposed solutions to alleviate risk factors of recidivism among incarcerated offenders are to provide sociologically specific programs, psychological treatment, mentorship, family counseling, educational programs, substance abuse treatment, vocational training, and social skills training (Ashkar & Kenny, 2008; Calley, 2012; Hakansson & Berglund, 2012; Trupin, Kerns, Walker, DeRoberts, & Stewart, 2011). Many of the risk factors have been studied as a whole, but very few have identified a concrete solution sufficiently effective to allow inmates to refrain from engaging in deviant behavior upon release.

Missouri's Corrections

Programs Offered in the Missouri Department of Corrections

In 2002, Missouri was the first of eight states chosen by the National Institute of Corrections (2016) as a demonstration site for the Transition from Prison to Community Model. It was renamed the MRP (MDOC, 2017). This model promotes state and local collaboration and provides a philosophical framework for stakeholder agencies to promote common interests, to integrate policies and services, and to improve the overall transition process of offenders who leave prison and return to Missouri communities

(MDOC, 2017). The MRP is designed to prepare offenders to be successful, productive, taxpaying citizens upon their release from prison. It is a philosophical change, including the examination of organizational priorities, practices, and culture with the ultimate goal of public safety (MDOC, 2017). The MRP established a state-level steering team that included state representatives from eight departments and the community: the MDOC; the Department of Mental Health; Department of Revenue; the MDESE; the Department of Social Services; the Office of the State Court Administrator; the Department of Economic Development; the Department of Health and Senior Services; and local community representatives from law enforcement, the faith communities, crime victims, and service and treatment providers. These teams of state and local representatives work together to help incarcerated offenders prepare for a successful transition back into the community (MDOC, 2017).

The Restorative Justice program is a victim-focused approach to criminal justice. The emphasis is on restoration of victims, the communities, and offenders. It encourages offenders to reflect on the harm caused by their criminal activity and to make restoration to victims, the community, and their families. There are two core practices within the Restorative Justice program: helping offenders reflect on their criminal activity and helping them reflect on the harm they have caused. The two practices are the impact of crime on the victims' class and reparative activities. Both of these practices are offered at all 21 institutions and in probation and parole offices across the state of Missouri (MDOC, 2017).

Women's programs have also been established to ensure accountability, reliability, and continuous improvement in providing gender-responsive environments to women offenders. The goal of these programs is to ensure that gender-responsive

programs are available to female offenders by providing health, mental health, self-esteem, parenting, academic education, vocational education, substance abuse, and life skills assistance to enhance their opportunities for a successful transition back into society (MDOC, 2017).

MVE is a program of the MDORS within the MDOC. The Missouri Legislature established it with State Statute RSMo 217.550 to create meaningful job training for incarcerated offenders. MVE uses offender labor, along with supervisors and administrative staff, to provide quality products and services to state agencies and other not-for-profit entities. It develops personal responsibility in offenders through the development of diverse training programs that enhance their employability and opportunity for success while incarcerated and upon release. MVE is responsible for 22 different industries and services located in 12 correctional institutions throughout the state of Missouri. These industries employ approximately 1,400 offenders each month. Products and services include chemical products, industrial laundry, clothing factory, furniture factory, graphic arts, engraving license plate factory, office systems manufacturing and installation, shoe factory, forms printing, warehouse/distribution network, plastic bags manufacturing, cardboard carton manufacturing, toilet paper manufacturing, metal products, signs, and toner cartridge recycling (MDOC, 2017).

ABE is an integral part of the rehabilitation process. To prepare inmates for successful reintegration into society and to reduce recidivism, offenders without a high school diploma or HSED are required by statute to participate in ABE classes. The academic education section offers the following programs to offenders:

- Assessment and evaluation: Intake center staff screen and properly diagnose all offenders prior to school assignments.

- Adult education: Classes are taught that assist the offender in working toward their HSED.
- Career and technical programs: Instructors are responsible for the development, delivery, and evaluation of school, work, and community activities for Missouri offenders.
- School programs: A number of vocational training programs offered throughout the prison system, including automotive repair, business technology, electrical wiring, residential carpentry, plumbing, small engines, welding, diesel mechanics and industrial technology, culinary arts, cosmetology, and the certified nursing assistant program, among others.
- Literacy: Classes are taught that provide specific materials and instruction for those with limited reading skills.
- Title I: This entitlement provides supplemental instructional services for educationally disadvantaged students under Age 21.
- Special education: Teachers provide appropriate education for offenders with disabilities through Age 21.

Although each program is different, and each program has different requirements, all of them require inmates to maintain a structured and disciplined routine. Inmates are forced to behave correctly without complaint or they will receive both negative and positive reinforcers. When they can focus and be successful within the program, they are rewarded with the outcome. By being able to do this, they also learn how to exist socially within a new environment, adapt to change, and acknowledge their drive to do better. If they are unable to form to the operant way of life, they will receive the negative reinforcer and will not be successful. They will ultimately give in to their previous self

and will soon return to the social and criminal life that they once led. For many inmates, it is a hard line to walk and maintain; however, for those who are successful and are able to obtain the end goal, they will be forever changed.

Impact of Education Laws

In many states, state, mandatory education laws affect correctional education programs. These laws require inmates who score below a certain grade level on a standardized test to attend correctional education courses while in prison (Kirshstein, & Best, 1996; Tolbert, 2002). At least 26 states have instituted mandatory education laws, most of which require adults who score below the eighth-grade level to participate in educational programming for a specified period or until they meet a set achievement level (LoBuglio, 2001; Tolbert, 2002). The National Research Council (2014) stated, “Basic correctional education programs have been enhanced in response to ‘mandatory education laws’ at both the state and federal levels. Since implementing the first mandatory literacy program in the early 1980s, 44% of states have instituted such requirements.” (pp. 3–56). The FBOP has also implemented a mandatory education policy, requiring inmates who do not have a high school diploma or a GED Diploma to participate in literacy programs for a minimum of 240 hours or until they obtain their GED Diploma (FBOP 2013; Tolbert, 2002). In Missouri, offenders who do not have a high school diploma or an equivalent certificate are required by statute to participate in ABE classes (MDOC, 2017). Enrollment in correctional education is also required in many states if the inmate is under a certain age, as specified by that state’s compulsory education law (Kirshstein, & Best, 1996; Tolbert, 2002). Some states even provide positive and negative incentives for inmates to enroll in education classes (e.g., earlier

eligibility for parole, extending visitation privileges, and reinstating days required to be served prior to being eligible for parole; Tolbert, 2002).

RAND (2013) suggested that correctional education has a positive and statistically significant effect on three domains that are the key for reinsertion into civil society: recidivism, post release employment, and reading and math scores. RAND's results included the following findings:

- Inmates who participated in correctional education programs had 43% lower odds of recidivating than inmates who did not. This represents a reduction of 13% on the risk of recidivism.
- The odds of obtaining employment after being released among inmates who participated in correctional education were 13% higher than the odds for those who did not. However, the scholarship in this area is not as strong, making the conclusion subject to further research.
- Correctional education is a cost-effective initiative; every 1 dollar spent on prison education could save up to 5 dollars on 3-year reincarceration costs. In this sense, the direct costs of reincarceration are far greater than the direct costs of providing correctional education.
- For a correctional education program to be cost-effective—or to break even—it would need to reduce the 3-year reincarceration rate by between 1.9% age points and 2.6 percentage points.
- The overall meta-analytic findings indicate that participation in correctional education programs is associated with a 13% reduction in the risk of reincarceration 3 years following release. Thus, correctional education

programs appear to surpass the break-even point in reducing the risk of reincarceration.

- Overall, the mean dollars spent per student for correctional education was \$3,479 in FY2009, compared with \$3,370 in FY2012. This represented a 5% decrease on average in the dollars spent per student.

In 2014, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced a new initiative to bring college courses to 10 prisons throughout the state. The program would offer associate and bachelor's degrees that inmates could complete in approximately 2–3 years. New York's program would cost the state an estimated \$5,000 per year per student, a comparatively small price to pay, considering that the state currently spends \$60,000 per year on every prisoner in its system (Kirchner, 2014). The higher rates of post release employment for those who received an education while in prison means more stability and more money, both of which translate into less crime, fewer inmates, and more savings for taxpayers.

The demand for correctional education has increased significantly. It is evident that prison education has a positive and demonstrable impact on recidivism. The Florida Department of Corrections (2017) performed an audit in fiscal year 1993–1994, calculating a combined cost–consequence analysis ratio of \$1.66 return for every taxpayer dollar invested, and a return of \$3.53 for every dollar invested in inmates who completed degrees. Westervelt (2015) interviewed Davis (2014), a senior policy researcher at RAND. Davis and colleagues examined 30 years of research and determined that prison education for inmates was effective. RAND (2013) found that, if an individual participates in any type of correctional education program—whether ABE, GED Diploma preparation, college studies, or vocational training—they had a 13% reduction in their risk of being reincarcerated. RAND also determined that, when looking

simply at direct costs, for every 1 dollar invested in a prison education program the state would ultimately save taxpayers 4–5 dollars in reincarceration costs.

In addition to state efforts, the federal government has provided monetary support to state correctional education programs since the mid-1960s. The largest source of funding has been the Adult Education Act of 1964, which was replaced by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) of 1998 (Tolbert, 2002). Prior to the 1998 legislation, states were required to spend no less than 10% of their basic state grant for adult education on educational programming in state institutions, including correctional institutions (Tolbert, 2002). Today, the law requires that they spend no more than 10%, meaning that some states might be allocating 10% of their basic state grant to correctional education, and others might be allocating a much lower percentage. Funding under the AEFLA (1998) is to be used for the cost of basic education, special education, English literacy, and secondary school credit. The legislation also stipulates that priority in enrollment should be given to those inmates who are within 5 years of release (Tolbert, 2002).

The AEFLA also helps to clarify the responsibility of correctional institutions to accommodate individuals with disabilities. In conjunction with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, the AEFLA (1998) requires correctional institutions to provide education services to inmates under the age of 22 who have disabilities. In addition, the AEFLA, along with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, required states to provide reasonable accommodations to students of all ages who have disabilities (Tolbert, 2002).

In addition to the AEFLA (1998), the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Act (1984), as amended in 1998, provides funding to states to improve the vocational and

technical education programs offered in correctional institutions (Tolbert, 2002). Prior to 1998, states were required to spend at least 1% of their federal funding on vocational and technical education programs in state institutions, including correctional institutions (Tolbert, 2002). However, the 1998 legislation specified that no more than 1% of the funds could be spent on such programs. This change in the Perkins law has resulted in some states allocating much less than 1% of their federal vocational and technical funding on prison programs (Tolbert, 2002). Other federal funding sources for state correctional education programs include the Workplace and Community Transition Training for Incarcerated Youth Offenders state grant and the Neglected and Delinquent Youth state grant (Tolbert, 2002). Authorized by the Higher Education Act (1965) as amended in the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, the Incarcerated Youth Offender grant provides funding for programs in state prisons, encouraging incarcerated youths (Age 25 and younger) to acquire functional literacy, life, and job skills by earning a postsecondary education degree or vocational training certificate while in prison. The Neglected and Delinquent Youth state grant was established by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1991 that was amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The grant funds organizations that include correction institutions working to improve the transition from school to employment for neglected and delinquent youth who are being released from prison (USDOE, 2000; Tolbert, 2002). The OCE is also appropriated money for discretionary grant programs, such as Life Skills for State and Local Prisoners. Under this grant program, recipients are provided funding to establish and operate programs designed to reduce recidivism through the development and improvement of life skills necessary for the reintegration of adult inmates into the community (Tolbert, 2002).

