

2022

Correctional Education and Response to Prison Reentry of African American Men

Robert Reddick
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [African American Studies Commons](#), and the [Public Policy Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Robert Reddick

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Richard Worch, Committee Chairperson,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Mark Stallo, Committee Member,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. JoAnn McAllister, University Reviewer,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2022

Abstract

Correctional Education and Response to Prison Reentry of African American Men

by

Robert Reddick

MS, Central Michigan University, 2007

BS, Jackson State University, 2002

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

November 2022

Abstract

There is limited knowledge of how correctional education programs prepare rural African American men for reentry into society after incarceration. The purpose of this study was to learn how young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceived their experiences of technical correctional education programs and how such programs aided in reducing recidivism during their reentry process from incarceration. This qualitative study was guided by the institutional theory which purported that correctional education should be based on the population served and not on mirroring other institutions. Using a qualitative phenomenological design, data were collected from five formerly incarcerated African American men using semistructured interviews and were electronically transcribed and analyzed using NVivo. This study aimed in filling in the gap in the literature by unveiling young, rural African American men's perceptions of correctional education programs and their plight during reintegration into society. Four findings emerged from the dataset that included: (a) a lack of choices on technical correctional programs, (b) helped provide employment opportunities to inmates post release, (c) strengthened family relationships, and (d) reduced recidivism. It is important that prisons continue to examine the technical correctional education programs that they provide to African American men so that they can return to society as functioning members, experiencing a decreased rate of recidivism, which is beneficial to all community members and leading to positive social change.

Correctional Education and Response to Prison Reentry of African American Men

by

Robert Reddick

MS, Central Michigan University, 2007

BS, Jackson State University, 2002

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

November 2022

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents (late Robert Lee Reddick, Sr., and Gerline Reddick). Despite having a 10th grade education, my father implanted the work ethic and passion in me for a career in law enforcement and as a public servant. In his declining health and to the day he took his last breath, he reminded me to always stay abreast of the needs of mankind! His words often to me were, “The humble and kindness you are, the better you’ll be in this world. If it’s hard for you to get and once you get it, no one can take it away from you!” I know he is smiling down on me and bragging about his son for making him proud! May he rest in peace, and thanks for the wisdom. My mother sacrificed her career as a teacher to raise me into the man that I am today. We spent many days in the summer months at our local library where she required me to read dozens of books and write a book report on each. I dedicate this dissertation to my late grandmother, Mary Reddick, for teaching me how to pray and have faith in God. A special dedication to the formerly incarcerated men who allowed me to share their experiences with correctional education in this research. I dedicate this dissertation to my children (Jamerique, Jamia, Jaleiyah, and Jayden) and grandchildren (Jasiah and Nevaeh). This validates that hard-work and determination run through the veins of Reddicks. Finally, and certainly not last, I dedicate this dissertation to my backbone, my queen, my First-Lady, Mavis! Not only did she sacrifice her education and readjust her life for our family, but she always reminded me to speak my dreams into existence through my faith. This Ph.D. is not mines but ours!

Acknowledgments

My journey in reaching this pinnacle of my education could not have been achievable without a robust support system for the past twenty-seven years, which fourteen of those years pursuing my Ph.D. My faith and personal belief in God guided my path and choices in life, including life-long relationships with several important people. For this reason and this reason only, I acknowledge the people who encouraged and inspired me academically and personally. First, I am tremendously grateful for my committee chair, Dr. Richard Worch, who agreed to spearhead my dissertation not once but twice, as I attempted this journey! His tutelage, patience, and support for me when many times I wanted to give up far exceeded that of a chairperson. I can honestly say that he made my journey fair, understandable, and straightforward. I give many thanks to Dr. Mark Stallo for guiding and designing my research based on my interest. Although I wanted to rush through this journey, he slowed me down and told me it is a marathon, not a sprint. I will always remember the final moment when I decided to quit and he said, "Give one more crack at it!" I thank Dr. Joann McAllister for her precise and honest feedback in ensuring that my masterpiece contained all the ingredients for completion. I am forever in debt to her for not giving up on me despite my initial feelings of resentment to her advice. I would be remiss if I did not express my gratitude for Ben Cook of Academic Advantage Consulting. There are not enough adjectives in the English language to express his professionalism in editing my dissertation. I thank my friend and former colleague, Officer Andrew Craig (Henry County Police Department), who always teased and acknowledged me as *Dr. Reddick* or *Doctor* early in the beginning of my

journey. Whenever we crossed paths and before we departed, he always had to have a status update on my dissertation. I acknowledge and extend a plethora of thanks to Dr. Maceo Brayboy for cheering me on regardless of the place or time. He always, with a resounding echo, called me, *Doc or Professor Reddick!* I further acknowledge Dr. Calvin Colbert and Tamisha McPherson, the first two people I met in Lansdown, Virginia, at our initial residency program for Walden University. Since that day we have encouraged and mentored each other through the years as we pursued our Ph.D.

To everyone I acknowledged above, and the many others not mentioned, it is their caring and generous support that have made my academic endeavor wonderful. I say, “Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!”

Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background of the Problem	2
Problem Statement	4
Purpose of the Study	9
Research Questions.....	10
Theoretical Framework.....	11
Nature of the Study	12
Operational Definitions.....	14
Assumptions.....	15
Scope	16
Delimitations.....	16
Limitations	17
Significance of the Study	18
Summary and Transition.....	20
Chapter 2: Literature Review	22
Introduction.....	22
Literature Search Strategy.....	22
Institutional Theory.....	23
Review of Related Research	27
Reviewed Literature.....	30

Education	30
Employment.....	40
Family Structure.....	45
Personal Motivation	49
Deviant Social Behavior	52
The Current Literature Research Based Description	55
Methodology Literature Review	61
The Methodology Literature Based Description.....	64
Conclusion	65
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	68
Introduction.....	68
Research Design and Rationale	68
Role of the Researcher	71
Methodology	73
Participant Selection Logic	73
Instrumentation	76
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection	79
Data Analysis Plan	80
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	82
Ethical Procedures	85
Presentation of the Results.....	87
Summary	88

Chapter 4: Results	90
Introduction.....	90
Demographics	90
Data Collection	92
Data Analysis	93
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	95
Results.....	97
Finding 1: Lack of Choices in Technical Correctional Programs.....	97
Finding 2: Helps Provide Employment Opportunities to Inmates Post-Release	100
Finding 3: Strengthens Family Relationships.....	102
Finding 4: Reduces Recidivism	104
Discrepant Cases.....	106
Summary	107
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	109
Introduction.....	109
Interpretations of the Findings	110
Institutional Theory.....	114
Limitations of the Study.....	115
Recommendations.....	116
Implications.....	117
Conclusion	118
References.....	120

Appendix A: IRB Approval.....	139
Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Questions	141

List of Tables

Table 1. Coding Framework	82
Table 2. Participant Demographic Data	91
Table 3. Finding 1: Participant Contribution	98
Table 4. Finding 1: Codes	98
Table 5. Finding 2: Participant Contribution	100
Table 6. Finding 2: Codes	100
Table 7. Finding 3: Participant Contribution	102
Table 8. Finding 3: Codes	103
Table 9. Finding 4: Participant Contribution	104
Table 10. Finding 4: Codes	104

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In the United States, African American men continue to occupy prisons more than any other race (Pew Research Center, 2018). According to Clark (2016), of those who are incarcerated, 95% will reenter society with the prospect that they will cease from their criminal behavior. However, data suggested that approximately 68% of African American men will be rearrested whereas 56% of those rearrested will be reincarcerated within three years of being released from prison (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2018; Chamberlain & Wallace, 2016). Alarming recidivism rates have substantial implications for African American men who continue to have negative relationships with peers, diminished work skills, an unstable or volatile home, and return to poor neighborhoods. One philosophy concerning this alarming recidivism rate has been associated with correctional education's failure to effectively address the social problems of formerly incarcerated African American men in disenfranchised areas (Taylor, 2016).

Although there has been research that has suggested that correctional education positively affects the reentry and recidivism for African American men (Crabtree et al., 2016; Hlavka et al., 2015; Sokoloff, 2017), there still exists a limited knowledge gap regarding the exact avenues of reentry for African American men. As Halimi et al. (2017) noted, there has been considerable speculation by prison administrators, researchers, educators, and policy makers about which correctional educational programs decrease recidivism for African American men. Therefore, the aim of this study was to better understand how young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years

perceived their lived experiences of technical correctional education programs and how such programs aided in reducing recidivism during their reentry process.