Several federal grant and funding programs that supported components of correctional education suffered during the 1990s as Congress looked for ways to get tough on crime (Forbes, 2013). One such program was the Pell grant, which fund the postsecondary education of low-income students. Between 1972 and 1995, inmates who were not sentenced to death or life without parole could apply for Pell grants and state funds to help offset the cost of prison education. Early in the 1990s, there were 350 postsecondary prison programs in 37 states. However, inmate eligibility was withdrawn in the get-tough-on-crime decade. By 2005, only a dozen prisons had postsecondary programs (Forbes, 2013). Prior to the VCCLEA (1994), inmates were eligible for the grant. However, the 1994 law made inmates ineligible to receive Pell grants, as well as some other forms of financial assistance (Tolbert, 2002). The VCCLEA (1994) effectively eliminated the ability of lower-income prison inmates to receive college educations during their term of imprisonment, which ensured that the education level of most inmates would remain unimproved over the period of their incarceration (VCCLEA, 1995). Subsequent changes to the law have also prohibited anyone with a prior conviction of certain drug offenses from receiving Pell grants (LoBuglio, 2001; Tolbert, 2002). Congress had originally funded prison education through the Library Services and Construction Act of 1964. However, correctional institutions lost funding when Congress made changes (HR 2742, 1996) to the Library Services and Technology Act of 1990, which had been a reauthorization of the 1964 Act. With these changes, correctional institutions have had difficulty qualifying for funding to support their libraries under what is now entitled the Library Services and Technology Act of 1996 (Gehring, McShane, Eggleston, 2001; Tolbert, 2002).

Without the various funding programs offered to the correctional institutions, it is believed that the recidivism rate will be much higher. The education programs are offered help to give inmates another chance at living a normal life. They are able to learn new trades, examine different careers, and move beyond their past.

Tracking the effectiveness of these programs nationally and across state lines needs to be improved. Therefore, much stronger evidence is needed for these programs. It is known they are cost-effective; however, it is unclear how much dosage matters. McGlone (2002) also found that national averages could conceal vast differences among states in the scope of their education programs. Ideally, a report should be written to detail the status of educational programs in American prisons and to describe trends in states' commitments to correctional education. The data to support such an effort are not uniformly available (Coley & Barton, 2006).

The USDOE's (2009) OCTAE released its Reentry Education Model, an evidenced-based effort "to bridge the gap between prison and community-based education and training programs" (p. 3). The model focused on establishing a strong program infrastructure, strengthening and aligning correctional and reentry education services, and integrating education into the correctional system. Three demonstration projects—two education providers working with county jails and another working with state prisons—were selected through a competitive process and received grant funding to help implement the model beginning in March 2013 (USDOE, 2017).

RAND (2013) suggested that rehabilitation programs (vocational, educational, or technical) increase an inmate's chances of success upon release. When practices include facilitating good communication, recognizing and respecting the different priorities of each person involved, and reaching out to staff occur then the implementation of the

rehabilitation models have a higher chance of positively effecting inmates (Clear & Cole, 1990).

Summary

The United States has the largest prison population in the world, with more than 2.2 million inmates in federal, state, and local facilities. Every year approximately 700,000 (almost 2,000 a day) inmates leave federal and state prisons in the United States to begin a new life (Maximino, 2014). At least two-thirds of released inmates are rearrested within 4 years after their first arrest (Agnew, 2012; Ashkar & Kenny, 2008). These shocking findings have resulted in action inspired by Congress and the states to provide assistance to parolees and to reduce the staggering amount of recidivism among them (Clear et al., 2013). Researchers have also expressed concerns about the recidivism rates and the way in which the decrease of funding will affect it. Other factors that might affect the recidivism rate are participation in the educational and vocational programs, cognitive issues, substance abuse, behavioral health, and lack of support when released from prison. The proposed solutions to alleviate risk factors of recidivism among incarcerated offenders are to provide sociologically specific programs, psychological treatment, mentorship, family counseling, educational programs, substance abuse treatment, vocational training, and social skills training (Ashkar & Kenny, 2008; Calley, 2012; Hakansson & Berglund, 2012; Trupin et al., 2011).

The goal of the researcher in this literature review was to familiarize the reader with the previous research pertinent to this study. The researcher presented an overview of literature that is related to the history of correctional education worldwide and in America; and discussed demographics of inmates in correctional institutions in the state of Missouri, educational opportunities available to inmates, and information about

recidivism. Strong evidence indicates that effective rehabilitation or educational programs and services during incarceration produce the positive result of lowering recidivism (Hirschi, 2004; Moore & Morris, 2011; Ojo 2012; Zembroski, 2011). In this study, the researcher focused on adults who were or are incarcerated and explored how rehabilitative programs influenced recidivistic behavior. In Chapter 3, discusses the methodology of the study, including the research questions, the design of the study, the population of the study, the instrumentation, the data collection procedures, and the data analysis schema of the study. In Chapter 4, the researcher presents the findings and results of the study. Finally, in Chapter 5, the researcher presents the summary, conclusions, discussions of findings, and recommendations for practice and further research.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to develop a deeper understanding of the educational programs offered in Missouri correctional facilities and to determine what changes could be made to reduce the recidivism rate in the State of Missouri. At least two-thirds of released inmates are rearrested within 4 years after their first arrest (Agnew, 2012, pp. 33–38; Ashkar & Kenny, 2008). LoBuglio (2001) found that inmates who had participated in correctional education programs had a 43% lower rate of recidivating than inmates who had not. The purpose of this researcher's study was to determine the impact of an educational program in which an inmate participates. Thus, policy makers, administrators, educators, and community members can begin to provide more assistance in this area of education. The researcher examined the statistics involved with recidivism and the effect that education could have on the lives of inmates upon release.

In this chapter, the methodology of the study is discussed. A brief description of the research design, the research questions, and the instrumentation are presented at the beginning of this section. Next, the research procedures, a description of the population, and data collection procedures are examined.

Research Design

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the actual experiences of the inmates who have been enrolled in educational programs during their incarceration, specifically how those programs influenced recidivistic behavior. The researcher interprets the informants' responses to open-ended questions concerning their actual experiences because of their participation in the prison educational programs. The

participants of the study included inmate students from the MDOC facilities, the directors, teachers, and staff at the facilities. The researcher interviewed inmates in one-on-one interviews and conducted focus groups that included many inmates and staff members at the facility. The director ultimately determined the selection process, deciding whom he or she would permit the researcher to interview. Afterward, the researcher obtained from the inmates and the staff their signed copies of the Informed Consent for a Research Study Entitled Perceptions of Receiving Education Services While Incarcerated (Appendix A). The researcher hopes that the results from examining the interview data will provide new knowledge that will be significant to the inmate participants, correctional administrators, and community advocates for correctional education.

Research Population and Participants

The participants included inmates who were incarcerated in the state of Missouri corrections facilities (and were enrolled in educational programs). The participants also included a few of the staff members, directors, and administrators in the facilities. The inmate participants in the study included 20 men and 20 women between Ages 18–60. These participants were considered adults and their consent allowed approval of the study. The inmate participants were then participating in a prison education program and were within 24 months of their release from prison. All of the participants were informed that partaking in the study was voluntary. They were provided with the Interview Protocol Project (Inmate or Staff; Appendices B and C) and question guide that was comprised of open-ended questions. The questions, which were derived from the literature on rehabilitation and recidivism, helped to achieve the objectives of the study. The participants were notified that the results would be confidential, and that their

anonymity would be upheld. The partakers were also assigned an alphanumerical name that was used throughout the research timeline. The participants were also informed that all of the transcribed documents would be destroyed once the study was completed.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this phenomenological study were in keeping with the phenomenological approach to research. Following are the central research questions for the study:

1. What are the perceptions, experiences, and beliefs of inmates regarding correctional education programs?
2. What is the perception of the impact of correctional education programs on post release employment? Do inmates want to continue with their education upon release?
3. What are the perceived benefits for participants who are earning an education while incarcerated?
4. What are the perceived barriers for participants who are earning an education while incarcerated?

These questions were addressed during the interview process with the inmates and staff.

Answers to questions were in short answer format and were recorded. The Interview Protocol Project (Inmate or Staff) was designed to address the central research questions and included multiple questions per subgroup. This information is displayed in Table 1 and Table 2.

Instrumentation

The instrument that guided the data collection was the list of interview questions in the Interview Protocol Project (Inmate or Staff). According to Merriam (1998),

questions are at the heart of interviewing. To collect meaningful data, the researcher must ask relevant questions. These questions were cautiously constructed to capture the inmate students' insights regarding (a) the role of education in their lives, (b) their experiences after earning an education, (c) the barriers to earning an education while they were incarcerated, and (c) the benefits of earning an education while they were incarcerated. Moustakas' (1994) recommendation was that qualitative researchers should conduct face-to-face interviews, using an interview guide that would include open-ended questions.

Table 1

Guiding Research Questions with Associated Interview Protocol Project: Inmates

Guiding Research Questions	Interview Protocol
What are the perceptions, experiences, and beliefs of inmates regarding correctional education programs?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has your opinion of education changed because of participating in the adult education program? If so, how? 2. How did you come to be involved in this program? 3. What motivates you to be involved in this program? 4. What has been your experience with this program?
What is the perception of the impact of correctional education programs on post release employment? Do you want to continue with your education upon release?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. What goals do you have now thinking upon your release? 6. Does the participation in the education program in prison make you feel motivated to continue your education, or to set employment goals?
What are the perceived benefits for participants who are earning an education while incarcerated?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Do you believe this program will benefit you once you are released? 8. Are there other benefits (other than gaining an education) to completing an education program?
What are the perceived barriers for participants who are earning an education while incarcerated?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. What are some of the barriers that have affected your experience? 10. What barriers do you believe there are to gain successful reentry into the workforce after release?

Table 2

Guiding Research Questions with Associated Interview Protocol Project: Staff

Guiding Questions	Interview Protocol
What is your role here at the prison?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are you an educator, officer, or administrator? 2. How long have you worked in this role within the prison? 3. Do you work closely with the inmates in the educational programs? Or are you an observer? 4. Any program in particular that you work in?
Do you believe that the programs are effective?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Are offenders allowed to “re-enroll” in programs—if they leave prison and then return, can they attend another or the same program? 6. Do you see many repeat offenders in the programs? 7. Are there any programs that are more successful in reducing recidivism than others? What are the programs?
What is your perception of the inmates’ thoughts on the programs?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Can you tell a difference in attitudes between the inmates who are enrolled in these programs and those who are not? 9. Do you perceive the inmates to take pride in their education and the skills they are learning? 10. Do you believe that the inmates want to better themselves to avoid recidivism?

To ensure reliability and face validity of the interview question guide prior to conducting the study, a pilot interview was administered, and a validity panel was formed. Seidman (2006) wrote, "The best advice I ever received as a researcher was to do a pilot of my proposed study" (p. 38). Merriam (1998) too stated, "Pilot interviews are crucial for trying out your questions" (p. 75). Therefore, the pilot interview was conducted with a former inmate who had previously gone through an educational program within a Missouri correctional facility. The pilot interview provided advice concerning the interview guide and narrative data from the sample interview. The researcher analyzed the collected advice and narrative data to determine the quality of measurement of the instrument. After the pilot interview, the researcher reflected on the interview experience, discussed it with colleagues, and making any necessary revisions to the research approach according to what she had learned from the pilot experience (Seidman, 2006). The advice that was obtained during the pilot interview and the validity panel led the researcher to evaluate the questions and then to modified them for validity, accuracy, and clarity according to the recommendations from the participants.

The development of a validity panel helped to validate the strategies that were included in this qualitative research study. By using the index of item-objective congruence, the researcher sought the input of educators and professionals with fresh eyes to judge whether each survey question was clearly worded and measured the research study question that preceded it (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1977). Five members were invited, and they verbally agreed to serve on the validity panel. Each member was emailed a copy of the Survey Instrument of Validity Panel Evaluation (Appendix F). They were then asked to score each survey question with a +, 0, or -. An approval of the question would score a +, a neutral feeling about a question would render a 0, and the

disapproval of a question would receive a -. Once the questions were scored, the panelists were then asked to make specific comments about their decisions and the survey in general. The researcher also noted their credentials, which supports their selection as experts. The reported credentials included various levels of education, including teachers, principals, lawyers, and the police force. The range of academic degrees of the panelists included bachelor and master's degrees. The sum and average of the validity panelist's scores for each survey question was then calculated. The questions that received a + were worth 1, those that received a 0 received a 0 score, and those that received a - received a -1 score. The average score to allow a question to be kept without further review was established as 0.75 or higher. The researcher reexamined any questions with comments from a panelist or with an average below 0.75 and asked the panelist to determine the needed corrections. To establish the survey's content validity, the following tables were used.

Table 3

Validity Panel Survey Results: Inmate Interview

Questions	Panelist 1	Panelist 2	Panelist 3	Panelist 4	Average
1	+	+	+	+	1.0
2	+	+	+	+	1.0
3	+	+	+	+	1.0
4	+	+	+	+	1.0
5	+	+	+	+	1.0
6	+	+	+	+	1.0
7	+	-	+	+	0.50
8	+	+	+	+	1.0
9	+	-	+	+	0.50
10	+	-	+	+	0.50

Table 4

Validity Panel Survey Results: Staff Interview

Question	Panelist 1	Panelist 2	Panelist 3	Panelist 4	Average
1	+	-	+	+	.75
2	+	+	+	+	1.0
3	-	+	-	+	.50
4	+	+	+	+	1.0
5	+	+	+	+	1.0
6	+	+	+	+	1.0
7	+	-	+	+	0.75
8	+	+	+	+	1.0
9	+	-	+	+	0.75
10	+	-	+	+	0.75

Once the data had been calculated and put into the table, the researcher revised the questions that scored 0.75 or below. The first question on the inmate protocol to be revised was number 7. Is this your 1st time being incarcerated? If no, then how do you feel this program will benefit you from returning? With suggestions from the panel, the researcher changed to 7. Do you believe this program will benefit you once you are released? How? The second question to be revised was number 9. What are some of the obstacles that impact the education program? With suggestions from the panel, the researcher changed to 9. What are some of the barriers that have impacted your experience? The third question to be revised was number 10. What obstacles do you

believe there are to gain successful re-entry into the workforce after release? With suggestions from the panel, the researcher changed to 10. What barriers do you believe there are to gain successful re-entry into the workforce after release?

Once the data had been calculated on the staff protocol and put into the table, the researcher revised the questions that scored 0.75 or below. The first question on the staff protocol to be revised was number 1. What position do you hold within the facility? With suggestions from the panel, the researcher changed to 1. Are you an educator, guard or administrator? The second question to be revised was number 3. How closely do you work with the offenders? With suggestions from the panel, the researcher changed to 3. Do you work closely with the offenders in the educational programs? Or are you an observer? The third question to be revised was number 7. What programs are more successful? With suggestions from the panel, the researcher changed to 7. Are there any programs that are more successful in reducing recidivism than others? What are the programs? The fourth question to be revised was number 9. Do you feel the inmates take pride in their work? With suggestions from the panel, the researcher changed to 9. Do you perceive the offenders to take pride in their education and the skills they are learning? The last question to be revised was number 10. Do you think the offenders want to better themselves? With suggestions from the panel, the researcher changed to 10. Do you believe that the offenders want to better themselves in order to avoid recidivism?

Data Procedures

Interviews

The method used to collect responses to the questions in the Interview Protocol Project (Inmate or Staff) were interviews. These interviews allowed the inmate students

to share their perspectives concerning the educational programs offered in correctional facilities. Interviewing is one of the most common forms of gathering data in qualitative studies in education, and in numerous studies, it is the only source of data (Merriam, 1998). The researcher used the steps that Creswell (2007) outlined for conducting interviews: (a) identify interviewees; (b) determine what type of interview is practical and will net the most useful information to answer the research questions; (c) use adequate recording procedures when conducting one-on-one interviews; (d) design and use an interview protocol; (e) refine the interview questions and procedures through pilot testing; (f) determine the place for conducting the interview; (g) after arriving at the interview site, obtain consent from the interviewee to participate in the study; and (h) during the interview, stay to the questions, complete the interview within time specified, be respectful and courteous, and offer few questions and advice.

The researcher contacted the MDOC by email to request participation in the study. The email contained an application for research, which the MDOC requires. This application explained the purpose of the study, the selection of the participants, and the structure of the interview process and questions. The Informed Consent for a Research Study and the Interview Protocol Project (Inmate or Staff) containing the questions to be asked during the interview were also be provided. The Informed Consent form included the following major parts as Seidman (2006) outlined as necessary for in-depth interviewing: (a) an invitation to participate in what, to what end, how, how long, and for whom, (b) risks, (c) rights, (d) possible benefits, (e) confidentiality of records, (f) dissemination, and (g) contact information and copies of the form. Each participant was given an alphanumeric name and no identifying characteristics were acknowledged.

The researcher used a semi structured interview process in which the wording and order of some questions were predetermined, and open-ended questions were used (Merriam, 1998). The open-ended questions follow the plan of the Interview Protocol Project in Table 1 (Inmate) and Table 2 (Staff). The most common form of interviewing is the person-to-person encounter where the main purpose is to obtain a particular kind of information (Merriam, 1998). Each participant was asked to sign a copy of the Informed Consent for a Research Study, which provided the researcher with the inmate's or staff member's written consent to be studied. The participants were also advised of their right to confidentiality, informed that their identity would be protected, and informed that all answers would be destroyed upon completion of the study.

The interviews were used as an informal communication tool. The researcher believed that by completing the interviews personally, she could gain a better insight into the inmate's perception of the programs, and they would be more willing to express their thoughts regarding how to improve the programs. The researcher actively listened, provided the offenders with a paper copy of the Interview Protocol Project (Inmate or Staff), and took limited notes. The researcher then followed up regarding the participants' statements, asked questions when information was not understood, asked to hear more about a subject, and explored topics without probing. The researcher attempted to develop a rapport with the participants and strove to listen more and talk less by asking open-ended rather than leading questions (Seidman, 2006).

When the interviews were conducted, they lasted about 1 hour in length. The participants wrote answers on the interview guides; the researcher then transcribed and analyzed the responses. The data that were collected from the interviews were used to

answer the research questions. The researcher used a constant comparative analysis to interpret the data and to describe the emerging themes.

Data Collection

The first step in the data collection procedure was to seek approval through the Southwest Baptist University Research Review Board. In the study, the researcher used human subjects from a protected population; therefore, after the researcher received the Research Review Board Approval (Appendix E), the researcher could seek approval from the MDOC, which was also required before the study could be conducted. After the MDOC granted permission and the Permission to Conduct Study (Appendix D) was received, the MDOC contacted the researcher for selection of participants, the location of the interviews, and the date and time of interviews.

Each participant was asked to sign a copy of the Informed Consent for a Research Study, providing his or her written consent to be studied. The participants were also advised of their right to confidentiality and advised that their identity would be protected. Once a participant gave his or her consent and had been advised of his or her right to confidentiality, he or she was then assigned an alphanumeric name to be used throughout the process.

The data were collected through a series of interviews. These interviews were conducted in correctional facilities in the State of Missouri and followed the Interview Protocol Project (Inmate or Staff). The written interviews were transcribed at the conclusion of the interviews.

When the data had been gathered, they were then organized and prepared for analysis. The data were developed into themes through coding, and then they were presented into tables for discussion. The real learning for the researcher came from doing

the analysis (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Seidman, 2006). Concerning qualitative data analysis, Merriam (1998) wrote:

At the outset of a qualitative study, the investigator knows what the problem is and has selected a sample to collect data in order address the problem. But the researcher does not know what will be discovered, what or whom to concentrate on, or what the final analysis will be like. The final product is shaped by the data that are collected and the analysis that accompanies the entire process. Without ongoing analysis, the data can be unfocused, repetitious, and overwhelming in the sheer volume of material that needs to be processed. Data that have been analyzed while being collected are both parsimonious and illuminating. (p. 162)

Data were collected for this study from interviews, and the researcher used constant comparative analysis to interpret the data. The data were then analyzed for emerging themes, coded, and categorized to make sense of the essential meanings. The constant comparative method is a common form of analysis in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). The constant comparative method is appropriate for this study because its basic strategy is compatible with the inductive, concept-building orientation of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998). This study incorporated the similar steps that Merriam (1998) and Seidman (2006) outlined for conducting constant comparative analysis. The researcher started with a particular incident or one segment of data from an interview, document, or field notes and then compared it with another incident in the same set of data or in a different set of data. These comparisons were made constantly, and they led to tentative categories. The researcher then looked for similarities and differences while continually making comparisons within and between

the sets of data. The overall goal of this analysis was to seek out patterns in the data that could then be arranged in relationship to each other.

Constant comparative analysis involves three levels of analysis. The first level involves the most basic way to present a study's findings, which is through a descriptive account. This descriptive account requires decisions about what to include or leave out, and it is important to all forms of qualitative research. However, few studies limit themselves to this level of analysis. The second level moves beyond basic description as the researcher seeks to construct categories or themes that capture reoccurring patterns in the vast amount of descriptive data. Therefore, the researcher used coding to help develop these categories. Creating categories is an intuitive process but is also developed systematically with the study's purpose. Categories and subcategories are commonly created during the constant comparative method, as the researcher seeks to compare one unit of information with the next, while looking for patterns in the data. Cross analysis is especially important because it goes beyond categories and toward the development of a theory. The third level of analysis involves making inferences, developing models, or generating theory. During this level, the researcher knows that the category does not tell the whole story and that more can be understood about the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998).

For this study, the researcher followed the step-by-step process for constructing categories during qualitative data analysis as Merriam (1998) defined. The first step in this process was when the researcher read the first transcript and wrote down notes, comments, and observations. During this process, the researcher asked questions and made comments of the data. After completing this step, the researcher then went back over her notes and tried to group together similar comments or notes. Then the researcher

moved on to the next transcript and followed the same steps, while reading the first transcript. While doing this, the researcher kept in mind the list of groupings that had been developed from the first transcript. The researcher developed a separate list of notes, comments, and observations for the second transcript and then compared those to the ones developed from the first transcript. These two lists were then merged into one master list from both sets of data. The researcher then used this master list as an initial classification system for capturing the emerging patterns in the data. This process was followed as the researcher analyzed each of the transcripts from the interviews.

When the step-by-step process was completed, the researcher then used coding to develop a system for organizing and managing the collected data. Coding is a process by which the researcher assigns a short description to various aspects of the data so that specific parts of the data can be easily retrieved. According to Merriam (1998), coding involves two levels: identifying information about the data and interpretive insights relating to analysis. The researcher used identifying notations for each interview and set of data as it was collected so that the data could be easily accessed during the analysis and presentation of findings. The researcher kept track of her thoughts, speculations, and hunches during this process. It is a rudimentary analysis; therefore, it needed to be built upon as the researcher moved between the emerging analysis and the raw data of the interviews (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998).

Narrative data from the interviews were transcribed during the interview process. According to Merriam (1998), verbatim transcription of interviews provides the best database for analysis. The narrative data were analyzed using the constant comparative analysis, and the findings were presented to the readers. Seidman (2006) wrote:

The researcher's task is to present the experience of the people he or she interviews in compelling enough detail and in sufficient depth that those who read the study can connect to that experience, learn how it is constituted, and deepen their understanding of the issues it reflects. (p. 51)

The interview statements were then compared against the literature. Recommendations were made for current and future practitioners, and for the correctional facilities offering the programs.