This study was useful in determining which areas of correctional education programs African American men felt were beneficial for them to be successful and productive members of society. Additionally, this study can assist criminal justice administrators, policymakers, and other stakeholders in developing correctional education programs suitable for African American men to reduce criminal activities, obtain employment, and enhance their level of education among many other things in their lives. Furthermore, by investing in educational programs in prison, government can protect future funds by assisting incarcerated African American men to acquire skills needed to become gainful employed, taxpayers, and meaningful contributors to society (Hall et al., 2016; Rhodes et al., 2016).

This chapter will introduce this study by discussing the background of the problem, identifying the problem statement, the purpose of the study, and the research questions. This chapter will also provide a discussion on the theoretical framework that guides this study as well as an overview of the methodology and research design that will be utilized. This chapter will then conclude with defining key terms within this research as well as discussion on the study's scope, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and significance.

Background of the Problem

There is a dilemma in the United States concerning how correctional education programs prepare African American men for reintegration into society (Baranger et al.,

2018). African American men continue to occupy prisons more than any other race (Pew Research Center, 2018), as Clark (2016) discussed that of those that are incarcerated, 95% of African American men will reenter society with the prospect that they will cease from their criminal behavior. However, data suggested that approximately 68% of African American men will be rearrested whereas 56% of those rearrested will be reincarcerated within three years of being released from prison (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2018; Chamberlain & Wallace, 2016). This is highlighted especially towards African American men who continue to have negative relationships with peers, diminished work skills, an unstable or volatile home, and return to poor neighborhoods. Despite the correctional education programs provided to them in prison, African American men continue to reoffend and be arrested at a rate higher than other races in the United States (Capers, 2016; Pew Research Center, 2018; Smith, 2017). Currently, in the United States correctional facilities lack appropriate education programs for African American men serving time (Mastrorilli, 2016). In prison, African American men's access to education programs regarding rehabilitative programs and other adult life learning skills are limited or unavailable (Sokoloff, 2017).

While much was known about the effects of prison education in reducing recidivism of individuals within the United States, not much was known about how technical correctional education programs effected the recidivism rates of young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years. Therefore, this study filled a gap in the literature regarding how young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years' experienced technical correctional education programs and how they

perceived these programs as being useful in reducing recidivism when reintegrating back into society, because there was a lack of current knowledge regarding the effects of prison education in reducing recidivism of African American men.

The high number of African American men incarcerated have negative effects on their children, families, and communities. This dilemma confronting the criminal justice system indicates that there need to be a collaborative effort to reevaluate correctional education programs to determine their effectiveness and usefulness for African American men as they transition into communities (Muth et al., 2016). Although research has indicated that the extreme rate of recidivism for African American men has consequences for communities across the United States (Hunter et al., 2016), there has been limited research on African American men' ways of adjustment from incarceration to the community (Visher et al., 2017). Thus, an improved awareness of the effectiveness of correctional education during the reentry process, as provided by this study, may enable criminal justice experts, friends, and family members to assist more African American men to adjust to life in the community and reduce their recidivism rates (Paternoster et al., 2016).

Problem Statement

The problem being studied was that in the United States, there was limited knowledge of how correctional education programs prepared African American men for reentry into society after incarceration (Cid & Martí, 2017). Recently researchers have begun to examine problems associated to the adjustment process, formally referred as the process of reentry, for African American men (Schlager, 2018). In Georgia, data obtained

by the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) for inmates entering its prison system during the fiscal year 2018 indicated that the reentry population is largely African American males (56%) compared to White males (40%) and Hispanic males (3%) (Georgia Department of Corrections, 2019). Therefore, the problem was current correctional programs were ineffective in addressing the socioeconomical, intellectual, and mental health needs of African American men for reentry into society.