Validation of the Data

The researcher attempted to produce a study that provided valid and reliable results, which was obtained in an ethical manner. The validity and reliability of the study was addressed as the researcher paid careful attention to the study's design, interactions with participants, the data collection and analysis process, and the way the findings were presented (Creswell, 2007; Heppner & Heppner, 2004; Merriam, 1998). Merriam stated, "Being able to trust research results is especially important to professionals in applied fields, such as education, in which practitioners intervene in people's lives" (p. 198). Ensuring validity and reliability in a qualitative study involves conducting the research in an ethical manner (Creswell, 2007; Heppner & Heppner, 2004; Merriam, 1998). The researchers own values and ethics determine the actual ethical practice in a qualitative study (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, while directing this study, the researcher maintained and used a high level of integrity and character. This level of ethics was accomplished by preserving an elevated level of confidentiality and professionalism.

Internal validity addresses the issue of how the research findings match with reality and whether the researchers are measuring what they think they are measuring (Merriam, 1998). The internal validity of this study was addressed through triangulation,

peer examinations, and clarifying the researcher's biases (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). Triangulation in this study involved using multiple sources of data from interviews to confirm the emerging findings and to compare those emerging findings with relevant literature. The researcher used peer examinations by asking colleagues to comment and offer insight on the emerging findings. The researcher attempted to reveal any biases by clarifying initial assumptions at the beginning of this study. The researcher believes that the education in the corrections department across the State of Missouri to be a worthy topic of study. Therefore, the researcher assumed that the purposefully selected MDOC facilities would be able to offer valuable insight concerning how the education programs affect the recidivism rate in the State of Missouri. The researcher believes that the findings from this study will benefit current and future programs and will benefit the facilities offering them.

External validity for a study is concerned with the extent to which the findings of the study can be applied or generalized to other situations (Merriam, 1998). Seidman (2006) wrote, "The job of an in-depth interviewer is to go to such depth in the interviews that surface considerations of representativeness and generalizability are replaced by a compelling evocation of an individual's experience" (p. 51). Therefore, to assist with the issue of generalizability in qualitative research, the researcher employed in this study the strategies of using rich, thick description and typicality. Providing enough description in this study and describing how typical the participants were, will allow the reader to determine how closely their experiences match with those of the participants in this study, and, thus, whether the findings will be applicable to them (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998).

Reliability of the Data

Reliability for a study is the extent to which the research findings can be replicated in another study (Merriam, 1998). Merriam (1998) also argued that a better concept for qualitative research would be not whether the findings would be found again, but instead whether the results would be consistent with the data being collected. Therefore, the researcher's position, triangulation, and an audit trail enhanced the reliability of this study (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). Regarding the researcher's position, this study was founded on the assumption that some educational programs that are offered in the corrections facilities are more effective than others are, and that the selected facilities would be able to offer insight concerning how they implement the programs and, therefore, obtain success. In addition to using multiple sources for data collection, the triangulation for this study included using multiple methods and levels of data analysis. The researcher created an audit trail by describing in detail how the data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the study (Merriam, 1998).

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the methodology, research design, instrumentation, participants, data collection procedures, and validation of the data. It included the research questions used in the interviews along with a description of the focus group. In Chapter 4, the researcher presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the actual experiences of the inmates enrolled in educational programs during their incarceration, specifically how these programs influence recidivistic behavior. The researcher interpreted the participants responses to open-ended questions concerning their perceptions because of their participation in the prison educational programs. The participants of the study included students from the MDOC facilities, the education supervisors, and teachers at the facilities. The researcher interviewed offenders in the classroom setting and conducted focus groups that included offenders and staff members at the facility. The MDOC research review board ultimately determined the selection process, deciding how many offenders and staff members they would permit the researcher to interview. Permission to be interviewed from offenders and staff was obtained through the Informed Consent for a Research Study. The interview data provided new knowledge significant to offender participants, correctional administrators, and community advocates for correctional education.

In this chapter, the researcher presents the results from the in-depth, structured interviews with the students from the MDOC facilities, the education supervisors, and teachers at the facilities. The researcher followed the strategies outlined in the previous chapter to select the participants, to ensure trustworthiness, and to analyze and interpret the descriptive data. Themes were identified in each of these areas: male offenders, female offenders, and staff. This chapter includes a description of the participants and the findings related to each research question.

Selection of Participants

Participants included people who were incarcerated with the MDOC. The participants also included a few of the education supervisors and teachers at the facilities. The participants were selected based on their enrollment in the GED/HSED courses. The administrators allowed the researcher to explain her reasoning to the class, from there the participants were able to decide if they wanted to participate or not. Once the offenders decided to participate, the researcher handed them the permission form and read it out loud ensuring they understood what was being asked of them before beginning the interviews. The offender participants in the study included 20 men and 20 women of ages 18–60. These participants were considered adults and their consent allowed approval in the study. All of the participants were informed that partaking in the study was voluntary. They were provided with an interview protocol and question guide that was comprised of 10 open-ended questions. The questions, which were derived from the literature on rehabilitation and recidivism, helped to achieve the objectives of the study. The participants were notified that results would be confidential, and that their anonymity would be upheld. They were assigned an alphanumeric name that was used throughout the research timeline. Participants were also informed that all transcribed documents would be destroyed once the study was completed.

Demographics of Participants

The offenders were of varying races and ages (Ages 18–60). They were all working on obtaining their HSED or GED and were at varying levels in either program. The male facility was a mixed custody (minimum, medium, and maximum security) facility located in South Central Missouri. The MDOC gave the researcher her choice of male facility to attend. This facility was chosen simply because it was the one that was

closest to the researcher's home and was within a couple hours' drive. The female facility was also a mixed custody facility located in North Central Missouri. The MDOC gave the researcher her choice of female facility to attend, however there are only two facilities in Missouri. This facility was chosen because, the other facility's Education Supervisor had recently resigned, therefore there would not be a supervisor for the researcher to speak with.

Table 5 lists each male participant's alphanumeric name, his age, race, and highest-grade level completed.

Table 5

Male Participant Demographics

Participant alphanumerical name	Age	Race	Highest grade completed
M1	34	Black	12th
M2	26	Black	10th
M3	46	White	8th
M4	30	Black	8th
M5	31	Black	12th
M6	29	Black	10th
M7	28	Black	8th
M8	32	Black	12th
M9	24	Black	10th
M10	22	Black	11th
M11	33	Black	11th
M12	24	Black	10th
M13	30	Black	11th
M14	28	White	11th
M15	38	Hispanic	10 th
M16	35	Native American	10th
M17	23	White	10th
M18	22	White	9th
M19	27	Black	10th
M20	24	Black	11th

According to table 5, participants had completed grades 8th-12th and were anywhere from 22-46 in age. Fourteen out of the twenty (70%) male offenders were black, four (20%) male offenders were white, one (5%) male offender was native american and one (5%) male offender was hispanic.

Physical Structure of Male Classroom

The classrooms were designed much like a public-school classroom: there were posters hanging on the walls, bookshelves with texts, and offenders were seated around the room at tables. Each classroom had an average of ten students, and their numbers fluctuated on a daily basis. In each classroom, a “tutor” was stationed; he was an offender who had previously gone through the program and was successful. Tutors helped to give instruction and support to the offenders as well as being an aide to the teacher. To become a tutor, one had to apply for the position and, when “hired,” they would be paid via the canteen. The tutor’s pay would be immediately added to his balance in the canteen and he could purchase items or pay fines and fees. Tutors could make as much as \$10.00 per month.

The offenders were allowed to leave the room on their own to go to the restroom or to get a drink; they just had to notify the teacher, sign out, and then take a pass. The environment was structured yet laid back. The offenders knew what was expected of them and they followed directives. The offenders were working and learning, yet able to carry on conversations among themselves as well. Security officers were always present and visible, pacing the hallway outside of the classrooms.

Upon entering in the classroom, the offenders would retrieve a folder with their name on it. In this folder was their work for the day; each student’s work was determined

by his level of learning. The offenders immediately began working and would ask the teacher or the tutor for assistance when they had a question.

Table 6 lists each female participant's alphanumerical name, her age, race, and highest-grade level completed.

Table 6

Female Participant Demographics

Participant alphanumerical name	Age	Race	Highest grade completed
F1	23	Black	9th
F2	25	White	11th
F3	20	White	8th
F4	37	White	10th
F5	26	White	10th
F6	33	White	10th
F7	49	White	8th
F8	28	Black	9th
F9	22	Black	11th
F10	36	White	8th
F11	34	White	9th
F12	29	White	11th
F13	30	White	10th
F14	48	White	9th
F15	42	White	12th
F16	40	White	10th
F17	24	White	12th
F18	29	Black	10th
F19	25	Black	10th
F20	27	Hispanic	11th

According to table 6, participants had completed grades 8th-12th and their ages ranged from 22-49. Five out of the twenty (25%) female offenders were black, fourteen (70%) female offenders were white, and 1 (5%) was hispanic.

Physical Structure of Female Classroom

The classrooms were designed much like a public-school classroom: there were posters hanging on the walls, bookshelves with texts, and offenders were seated around the room at tables and desks. Each classroom had an average of 15 students, and their numbers fluctuated on a daily basis. In each classroom, a “tutor” was stationed; she was an offender who had previously gone through the program and was successful. Tutors helped to give instruction and support to the offenders as well as being an aide to the teacher. To become a tutor, one had to apply for the position and, when “hired,” they would be paid via the canteen. Their pay would be immediately added to their balance in the canteen and they could purchase items or pay fines or fees. Tutors could make as much as \$10.00 per month.

The offenders were allowed to leave the room on their own to go to the restroom or to get a drink; they just had to notify the teacher, sign out, and then take a pass. The environment was structured yet laid back. The offenders knew what was expected of them and they followed directives. The offenders were working and learning, yet able to carry on conversations among themselves as well. Security officers were always present and visible, pacing the hallway outside of the classrooms.

Upon entering in the classroom, offenders would retrieve a folder with their name on it. In this folder was their work for the day; each student’s work was determined by her level of learning. The offenders immediately began working and would ask the teacher or the tutor for assistance when they had a question.

Table 7 lists staff participant's alphanumerical name, their age, race and highest level of education.

Table 7

Staff Participant Demographics

Participant alphanumerical name	Age	Race	Highest level of education
S1	68	White	Bachelor's degree
S2	65	White	Specialist degree
S3	69	White	Bachelor's degree
S4	32	White	Master's degree

According to table 7, the majority of the staff members were in the later part of their education career. Most are retired public school employees, including retired superintendents, teachers, and principals. A few teachers who had begun their teaching careers in the MDOC were also on staff.

Teacher Structure of Classroom

The teachers maintained a structured environment. They had class expectations and set a high level of standards for their students. In the male facility, all of the teachers had taped off a box on the floor around their desk with yellow tape. The offenders were not allowed to be inside the box unless given permission by the teacher. When the teachers spoke to the class they expected all offender's to be sitting and all eyes on them. If an offender was not following protocol the teacher would address them and the offender would immediately follow directions. The Researcher noticed one teacher who approached offenders at their desk when needing help, the other teachers remained at the teacher's desk and would make the offenders come to them. There also was to be no

contact between the offenders and staff. Staff could not give high fives or pats on the back, this would warrant an immediate write up from the Supervisor. Offenders also had to be conscious of staff whereabouts at all time. A bump in the hallway or classroom between an offender and a staff member would warrant an assault write up against the offender.

Assuring Trustworthiness

This study merged the key characteristics of a “good” qualitative study that Creswell (2007) outlined. Additionally, Creswell (2007) listed several validation strategies to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research. These strategies included (a) prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field; (b) triangulation; (c) peer reviews or debriefing; (d) clarifying researcher bias; (e) member checking; (f) rich, thick description; and (g) external audits. The following strategies were used in this study: (a) triangulation, (b) peer reviews (c) clarifying researcher bias and (d) rich, thick description.

Triangulation of the data was achieved by comparing data from the different participants, engaging in peer reviews of the data and emerging themes, and comparing the data and emerging themes to current research as cited in the review of literature. These strategies were incorporated to provide corroborating evidence from different sources to support the data and emerging themes (Creswell, 2007).

Peer reviews of the emerging themes and supporting data was completed by four of the researcher’s colleagues. Two of the colleagues have master’s degrees in administration. One has a master’s degree in education and the other has a specialist degree in school superintendence. All four colleagues have varying experience within the education field. One is a high school principal, one is a special education director, one is

a curriculum director and the other is an instructional coach. The researcher provided her colleagues with the emerging themes and the data from the participants used to support each theme. The colleagues were asked to evaluate the data and themes to determine whether the results were credible, they were then given the opportunity to offer their insight and recommendations. All four colleagues gave recommendations pertaining to the data and established the emerging themes, which were practical according to the supporting data. These steps provided an external check of the research process (Creswell, 2007).

Clarifying researcher bias was completed on experiences and the researcher discovered any biases by clarifying initial assumptions at the beginning of this study. The researcher has had some experience with adult education but did not have any experience with adult education in the prison setting. The researcher's initial assumptions included (a) believing that education in the prison setting was a worthy topic of study; (b) assuming the offenders would be able to offer valuable insight concerning their perceptions of the programs; and (c) believing the findings from this study would benefit current and future programs. This process is included so that the reader will understand the researcher's position and any biases or assumptions that might affect the researcher (Merriam, 1998).

Qualitative research focuses on process, meaning, and understanding; therefore, it produces a product that is richly descriptive (Merriam, 1998). Rich, thick description was contained within this study because the researcher described in detail how the study was designed, how the participants were selected, and how the data was collected and analyzed. This process will allow readers to make decisions about transferability (Creswell, 2007).

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative studies consists of (a) preparing and organizing the data for analysis; (b) reducing the data into themes by coding and condensing the codes; and (c) presenting the data in figures, tables, or discussion (Creswell, 2007). In this study, the researcher followed the steps Creswell (2007) outlined, and the strategies in the previous chapter that Merriam (1998) and Seidman (2006) suggested for conducting constant comparative analysis.

First, the data obtained from the interviews was transcribed and organized for analysis. Then, the researcher read the transcripts, wrote down notes and observations, reread the notes, and grouped together any similar notes or comments. The researcher followed these same steps for each of the transcripts. The researcher followed this procedure, while constantly comparing the groupings from previous transcripts and developing codes to establish and manage the data. Next, the researcher assembled a list of the notes and codes from each transcript, categorized and compared the codes for similarities, and summarized the codes into emerging themes. The resulting emerging themes are presented according to each of the research questions. In this study, the researcher used the first two levels of data analysis that Creswell (2007) and Merriam (1998) described. The researcher used the first level of data analysis by making decisions about what to include or leave out and by presenting a descriptive account of the data. The researcher used the second level of data analysis through coding the data, comparing the data for patterns, and constructing themes that capture the reoccurring patterns in the data.

While completing the analysis of the data and throughout the entire study, the researcher took care to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. The researcher kept

protocols and transcriptions of the data secure. The participants were assigned “alphanumeric names” and no personal information was shared during the interviews.

Research Question 1

Overarching Research Question 1: What are the perceptions, experiences, and beliefs of offenders regarding correctional education programs? The researcher asked open-ended questions according to the overarching research question. Findings from Research Question 1 were reported, and themes were established by a minimum of five out of the 40 participants’ similar perceptions that pertained to the correlating research question.

Offender’s Perceptions, Experiences, and Beliefs

According to the male and female participants, 34 out of 40 stated that their perceptions of education had changed positively since being incarcerated. 16 of the 40 stated that they were better focused and on task than when they had been in public school. 11 of the 40 had gained confidence and they were excited about learning. 14 of the 20 male participants felt (and expressed) that the MDOC had forced them to get an education. They stated that it was their experience that if they did not participate in the GED or HSED programs they would have been sent to the “hole.” However, 16 of the 20 female participants stated they wanted and had requested to be placed into the GED Diploma or HSED program. Overall, 37 of the 40 male and female participants stated they believed that, by obtaining their GED or HSED, it would help them gain work upon release.

The themes identified for their role in education are supported in detail in Table 8, using quotes and other important information gathered from the interviews. Three themes

were identified for perceptions, experiences, and beliefs. Table 8 shows the three themes and the qualitative data for each theme.

Table 8

Themes for Perceptions, Experiences, and Beliefs

Identified themes	Male offenders	Female offenders
Forced to get GED or HSED	14/20	11/20
Was going to complete program for themselves	16/20	19/20
Positive experience, glad they were “bettering” themselves	18/20	16/20

According to table 8, over half of the participants perceptions, experiences and beliefs were positive when pertaining to the education itself. However, 34 of the 40 offenders felt they were being forced into the program and they did not appreciate that feeling. They expressed wanting to have the option of not participating in the program.

Forced to Earn an Education

Twenty-five of the 40 total offenders provided descriptive data to support the theme of believing that they were being forced to obtain their GED or HSED. When discussing this subject, 14 out of the 20 male offenders felt that they were being forced to get an education. The offenders stated that if they did not attend their class, they would be placed into solitary confinement. They felt as though they really didn’t have an option when it came to getting their GED/HSED. Even feeling they were being forced to learn, 12 of the 14 offenders were thankful and did feel they were learning. 11 of the 20 female offenders also stated they felt they were being forced to get an education, they stated that

it was either they attend, or they would get punished. All 11 of them were thankful and excited about their gained knowledge.

Completing the Program for Themselves

Thirty-five of the 40 total offenders provided descriptive data to support the theme of completing the education program for themselves. 16 of the 20 male offenders stated that their confidence and self-esteem was increasing with each objective learned. They all also stated that their main motivation was to get their GED or HSED. 19 of the 20 female offenders stated that their confidence and self-esteem was increasing with each objective learned. One of the offenders said that she was excited to show herself that she could accomplish things on her own and was proving that she was changing. The offenders also believed by obtaining their GED or HSED, they would have greater opportunities inside the prison as well. These opportunities meant having a chance to participate in the vocational programs that are offered.

Positive Experience

Thirty-four of the 40 total offenders provided descriptive data to support the theme of a positive experience. 18 of the 20 male offenders felt the educational program had been a positive experience. One offender said he had expanded his knowledge and his desire to be successful. Another offender said he had learned more than he ever thought he could. 16 of the 20 female offenders felt the educational program had been a positive experience. One female offender said she had learned that she could do anything to which she put her mind to. Another offender said she enjoyed learning more as an adult than she did when she was a child.

Negative Experience

There were two offenders who had stated that they felt their experience could have been better, if the teachers were better. They did not feel as if the teachers really cared about them. They voiced their concerns about the teachers not really teaching them, just trying to learn through worksheets. Three of the female offenders also expressed that their negative responses would be that it is harder to learn as an older adult.

Research Question 2

Overarching Research Question 2: What is the perception of the impact of correctional education programs on post release employment? Do the inmates want to continue with their education upon release? The researcher asked open-ended questions according to the overarching research question. The findings from Research Question 2 were reported and the themes were established by a minimum of five of the 40 participants' similar perceptions pertaining to the correlating research question.

Perception of the Impact of Education

According to the male and female participants, 12 of the 40 offenders stated that their perceptions of the impact of education had changed since they were incarcerated. 35 of the participants stated that they were able to set goals for work, family, and education when thinking about their release. Four other participants felt that, once they had obtained their education, they would be able to reach set goals. 17 of the male participants felt that, by getting their GED or HSED, they would be able to set goals for when they would be released. They said they would be able to better their lives upon release by having this degree. 13 of the female participants said they had goals of increasing their education upon release. They said they did not want to stop with obtaining their GED or HSED. 35 of the 40 male and female participants said they

believed that, by obtaining their GED or HSED, it would help them reach their future goals.

The themes identified for their perception of the impact of education are supported in detail in Table 9 with quotes and other important information gathered from the interviews. Three themes were identified for perception of the impact of education. Table 9 shows the three themes and the qualitative data for each theme.

Table 9

Themes for Perception of Impact of Education

Identified themes	Male offenders	Female offenders
Work goals	6/20	3/20
Family goals	4/20	2/20
Education goals	7/20	13/20

According to table 9, 12 of the offenders stated their perception of education had changed. They were able to think ahead and form goals for when they will be released. The researcher felt it important to point out that the reasoning for the low numbers pertaining to Question 2 are because 24 of the offenders stated their perceptions of education had not changed. They have always felt education to be important, they were just never able to be motivated enough to finish.

Work Goals

Thirty-five of the 40 total offenders provided descriptive data to support the theme of their perception of the impact of correctional education programs on post release employment. Six of the 20 male offenders stated they had a goal of obtaining some type of work once they were released. One offender was making plans to attend a

welding school upon release. Another offender said he would like to do masonry, truck driving, or HVAC work. Three of the 20 female offenders said they had a goal of obtaining some type of work once they were released. One offender said she would like to work with an internet education forum, and tutor or teach others once she was released. The other 12 offenders said they just wanted to be able to get a good paying job upon release.

Family Goals

Thirty-five of the 40 total offenders provided descriptive data to support the theme of their perception of the impact of correctional education programs on post release employment. Four of the 20 male offenders stated they had a goal of being with their families once they were released. One offender said he just wanted to be a better father to his sons and a better son to his mother. Another offender said he wanted to focus on his family and to make a better life for them. Two of the 20 female offenders said they had goals of being with their families once they were released. One offender said she wanted to be able to help her grandchildren with their school work. Another offender said she wanted to make better decisions for her children.

Education Goals

Thirty-five of the 40 total offenders provided descriptive data to support the theme of their perception of the impact of correctional education programs on post release employment. 7 of the 20 male offenders said they had a goal of obtaining more education upon their release. One offender said he wanted to go to college to better his life and to help other people with their goals. Another offender said he wanted to go to school and work on a trade, so he could open his own company. 13 of the 20 female offenders said they had a goal of obtaining more education upon their release. One

female offender said by taking the classes in prison and obtaining her HSED, she would have the opportunity to enroll in other classes outside of prison. Another offender said that, after obtaining her HSED, she wanted to start college and not return to the life that she had been living.

Research Question 3

Overarching Research Question 3: What are the perceived benefits for participants who are earning an education while incarcerated? The researcher asked open-ended questions according to the overarching research question. The findings from Research Question 3 were reported and the themes were established by a minimum of five out of the 40 participants' similar perceptions pertaining to the correlating research question.

Perceived Benefits

According to the male and female participants, 39 out of 40 of them said their perceived benefits of education had changed since being incarcerated. 7 offenders had perceptions that gaining an education would benefit their family, 20 said a benefit was their ability to get a job, and 12 said it was a benefit to themselves. The 39 participants felt they would be able to support their families better with an education. They also felt that, with an education, they would have more opportunities to gain a better job. Lastly, the 40 participants all believed that, by gaining an education, they would increase their self-confidence and the way they perceived themselves.

The themes identified for their perceived benefits are supported in detail in Table 10 with quotes and other important information gathered from the interviews. Three themes were identified for perceived benefits. Table 10 shows the three themes and the qualitative data for each theme.