Aside from the educational programs and vocational training provided by prisons directed at preparing African American men as productive members of society (Clark, 2016a), recidivism remained high for this ethnic group (Georgia Department of Corrections, 2019). According to the U.S. Department of Justice-Bureau of Justice Statistics (2018), the incarceration rate for African American males (1,608) in the United States was more than five times that for White males (274) and double for Hispanics males (856). A challenge associated to being reincarcerated for African American men is not being adequately equipped for the challenges they experienced, most notably unemployment during the reentry process (Cerde et al., 2015). As Duwe and Clark (2017) reported, exoffenders who are unemployed or lack viable skills are more prone to recidivate than those with marketable skills or training. Moreover, a positive reentry process of African American men is contingent on a variety of available means, including their demand for basic welfare needs such as shelter, work, education, and possibly mental health treatment (Sokoloff & Schenck-Fontaine, 2017). Unfortunately, the duration of time exhausted outside of prison for African American men is short-term primarily due to the ineffectiveness and inadequacy of prison programs and community

resources. Particularly speaking, a number of African American men who are released into the community demonstrates several noncompetitive skills: low education, limited work history, and high substance abuse problem which all leads to an abnormal rate of rearrests within 3 years of being released (Keena & Simmons, 2015; Rhodes et al., 2016). The problem associated with current research was the lack of knowledge of how correctional education prepared African American men for reintegration into society (Scott, 2016). Thus, to completely understand the deficiency of correctional education, it was appropriate to identify the exact problems African American men encountered after incarceration.

The reentry process of African American men is a complicated process that is not thoroughly realized by criminal justice professionals, policymakers, and other stakeholders (Shaul et al., 2016; Wooditch et al., 2014). The majority of African American men released from prison return to the same community, environment, or means of survival that caused them to be imprisoned (Anderson et al., 2018; Clark, 2016b; Lee et al., 2017). These men must seek ways to support themselves, find housing, and try to reestablish the social bonds with family and friends. Years of not having to perform any of these arduous tasks further hinder African American men successful reentry.

There was a need for more research and knowledge concerning how formerly incarcerated African American men made the transition from a controlled, structured environment to one that was full of uncertainty and the unknown (Jeffers, 2017; Schlager, 2018; Skinner-Osei & Stepteau-Watson, 2017). A general understanding among

researchers and practitioners indicated that educational programs in prison is an integral part in the rehabilitation and transformation of offenders, particularly African American men, during the reentry process (Crabtree et al., 2016; Visher et al., 2017). Researchers have determined that the process of helping African American men to desist from criminal behavior and succeed through their reentry encompasses a variety of programs depending on individual needs. Moreover, the advantages to education for African American men in prison comprise of the development of life skills they need to be positive and responsible members of society (Keena & Simmons, 2015; Schlager, 2018; Scott, 2016). As Muth et al. (2016) noted, becoming literate is a major element and generally believed means for targeting the social and mental demands of offenders, which all likely may decrease the probability of recidivism.

Numerous researchers indicated that correctional education is an essential element for African American men as they leave prison (Ellison et al., 2017; Hunter et al., 2016; Jeffers, 2017). Nevertheless, few studies examined the extent correctional education impacted African American men' lives during the reentry process. Furthermore, the literature lacked knowledge of the exact role prison literacy and programs played for African American men in achieving postrelease success. Hence, this study sought to understand how young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceived their experiences of technical correctional education in relation to recidivism.

According to Scott (2016), the incarceration rate in the United States was the highest of any nation in the world and continued to increase. This trend caused overcrowding in prisons where African American men contributed to a significant

portion of this devastating rate (Baranger et al., 2018). Recently, corrections in the United States have changed their perspectives on offenders' punishment from being punitive to more of rehabilitation (Visher et al., 2017). Considering education is important in today's workforce (Duwe & Clark, 2017; Evans et al., 2018), prison education is now the attention of criminal justice administrators, policymakers, and practitioners. Despite being around for over 300 years, concerns regarding the effectiveness of correctional educational in decreasing the recidivism of African American men during reentry still exist. One key concern has been the amount of education African American men have obtained prior to incarceration (Ellison et al., 2017); improving their educational level can reinforce meaningful employment opportunities and reduce recidivism during the reentry process (Schnepel, 2018; Visher et al., 2017). While much was known about the effects of prison education in reducing recidivism of individuals within the United States, not much was known about how technical correctional education programs effected the recidivism rates of young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years. Therefore, this study filled a gap in the literature regarding how young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years' experienced technical correctional education programs and how they perceived these programs as being useful in reducing recidivism when reintegrating back into society.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to learn how young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceived their experiences of technical correctional education programs and how such programs aided in reducing recidivism during their reentry process from incarceration. A study by the Pew Center on the States (2018) reported that African American men disproportionately occupy prison and community supervision more than any other race in the United States. This social phenomenon emphasized a need for a different method and mindset towards correctional education programs by criminal justice officials and policymakers. As Mastroilli (2016) purported, the fundamental basis for educational programs in prison is threefold: providing literacy and competences to enhance employability post released; improving cognitive skills for inmates to rationalize responsibly; and lessen the probability of reincarceration. Data collection were qualitative interviews of young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years to determine the correctional education programs they perceived were conducive for them to be productive citizens and not a financial or social burden on society. According to Smith (2017), this information was needed to understand what correctional education programs were most appropriate for African American men to sustain abstinence from criminal behavior outside of prison.