Table 10

Themes for Perceived Benefits

Identified themes	Male offenders	Female offenders
Benefit their family	3/20	4/20
Benefit their ability to get a job	14/20	6/20
Benefit themselves	2/20	10/20

According to table 10, there was a discrepancy between the male and female offenders when it came to benefits. 14 out of 20 male offenders believed that getting their GED/HSED this would benefit their ability to get a job. They seemed to be focused on getting a job and one that pays well, to help support their families. While 12 out of 20 female offenders believed that getting an education would open up more opportunities for themselves.

Benefit Their Family

Thirty-nine of the 40 total offenders provided descriptive data to support the theme of their perceived benefits of gaining an education while incarcerated. Three of the 20 male offenders believed that gaining an education would benefit their families. One offender said that a benefit would be being able to help his children with their homework. Another offender said that he would be able to teach his children. Four of the 20 female offenders believed that gaining an education would benefit their families. One offender said that, by obtaining an education while incarcerated, it would benefit her children and family, and that she wanted them all to be proud of her. Another offender said that she would be able to help her grandchildren.

Benefit Their Ability to Get a Job

Twenty of the 40 total offenders provided descriptive data to support the theme of their perceived benefits of gaining an education while incarcerated. Fourteen of the 20 male offenders perceived benefits in their ability to get a job upon release. One offender said that he would feel more confident when getting a job once he has his GED/HSED. Another offender said he believed that completing his education would give him a step-up when trying to get a job. Six of the 20 female offenders perceived benefits of their ability to get a job upon release. One offender said that, by obtaining an education while incarcerated, she would gain experience and patience when working with others. Another offender said that many jobs require a GED or a High School Diploma.

Benefit Themselves

Twelve of the 40 total offenders provided descriptive data to support the theme of their perceived benefits of gaining an education while incarcerated. Two of the 20 male offenders perceived that gaining an education would benefit them. One offender said that it had helped him to gain knowledge. Another offender felt that the program had helped him to learn things that he never knew. Ten of the 20 female offenders perceived that gaining an education would benefit them. One offender said that, by completing the program, it would help her to feel as though she had achieved something in life, when sometimes she felt like she had failed. Another offender said a benefit would be self-satisfaction.

Research Question 4

Overarching Research Question 4: What are the perceived barriers for participants who are earning an education while incarcerated? The researcher asked open-ended questions according to the overarching research question. Findings from Research

Question 4 were reported, and the themes were established by a minimum of five out of the 40 participants' similar perceptions pertaining to the correlating research question.

Perceived Barriers

According to the male and female participants, most of them said that some of the perceived barriers included their criminal records and their lack of knowledge. Several offenders said they believed that having a criminal record of felonies committed would be a barrier for them when thinking about their release. Other participants felt their lack of knowledge would be a barrier for them. They believed they had learned while they were in the program, yet they felt that they did not know enough to properly obtain a job outside of the facility.

The themes identified for their perceived barriers are supported in detail in Table 11 with quotes and other important information gathered from the interviews. Two themes were identified for perceived barriers. Table 11 shows the two themes and the qualitative data for each theme.

Table 11

Themes for Perceived Barriers

Identified themes	Male offenders	Female offenders
Having a criminal record	6/20	7/20
Lack of knowledge	10/20	19/20

According to table 11, the offenders seemed to agree that a lack of knowledge was going to serve as a barrier for them. 10 of the 20 male offenders made statements of wanting to know enough to help their children learn to read or to be able to help them

work on their homework. Two of the female offenders felt that because of their age, they were having difficulty retaining the knowledge.

Having a Criminal Record

Thirteen of the 40 total offenders provided descriptive data to support the theme of their perceived barriers of gaining an education while incarcerated. Six of the 20 male offenders perceived that a barrier for them would be having a criminal record. One offender noted his criminal record (which are felonies) would be his barrier. Another offender said that having a bad arrest record would be one of his barriers. 7 of the 20 female offenders perceived that a barrier for them would be having a criminal record. One offender said an education was needed because she was a felon but having an education would not matter because no one would want to hire a felon even with an education. Another offender said having felonies on her record would be a barrier.

Lack of Knowledge

Thirty-nine of the 40 total offenders provided descriptive data to support the theme of their perceived barriers of gaining an education while incarcerated. Ten of the 20 male offenders perceived that a barrier for them would be a lack of knowledge. One offender said his inability to do math would be a barrier. Another offender said he just recently learned how to read and was still learning new words. 19 of the 20 female offenders perceived that a barrier for them would be a lack of knowledge. One offender said her learning disability and her inability to comprehend even the smallest of things was a barrier. Another offender said she did not think that she was smart enough but felt she was making gains.

Staff Data

When looking at the data retrieved from the staff interviews, themes were identified for their perceptions of the offenders and the programs. The themes are supported in detail in Table 12 using quotes and other important information gathered from the interviews. Three themes were identified for perceptions of the offenders and the programs. Table 12 shows the three themes and the qualitative data for each theme.

Table 12

Themes of Perceptions of the Offenders and the Programs

Identified themes	Staff members
Positive attitude in offenders	4/4
Perception of wanting to better themselves	4/4
Perception of success	4/4

According to table 12, all 4 staff members perceived that the offenders did ultimately want a positive experience when it comes to education. 3 of the staff members stated that the offenders usually came into the program with a “chip” on their shoulder, but eventually would see the benefits of it.

Positive Attitude in Offenders

Four of four total staff members provided descriptive data to support the theme of a positive attitude in offenders when gaining an education while incarcerated. One staff member said that he or she had students often come into the classroom with a bad attitude, but they turned their attitude around once they saw they could be successful. Another staff member said, when the offenders would graduate it would be life changing, they would be more confident and happy, and that they would even walk differently.

Perception of Wanting to Better Themselves

4 out of 4 total staff members provided descriptive data to support the theme of a perception of offenders wanting to better themselves when gaining an education while incarcerated. One staff member said most of the offenders were working to help their families; however, in the process, they had more doors open to them and they did not return to prison. Another staff member said that some of the offenders truly wanted to avoid recidivism; however, some offenders liked to be in prison because, outside of prison, they would be homeless, or some would return to prison on purpose.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the actual experiences of the inmates enrolled in educational programs during their incarceration, specifically how these programs influence recidivistic behavior. Chapter 4 presented the analysis of the data. It also included a description of the offenders and the staff members. The results of the study were generated from analyzing the descriptive data from the interviews with each of the participants. The researcher analyzed the data and presented it according to each research question. Each theme identified in the study was supported in detail using quotes and other pertinent information gathered from the participants. The participants provided valuable insight concerning how they perceive the educational programs in the facilities. The descriptive data resulting from the interviews was used to answer the research questions for this study. Chapter 5 includes the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated the perceptions of offenders receiving education services while incarcerated. Using the research design, the researcher described the self-reported perceptions of 40 offenders who were in Missouri correctional facilities and enrolled in GED or HSED programs. She also described the perceptions of four staff members who worked with the 40 offenders. From the information provided by the participants in this study, the perceptions of correctional education seem to be positive and benefiting to the offenders. The study incorporated qualitative methodology using in-depth, semi structured interviews to gather the perceptions of the participants. Descriptive data was collected from the interviews and analyzed using constant comparative analysis. Themes emerged as the data from the interviews were analyzed, this helped the researcher to understand the perceptions of receiving educational services while incarcerated.

The main results of the research include the 14 themes that emerged from the descriptive data. The following three themes emerged pertaining to the offenders' perceptions, experiences, and beliefs: (a) that they were forced to get their GED or HSED, (b) that they were going to complete the program for themselves; (c) that they had a positive experience and were glad they were bettering themselves. Over half of the participants' perceptions, experiences and beliefs were positive when pertaining to the education itself. However, most felt they were being forced into the program and they did not appreciate that feeling. They expressed wanting to have the option of not participating in the program.

The following three themes emerged pertaining to the offenders' perceptions of the impact of education: (a) work goals, (b) family goals, and (c) education goals. Some

of the offenders stated that their perception of education had changed. They were able to think ahead and form goals for when they will be released. The researcher felt it important to point out that the reasoning for the low numbers pertaining to Question 2 are because most offenders stated that their perceptions of education had not changed. They have always felt education to be important, they were just never able to be motivated enough to finish.

The following three themes emerged pertaining to the offenders' perceptions of benefits of obtaining an education: (a) benefits to their family, (b) benefits to their ability to obtain a job, (c) benefits to themselves. There was a discrepancy between the male and female offenders when it came to benefits. The majority of male offenders believed that getting their GED/HSED would benefit their ability to get a job. They seemed to be focused on getting a job and one that pays well, to help support their families. The female offenders believed that getting an education would open up more opportunities for themselves.

The following two themes emerged pertaining to the offenders' perceptions of barriers upon release: (a) having a criminal record and (b) their lack of knowledge. The offenders seemed to agree that a lack of knowledge was going to serve as a barrier for them. Many of the male offenders made statements of wanting to know enough to help their children learn to read or to be able to help them work on their homework. Some of the female offenders felt that because of their age, they were having difficulty retaining the knowledge.

The following three themes emerged pertaining to the staff perceptions of offenders obtaining an education: (a) positive attitude in the offenders, (b) a perception of them wanting to better themselves, and (c) a perception of success. Staff members

perceived that the offenders did ultimately want a positive experience when it comes to education. Many staff members stated that the offenders usually came into the program with a “chip” on their shoulder, but eventually would see the benefits of it.

Conclusions

The four research questions guiding this study were fully addressed through the collection and analysis of the descriptive data. First, the data revealed that the offenders’ perceptions of education have changed since being incarcerated. As adults, most of the offenders found the importance of education and realized without a GED or an HSED, they would have few opportunities. They also have hope that, by obtaining this education, they would not return to prison. Second, the data identified no additional programs that could be offered as a first stepping-stone for the offenders’ educational process. The results of this study were interpreted while considering the overall set of results, the relevant literature, the theoretical framework, and the limitations of the study.

The overall findings from this study supported the researcher’s original hypothesis: Inmates who enroll and complete educational programs while incarcerated are more likely to remain out of prison than those who do not participate or complete programs. The participants in this study expressed hope and goals for their lives upon release. Furthermore, the data identified common perceptions concerning the beliefs of offenders regarding their education. The perceptions are the themes that emerged during the analysis of the data. During this study, the themes that emerged were also interpreted through the review of applicable literature and the theoretical framework of the study. Conclusions were made by comparing the authors’ writings in the relevant literature with the descriptive data gained from the offender interviews. For each theme, the researcher examined the similarities and the differences between the findings and the literature.

Offender's Perceptions, Experiences, and Beliefs

Fifty-seven percent of prison inmates in the United States do not have a high school diploma or a high school equivalency diploma (Greenberg et al., 2003). According to the male and female participants, a majority of them stated that their perceptions of education had changed positively since being incarcerated. Several stated that they were better focused and on task than when they had been in public school. Other participants had gained confidence and were excited about learning. Most of the male participants felt (and expressed) that the MDOC had forced them into getting an education. Their feelings regarding education could be affected by the Federal Bureau of Prisons when they implemented a mandatory education policy requiring inmates who do not have a high school diploma or a GED to participate in literacy programs for a minimum of 240 hours or until they obtain their GED or HSED. At least 26 states, including Missouri, have instituted mandatory education laws. The majority of these laws require adults who score below the 8th grade level to participate in educational programming for a specified period of time or until they meet a set achievement level (Tolbert, M., 2002). The offenders went on to state that it was their experience that if they had not participated in the GED or HSED program they would have been sent to the "hole." However, several of the female participants stated that they wanted and requested to be placed into the GED or HSED program. The majority of male and female participants stated that they believed that, by obtaining their GED or HSED, it would help them gain work upon release. The authors in the literature on successful reintegration simply stated that a prisoner who would be able to gain employment and remain out of prison would be successfully reintegrated (Drakeford, 2002; Gehring, 1997; Hrabowski & Robbi, 2002; Silva, 1994). The State of Missouri statistics showed that 48% of the offenders who leave prison

without a GED Degree or HSED would return to prison within 2 years as opposed to 37% of offenders who did obtain a GED Degree or HSED while in prison would return within 2 years (MDOC, 2015).

Perceptions of the Impact of Education

Ultimately, the overall goal of correctional educational programs is to reduce recidivism by increasing the chances of employment for ex-offenders (Bayliss, 2003). According to the male and female participants, a majority of them stated that their perceptions of the impact of education have changed since being incarcerated. Several participants stated they were able to set goals for work, family, and education when thinking about their release. Other participants felt that, once they obtained their education, they would be able to reach their goals. Most of the male participants felt that, by getting their GED or HSED, they would be able to set goals for when they would be released. They stated that they would be able to better their lives upon release by having a degree. Several of the female participants stated they had goals of increasing their education upon release. They did not want to stop with obtaining their GED or HSED. The majority of male and female participants stated that they believed that, by obtaining their GED or HSED, it would help them reach their future goals. According to the OCTAE (2016), as many as 90% of federal and state prisons offer education and training programs while incarcerated. Inmates enrolled in these programs are preparing for, and earning, GED or HSEDs, college degrees, or certificates in technical trades to better prepare themselves for life after release.

Even though most of the offenders expressed positive perceptions, there was still an underlying worry to them. Several expressed concerns with their goals and actually being able to obtain those goals due to their criminal background. They were aware that

because of their background they would be faced with obstacles and let downs when it came to their goals that no amount of education could overcome.

Perceived Benefits

The FBOP implemented a mandatory education policy that requires inmates who do not have an HSED or a GED Diploma to participate in literacy programs for a minimum of 240 hours or until they would obtain their GED or HSED. According to the male and female participants, a majority of them stated that their perceived benefits of education had changed since they had been incarcerated. Several had perceptions that gaining an education would benefit their family, benefit their ability to get a job, and benefit themselves. The participants felt that they would be able to support their family better if they had an education. They also felt that with an education, they would have more opportunities to gain a better job. Lastly, the participants believed that, by gaining an education, it increased their self-confidence and the way they would perceive themselves. The FBOP is also designing reforms to reduce recidivism by focusing on evidence-based rehabilitation strategies. The reforms were targeted at core behavioral issues that result in criminality and they were aimed at reducing the likelihood that inmates would reoffend while incarcerated or after their release (USDOJ, Archives, 2017). Some of the most intense reforms begin with the arrival of the inmate at a FBOP facility and continuing until his or her return home.

Perceived Barriers

At least 26 states have instituted mandatory education laws. The majority of these laws require adults who score below the 8th grade level to participate in educational programming for a specified period or until they meet a set achievement level (Tolbert, 2002). According to the male and female participants, a majority of them stated that some

of the perceived barriers included their criminal records and their lack of knowledge. Several stated they believed that having a criminal record of felonies would be a barrier for them when thinking about their release. They felt that employers would automatically turn them away once they found out about their criminal record, no matter what degree they held. Other participants felt that their lack of knowledge would be a barrier for them. They believed they had learned while in the program, but still felt they did not know enough to properly obtain a job outside of the facility. Some of the offenders did not feel they were smart enough to read, let alone hold down a proper job. The MDOC (2015) reported that 97% of currently incarcerated adults would be released back into society with the hope of not returning to prison. However, Missouri's current recidivism rate is 19.2% (MDOC, 2015). This means that, in 2015, out of the 27,000 released inmates, 5,184 will eventually return to prison.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study include participant and researcher bias, only having access to those offenders and staff members that the MDOC would allow, and the scope of the study. In this qualitative study, participant bias was a limitation, because the researcher relied on the expectation that the resulting data would reflect the truthfulness of the participants' responses. Each participant answered the questions according to his or her own perceptions. The researcher attempted to structure the interview guide to allow the participants the opportunity to provide objective data pertaining to each question. In addition, she triangulated the data from multiple participants before including it as an emerging theme. Participant selection was also a limitation, the Researcher was told how many offenders and staff members she could interview by the MDOC and then was limited to the participants who were willing to participate.

Researcher bias was a limitation of this study because of the fact that the researcher analyzed the data under the assumption that the participants would be able to offer insight of their perceptions of receiving education services while incarcerated. The researcher has some experience with adult education but does not have any experience with adult education in the prison setting. Her initial assumptions included believing that education in the prison setting was a worthy topic of study; assuming that the offenders would be able to offer valuable insight concerning their perceptions of the programs; and believing the findings from this study would benefit current and future programs. The researcher clarified her biases at the outset of the study and enhanced her credibility by incorporating (a) triangulation, (b) peer reviews, (c) clarifying researcher bias, and (d) rich, thick description.

The scope of the study was a limitation because the study only focused on conducting interviews with forty offenders and four staff members. Despite limiting the method of data collection to interviews, data was triangulated from multiple sources and was analyzed using multiple levels of analysis. Although the study was limited to 40 offenders and four staff members in MDOC facilities, specific criteria were yet established to ensure that quality participants were selected. The offenders and staff members were able to provide valuable insight concerning their perceptions on education services. Although the study was limited, a thorough review of current literature was conducted to identify the research practices. However, if this study were to be replicated, it might produce different results. Although the results might vary slightly with a different group of participants, it would not diminish the perspectives of the participants in this study.

Future Research

The offenders that participated in this study expressed gratitude for being asked to share their perceptions. They felt grateful that someone was interested in their opinion and was more than happy to share their experiences. Therefore, it is the researcher's opinion that future research should focus on interviewing more offenders about their correctional education experience and perceptions.

Research involving offenders could take many forms. This study could have covered many more aspects of education in the correctional setting. It could have gone deeper into the GED or HSED programs by covering also the vocational programs or the college experiences. Studying inmate tutor experiences would also provide valuable information for correctional education.

Another area to focus on for future research could be the impact of relationships between teachers and offenders. With the strict rules of no contact between teachers and offenders, one wonders if a simple touch on the shoulder or a congratulatory high five could help improve self-esteem and test scores for offenders.

Professional Implications

Based on the data collected from this study, there are some recommendations that can be applied when thinking about education programs in the correctional setting. Data from this study indicated that offenders overall are happy with their education program and believe it to be a positive experience. The offenders are gaining confidence and are able to set future goals for themselves. However, several of the offenders did express some negative feedback regarding their experiences. Some offenders stated that they found it difficult to learn from worksheets and that they did not feel as if the teacher's really cared about their education. They were in a structured classroom, where if they

gave a high five, hand shake or fist bump to the teacher, it would be an automatic write up for assault. Teachers for the most part remained at their desk and were available if the offenders needed them. The lessons seemed to be made up of worksheets out of a folder; no formal lesson was ever seen by the researcher in any of the classrooms. Are these a result of the lack of funding provided to our correctional facilities for educational programs? According to Tolbert (2002), some states are allocating much less than 1% of their federal vocational and technical funding on prison programs. RAND (2013) found that correctional education is a cost-effective initiative; every 1 dollar spent on prison education could save up to 5 dollars on 3-year reincarceration costs.

Other offenders felt that they were not given an option about their education and believed they were being forced into getting one. Many of these offenders have never learned to read or write; therefore they found education to be a very difficult subject. They struggled with the most common of worksheet and often relied on their neighbors for assistance. The MDOC (2017) reported that there are a large number of students with learning disorders behind bars, yet it seems that the only way we're teaching them is by worksheets. According to Learning Disabilities Association of America (2018), these processing disorders can interfere with learning basic life functioning skills such as reading, writing, or mathematics. They go on to state that these disorders can affect an individual's life beyond academics, there is just a gap between the individual's potential and actual achievement. Correctional institutions have a responsibility to accommodate individuals with disabilities. In conjunction with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, the AEFLA (1998) requires correctional institutions to provide education services to inmates under the age of 22 who have disabilities.

Another result of the data was the correlation between the grade of drop out and incarceration. All 40 of the offender participants had dropped out of school between 8th and 12th grades. What could our education departments change to help increase our graduation rates? Why are we losing so many youths to incarceration? Is it a lack of At-Risk programs that can target these students and offer a different type of support to ensure success while enrolled in our schools? Had these offenders previously been in juvenile facilities and then were released with no support only to return to prison? The Neglected and Delinquent Youth state grant was established by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1991 that was amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The grant funds organizations that include correction institutions working to improve the transition from school to employment for neglected and delinquent youth who are being released from prison (USDOE, 2000; Tolbert, 2002).

Other data from the study leads one to question the methodology used in the education programs. A state's approach to corrections and the communication between the correctional components can have a large impact on the state's correctional education program (Linton, 2001; Wese-Mitchell, 2014). For example, a decentralized system can lead to inconsistencies in the education offered to offenders and might duplicate efforts. A state's correctional education program is also shaped by its own governing structure, which can be separate from the governing structure of corrections (Tolbert, 2002). Although a central office within the MDOC administers the majority of state correctional education programs, other states administer correctional education through central offices that operate either through the Missouri Department of Education or independently. The MDOC (2017) stated that 43% of offenders who are released without a GED or HSED will return to prison within 2 years. If these programs are being taught mainly by

worksheets and intense structure, what would the rate of return be if technology and consideration were used?

Recommendations

In this study, the researcher attempted to discover the perceptions of receiving education services while incarcerated. Through interviews with 40 offenders and four staff members, she was able to discover what it means to attend classes while incarcerated. The findings indicated most offenders regret they have ended up being incarcerated and they wish that they would have remained in school when they were not incarcerated. They have discovered it has not been easy to obtain their GED or HSED while incarcerated and they are constantly looking for motivation to continue to succeed. The motivation to continue comes from both internal (themselves, family, and friends) and external (MDOC) sources, and this motivation might or might not result in the completion of a course.

The researcher feels that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education could benefit from this study by examining the correlation between the grade of drop out and incarceration. Further studies could provide more insight into at risk programs in the middle school and high school settings. Have such programs been incorporated into public schools, and if so have they seen a decrease in arrests? The field of correctional education could benefit from this study by examining their programs and taking into consideration the perceptions of their offenders. They could also have programs for their staff members who interact with the offenders in the classroom. The programs could focus on encouragement and motivation towards offenders. Finally, the field of higher education could benefit from the findings of this study by encouraging additional programs offered to offenders. The study changed the researcher's perception of the

educational programs offered in correctional facilities. These programs are offered as a means not only to educate, but also to encourage offenders to rise above their current circumstances to a better future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Informed Consent for a Research Study Entitled

Perceptions of Receiving Education Services While Incarcerated

You are invited to participate in a research study that examines the impact of receiving education services while incarcerated on the rate of recidivism. This study is being conducted by Traci Starnes, a doctoral candidate in educational leadership, under the supervision of Dr. Duke Jones. You are invited to participate in this study because you offer a unique perspective as a participant in a prison education program. Approximately 19 other inmates who had (or are currently) participated in a prison education program were also invited to participate in the study.

The purpose of this study is to determine your perception of receiving education services incarcerated. You will receive no direct benefits. Information learned in this study may help prison administrators, inmates, and other stakeholders by identifying successful themes related to inmate education programs.

You are being asked to participate in an audio recorded and/or written response interview; however, you may decline to participate or be recorded at any time. The interview may take up to one hour. All responses are strictly confidential; you will never be identified. After you complete the interview, data will be transcribed. Also note that during your interview there is a chance that a MDOC staff member will be present, however your confidentiality is my main concern. Staff members will not be allowed access to any information provided; all answers will be kept confidential.

Any information obtained in connection with this study will also remain confidential. Information collected through your participation will be used for a dissertation, may be presented at a professional meeting, or published in a professional

journal. You may withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. However, after your information has been provided and the study has been conducted, there will be no way to identify the responses you provided, and you will no longer be able to be withdrawn.