The information obtained through qualitative interviews were used to better understand how young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceived correctional education programs as being effective in reducing recidivism through the reentry process, which provided insightful information that aided in stronger

development of educational programs for correctional institutions. This in turn increased the resourcefulness of the education programs that could be provided to African American men who were incarcerated, tailoring programs to meet their needs more effectively. Correctional education can profoundly affect the successful reentry of African American men returning to society from incarceration (Hall, 2015; Hlavka et al., 2015). Numerous research studies has shown a nexus between correctional education, reduction in recidivism, and positive employment results (Evans et al., 2018b; Hunter et al., 2016; Lockwood et al., 2015).

The logic of this research was to obtain a better perspective of young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years regarding the effectiveness of technical correctional education in reducing recidivism during the reentry process. Information was needed to understand what challenges young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years experienced once released from incarceration. Additionally, a better understanding of young, rural African American men's previous educational experiences was needed to determine their drive to participate in a technical vocational educational program. Finally, information obtained from the research questions will be significant to implement educational programs that young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years deem important for a successful reentry.

Research Questions

The primary research question that guided this study included the following:

RQ1: How do young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceive their lived experiences of technical correctional education programs during the reentry process?

Additionally, the secondary questions included:

SQ1: What are young, rural African American men's' perceptions of technical correctional education programs while incarcerated?

SQ2: What technical correctional education programs do young, rural African American men perceive as being important for a successful reentry into society?

Theoretical Framework

This qualitative study was guided by institutional theory to examine how correctional education impacted young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years during the reentry process. Institutional theory is the centerpiece of how institutions are considered a social structure. Thus, it was significant to understand how this theory aided in understanding the development of correctional education programs, as Scott (1995) purported that institutions often look to their peers for cues on appropriate behaviors, which can include optimizing decisions, practices, and structures. Therefore, this theory was beneficial to guide this study, as correctional institutions may not be examining efficient and needed correctional education programs, basing such programs on the fists of other correctional institutions and not on the populations for which they serve. Therefore, a key component of institutional theory was that for an organization to survive, it must conform to the rules and belief systems that prevail in the environment. This theory benefited this current study, as the researcher was exploring how young, rural

African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceived their experiences of technical correctional education programs and how they perceived them for being useful to reduce recidivism during reintegration back into society. Therefore, a strong question that this theory brought to the table included whether correctional institutions built education programs for the benefit of the population that they were serving, versus that of education programs that aided them in conforming to the rules and belief systems that prevail in their environment. This theoretical framework shaped the current research design, as it allowed the researcher to examine the perceptions of formally incarcerated African American men to better understand how the organization of a prison system has optimized decisions, practices, and structures to assist inmates in preparing for reentry into the community in hopes of reducing recidivism rates. Therefore, when developing the semistructured interview questions, this theory better understood the rules, norms, routines, and schemes that prisons followed when preparing their inmates for community re-entry.

Nature of the Study

The primary concept that was explored in this research was how young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years who had been incarcerated perceived their participation in technical correctional education programs. The researcher used a qualitative methodology that included a phenomenological study design. As Kim et al. (2017) noted, a phenomenological study design is reliable when the researcher desires to discover and understand a social phenomenon and the perspectives and of the individuals involved. Furthermore, by using a qualitative research design, the researcher

was able to have participants describe rich descriptions about a phenomenon which little information may be known about.

Although the participants of this study had some similarities regarding criminal history and education, this study was concerned with the social phenomenon each experienced during the reentry process. Therefore, an appropriate inquiry of these experiences was guided from a qualitative phenomenological study design. A phenomenological study design focused on how the participants perceived a lived experience of an occurrence of a social phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994), which in this case was that of formerly incarcerated young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years and correctional education programs. In particular, the type of qualitative phenomenological approach that was used was hermeneutic phenomenology. Hermeneutic phenomenology was utilized for researchers to interpret a phenomenon by shedding light and reflecting on a lived experience (Moustakas, 1994).

Using a qualitative phenomenological study design, purposive sampling was used to select a small number of participants in Georgia who had been: (a) recently released from incarceration, (b) had been incarcerated for a minimum of one year, (c) had previously received a high school diploma or GED, (d) were between the ages of 20 to 30 years, (e) resided in a rural area, and (f) had completed a correction technical program while incarcerated, where open-ended questions allowed the researcher to obtain a clear and rich understanding of correctional education programs and how African American men perceived their experiences during their reentry into society. Particularly, the

researcher performed individual interviews with young, rural African American men to obtain the data needed for this study.

Operational Definitions

In the criminal justice system, there are various terms with similar meanings. The following were key terms for this study:

African American: An American, particularly of North America, who has origin or ancestry from any of the black racial groups of Africa (excluding those of Hispanic origin) (Lockwood et al., 2015).

Correctional education: Adult Basic Education, General Equivalency Degree, vocational program, or postsecondary literacy programs provided to inmates during incarceration or community supervision (Lockwood et al., 2015).

Incarceration: The act of placing an individual into confinement resulting from illegal behavior (Hall et al., 2016).

Prisoner reentry /Reentry process (interchangeable terms): The process of an individual leaving prison and transitioning back into society (Hall et al., 2016)

Recidivism: The relapse into criminal behavior following release from jail, prison, probation, or parole (Hall et al., 2016).

Rehabilitation: To restore to the original state, as through education or therapy (Sokoloff & Schenck-Fontaine, 2017).

Social learning: Learning occurs when a person observes another behavior and its effect (Matejkowski et al., 2017). Additionally, Matejkowski et al., (2017) explained

social learning as the probability of whether an offender desist from deviant behavior contingent on the wrongdoing of their social networks.

Trajectories: Long-term paths that people follow as they progress through life (Lee et al., 2017).

Transitions: Special life events that are embedded in pattern and sequences (Lee et al., 2017).

Assumptions

The following assumptions were related to the subjects of this study: (a) it was assumed that those subjects who participated in this research were similar in their attitudes and behavior to those of the general population, (b) it was assumed that all subjects' responses were given honestly and without any predispositions, and (c) it was assumed that all subjects participated willingly without any expectation of compensation.

This study examined qualitative data regarding the effects of correctional education towards young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years during the reentry process. In doing so, the researcher was cautious that his own prejudice and predisposition did not interfere with the accuracy of data collection. The assumptions pertaining to this research were important to preserve anonymity and confidentiality of each subject who was willing to explain their postreleased experiences during the reentry process as it related to correctional education. Confidentiality encouraged the subjects to speak openly and honestly without fear of others knowing their identity. Additionally, African American men were the subject of this study because they were an over-represented population in prisons in the United States.

Scope

This study was qualitative in nature where a phenomenological design was used to extract and analyze data from participants. The study focused on young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years who had participated in technical correctional education while incarcerated and had recidivated at least once during their reentry into society. African American men were the only ethnic group desired to participate in the study because this group had a higher incarceration rate than any other race in the United States. To ensure the interviews were transcribed precisely and accurately, the researcher used a proprietary service and participants' audio recording. This reaffirmed that data obtained was unbiased and a true interpretation of the study.

Delimitations

This study was limited because of the small population used and the available literature for the study. In addition, sex offenders, female offenders, those men not of African American descent, African American men who did not reside in rural areas, and individuals who were not between the ages of 30 to 40 years, and individuals who had not previously completed a high school diploma or GED were excluded from the study. Because women offenders and other races not of African American origin generally had a low recidivism rate once released from prison (Clark, 2016b), the sample comprised solely of African American men which accounted for a significant number of the racial makeup of prisons.