Participation is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not lead to any negative repercussions.

If you have any questions concerning this study, you may contact Dr. Duke Jones, dissertation advisor, at (417-399-2929) or djones@sbuniv.edu. You may also contact the Southwest Baptist University Research Review Board at rrb@sbuniv.edu.

**YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE.
YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO
PARTICIPATE HAVING THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE.**

Print Name	Date	Signature
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Appendix B:

Interview Protocol Project Inmate

Time of Interview: _____ Date: _____

Place: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

The purpose of this interview is to collect information relating to the perception of the education of inmates in the state of Missouri while incarcerated in reducing the rate of recidivism. Your identifying information will be kept confidential. To minimize risks, do not use your name or particular persons when describing perceived barriers affecting your experience, and instead use more general terms like "the system" or "an employee."

After completion of the study, the results will be available for examination at <http://sbuinv.edu>.

Questions:

Overarching Research Question 1: What is the role in education that the participant holds?

1. What level of education were you in when you were incarcerated?
2. Is this your first time being incarcerated? Do you feel that by increasing your education you will be able to stay out of prison?
3. How did you feel about education prior to incarceration?
4. Was education an important factor in your life?
5. While in school, were you planning to attend a college, junior college, or trade school?
6. What goals did you have prior to being arrested?
7. At what level in education are you currently?

Overarching Research Question 2: What are the perceptions, experiences, and beliefs of inmates regarding correctional education programs?

8. Has your opinion of education changed because of participating in the adult education program? If so, how?
9. How did you come to be involved in this program?
10. What motivates you to be involved in this program?
11. What has been your experience with this program?

Overarching Research Question 3: What is the perception of the impact of correctional education programs on postrelease employment? Do you want to continue with your education upon release?

12. What goals do you have now, thinking upon your release?
13. Does the participation in the education program in prison make you feel motivated to continue your education, or to set employment goals?

Overarching Research Question 4: What are the perceived benefits for participants who are earning an education while incarcerated?

14. Do you believe that this program will benefit you once you are released?
15. Are there other benefits (other than gaining an education) to completing an education program?

Overarching Research Question 5: What are the perceived barriers for participants who are earning an education while incarcerated?

16. What are some of the barriers that have affected your experience?
17. What barriers do you believe there are to gain successful reentry into the workforce after release?

Appendix C

Interview Protocol Project Staff

Time of Interview: _____ Date: _____

Place: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

The purpose of this interview is to collect information relating to the perception of the education of inmates in the state of Missouri while incarcerated in reducing the rate of recidivism. Your identifying information will be kept confidential. To minimize risks, do not use your name or particular persons when describing perceived barriers affecting your experience, and instead use more general terms like "the system" or "an employee."

After completion of the study, the results will be available for examination at <http://sbuinv.edu>.

Questions:

Researching Question 1: What is your role here at the prison?

11. Are you an educator, officer, or administrator?
12. How long have you worked in this role within the prison?
13. Do you work closely with the inmates in the educational programs? Or are you an observer?
14. Any program in particular that you work in?

Researching Question 2: Do you believe that the programs are effective?

15. Are offenders allowed to "re-enroll" in programs—if they leave prison and then return, can they attend another or the same program?
16. Do you see many repeat offenders in the programs?

17. Are there any programs that are more successful in reducing recidivism than others? What are the programs?

Researching Question 3: What is your perception of the inmates' thoughts on the programs?


18. Can you tell a difference in attitudes between the inmates who are enrolled in these programs and those who are not?

19. Do you perceive the inmates to take pride in their education and the skills they are learning?

20. Do you believe that the inmates want to better themselves to avoid recidivism?

Appendix D

Missouri Department of Corrections Permission to Conduct the Study

 STATE OF MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS RESEARCH AGREEMENT AND DATA REQUEST		DATE 2-7-18
NAME OF REQUESTOR Traci Stames		ORGANIZATION Southwest Baptist University--Student
PO BOX / STREET ADDRESS 23054 Emerson Rd		
CITY Lebanon	STATE Mo	ZIP CODE 65536
EMAIL tstames4@gmail.com		TELEPHONE NUMBER 417-718-1550
PROPOSAL INFORMATION		
TITLE <div style="text-align: center;">PERCEPTIONS OF RECEIVING EDUCATION SERVICES WHILE INCARCERATED</div>		
PURPOSE <small>(Field will expand for amount of text entered and four onto additional pages as needed.)</small> I would like to discover the perceptions of inmates on how they feel gaining an education while incarcerated will change their lives when they are released. The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the experience of inmates and their perspective regarding educational programs in a correctional setting. The research questions are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the perceptions, experiences, and beliefs of inmates regarding correctional education programs? 2. What is the perception of the impact of correctional education programs on inmates' post-release employment? 3. What are the perceived benefits for participants who are earning an education while incarcerated? 4. What are the perceived barriers for participants who are earning an education while incarcerated? 		
BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE <small>(Field will expand)</small> As a special education teacher, I realize that education does not come easy to all students. I would like to learn more about how adult inmates perceive education and the importance of building upon their prior knowledge. Benefits that the researcher is anticipating include, determining how educational programs are changing the lives of inmates and their outlook on life.		
RESEARCH DESIGN <small>(Field will expand)</small> The research design that will be used will explore the actual perception of the inmates on rehabilitative programs during their incarceration. The researcher will interpret the informants' responses to open-ended questions concerning their experiences as a result of their participation in the prison-based educational programs. I would like to enter the classroom and distribute the questionnaire as a whole group to save on time.		
BENEFIT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS <small>(Field will expand)</small> I believe that a benefit for the Department of Corrections, will be to evaluate what the perceptions of the inmates are when it comes to educational programs offered. The Department will be able to use the information gained to evaluate their programs and the effectiveness of them.		



STATE OF MISSOURI
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
RESEARCH AGREEMENT AND DATA REQUEST

DATE
2-7-18

NAME OF REQUESTOR: Traci Stames
ORGANIZATION: Southwest Baptist University—Student

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. I agree that anyone participating in this project will review and comply with the provisions of the Department of Corrections policy D1-6.3 Research Projects.
2. I agree that any information designated confidential by sections 217.075, 549.500, 610.035 RSMo, or any other provision of law shall not be disclosed by the researchers without the express written consent of the Department of Corrections.
3. I agree that data collected or obtained through cooperative research with the Department shall not be transferred to a third party without the approval of the Department.
4. I agree to forward a draft copy of the completed research project prior to publication or dissemination to the Department of Corrections, Office of Research and Evaluation.
5. I agree that publication of any part of the research project shall contain a statement that acknowledges the Department's participation in the project but disclaims endorsement of its findings.
6. I agree to submit a copy of the final research report to the Department of Corrections, Office of Research and Evaluation upon completion of the project.
7. I understand that the information provided may contain confidential and/or closed information pursuant to state and/or federal law and may be punishable under those statutes and/or regulations. I agree that the research project will take the necessary steps to comply with these statutes and regulations.
8. I understand that if this request is approved, every effort will be made to supply the data by the requested deadline; however, due to the high volume of such requests the Department cannot guarantee delivery by a certain date.
9. I understand the Department may charge for any research time or the cost of copying of records in accordance with section 610.026 RSMo.
10. I understand that the Department may withdraw from this agreement or project at anytime.

NAME: Traci Stames TITLE: Student

ORGANIZATION: Southwest Baptist University—Student DATE: 2-7-18

APPROVAL FOR USE BY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

NAME: David Oldfield TITLE: Director Research DATE: 2/15/18

COMMENTS: Evaluation

Appendix E

Research Review Board Approval



Southwest Baptist University
Department of Physical Therapy

February 7, 2018

Re: Perceptions of Receiving Education Services While Incarcerated

Dear Ms. Starnes,

On February 7, 2018 the RRB completed a review of your application and supporting documents for the above named research proposal. The Research Review Board (RRB) for Southwest Baptist University has determined that the proposed research project meets the criteria for Expedited status as per policy 1.15.3 in the faculty guidelines. This project requires continuing review every 12 months. Approval of this research will remain in effect until February 6, 2019.

The study has now been approved, therefore, work on the project may begin.

If any modifications to the procedures are made, the RRB will need to complete a new review of the changes to determine if further review is necessary.

Congratulations on the approval of your project, we wish you well during its completion. If you have any questions regarding the RRB's decision, please contact me at 417-328-2089.

Sincerely,

Martaun Stockstill, MS
Southwest Baptist University
Research Review Board, Chair

Appendix F

Survey Instrument of Validity Panel Evaluation

Notes for Validity Panel Members are boldly italicized and will not appear on the pilot survey (shown in nonbold print) to be asked of current inmates in the Missouri Department of Corrections who are enrolled in education programs. Please evaluate the following questions regarding the clarity of the wording, appropriate use of terms, and relevance of the survey question. After each question, please record on the line your rating for that question by using the following scale:

+ = Good question, I would recommend keeping it.

0 = Neutral, I am not for or against this question.

- = Not a good question, I would recommend deleting it.

Also at the end of each question, there is a place for any comments you would like to make about the question. Your identity and place of employment will be kept confidential; however please list your credentials that qualify you to be considered an expert in this area.

Interview Protocol Project

Time of Interview: _____ Date: _____

Place: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

The purpose of this interview is to collect information relating to the education of inmates in the state of Missouri while incarcerated in reducing the rate of recidivism. Your identifying information will be kept confidential. After completion of the study, the results will be available for examination at <http://sbuinv.edu>.

Questions:

Survey Questions 1–3 are regarding Research Question 1: What level of education were you at when you were incarcerated?

1. How did you feel about school? _____ *Comments:* _____

2. Was school an important factor in your life? _____ *Comments:* _____

3. Did your future goals include gaining an education? _____ *Comments:* _____

Survey Questions 4–9 are regarding Research Question 2: Is this your first time being incarcerated?

4. If yes, do you feel that by increasing your education you will be able to stay out of prison a second time? _____ *Comments:* _____

5. If no, then how do you feel this program will benefit you from returning? _____
Comments: _____
6. Has your opinion of education changed as a result of participating in the adult education program? If so, how? _____ *Comments:* _____

7. Has your opinion of yourself changed because of participating in the education program? If so, how? _____ *Comments:* _____

8. How did you come to be involved in this program? _____

Comments: _____

9. What motivates you to be involved in this program? _____ *Comments:* _____

Survey Questions 10 and 11 are regarding Research Question 3: Do you think you would have continued on with your education had you not been arrested?

10. What goals did you have prior to being arrested? _____ *Comments:* _____

11. Are those goals still attainable? Why? Why Not? _____ *Comments:* _____

Survey Questions 12 and 13 are regarding Research Question 4: What are the perceptions, experiences, and beliefs of inmates regarding correctional education programs?

12. What are some of the obstacles that impact the education program? _____

Comments: _____

13. What obstacles do you believe there are to gain successful reentry into the workforce after release? _____ *Comments:* _____

Survey Questions 14 and 15 are regarding Research Question 5: What is the perception of the impact of correctional education programs on post release employment? Do you want to continue with your education upon release?

14. How you feel this program can benefit you upon release? _____ *Comments:* _____

15. What goals do you have for yourself upon release? _____ *Comments:* _____

Survey Questions 16 and 17 are regarding Research Question 6: Which program were/are you enrolled in? Why this program?

16. Is this something that you were always interested in? _____ *Comments:* _____

17. Would you have chosen the same program if able to choose again? _____

Comments: _____

Survey Questions 18 and 19 are regarding Research Question 7: What changes could occur to the current programs to ensure success post release?

18. What aspects of the program do you feel could be improved upon? _____

Comments: _____

19. What aspects of the program do you feel benefit inmates? _____ *Comments:* _____

Thank you for evaluating my survey!