Limitations

Patton (2015) noted that a limitation in research is a part of the study that lacks control by the researcher and negatively influences the study. Thus, this study had several limitations. The participants of the study consisted of one ethnicity, gender, age range, and geographical location. The sample population limited the number of participants who participated in the study; therefore, the methodology that was utilized did not require a large sample (Moustakas, 1994). Additionally, because participation was voluntary, participants had the right to not answer any questions that made them nervous or troubled. It was expected that dependability was the focus during each phase of the research study. Specifically, during the interview of participants who had experienced the social phenomenon and with how data were collected. Feedback and advice from the researcher's committee members and Walden's IRB procedure assured that the research questions were appropriate for the study.

As a law enforcement officer and former correctional officer, the researcher had witnessed the effects of illiteracy on a disadvantage and disenfranchised population, arguably African American men. Those consequences included criminal behavior, unemployment, unstable homes, mental health issues, and unmotivated to learn. Because of these consequences, the researcher desired to determine the best ways to assist African American men from experiencing the revolving door of prison. Furthermore, the researcher advocated for stronger and successful educational programs for African American men in prisons and for more of them to be positive role models in communities. Thorough consideration will be made to reduce researcher bias to ensure

prior experiences with African American men did not hinder data collection and data analysis. Particularly, information obtained was recorded exactly as the words of the participants and not be personal opinions of the researcher. In essence, the findings were in a way that permitted participants' views to augment the case for better educational programs in prisons.

This study focused on the use of personal interviews and ensured there were no interferences or bias during participants' interviews. These interviews included semistructured interview questions to solicit data from the participants. Also, due to time constraint of completing the research, a small number of participants selected for the study were extracted from a larger population of participants who had been released from a Georgia prison system and not under community supervision. As a practitioner in public safety, bracketing the researcher's personal experiences from that of the participants' lived experiences presented a potential challenge for this study. Thus, establishing the reliability of the data collected was paramount in this study.

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to learn how young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceived their experiences of technical correctional education programs and how such programs aided in reducing recidivism during their reentry process from incarceration. This study aimed in filling in the gap in the literature by unveiling African American men's perceptions of correctional education programs and their plight during reintegration into society. Specifically, it identified themes that had not emerged from current literature on the topic

of correctional education and former incarcerated African American men (Doekhie et al., 2017). Through qualitative interviews of former incarcerated African American men, information will be obtained to determine why this ethnic group continues to experience obstacles during reintegration despite their participation in correctional education.

This study was useful in determining which areas of correctional education programs African American men felt were beneficial for them to be successful and productive members of society. Additionally, this study could assist criminal justice administrators, policymakers, and other stakeholders in developing correctional education programs suitable for African American men to reduce criminal activities, obtain employment, and enhance their level of education among many other things in their lives. Furthermore, by investing in educational programs in prison, government can protect future funds by assisting incarcerated African American men to acquire skills needed to become gainful employed, taxpayers, and meaningful contributors to society (Hall et al., 2016; Rhodes et al., 2016).

The high number of African American men incarcerated has damaging effects on their children, families, and communities. This dilemma confronting the criminal justice system indicates that there need to be a collaborative effort to reevaluate correctional education programs to determine their effectiveness and usefulness for African American men. This study could impact social change by enlightening criminal justice officials and others of the areas of correctional education that African American men perceive are most influential to them to be successful outside of prison. Moreover, this study revealed the area for public awareness into correctional education which could increase people's

views regarding the rehabilitation of African American men who were imprisoned. Finally, findings from this study could enable government officials in determining to what extent do correctional education programs need to be funded to reduce the revolving door for African American men.

Summary and Transition

Correctional education programs have an extensive history of rehabilitating criminals, particularly African American men, by various means. However, the removal of access of the Pell Grants in prison reduced the means available for implementing and maintaining correctional education programs appropriate for their successful transition to a free society (Mastorilli, 2016; Tewksbury et al., 2000). The insights of formerly incarcerated young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years can increase the awareness and understanding about what can be improved within correctional education programs in the United States. Although researchers have determined the benefit of correctional education programs on the reduction of recidivism, funding and support continues to be lacking (Ellison et al., 2017; Scott, 2016). African American men' perceptions of correctional education and how it prepared them for the reentry process is the motivation of this study. In summation, Chapter 1 provided an overview of the experiences of African American men regarding the reentry process. Also, this chapter outlined the problem statement, the nature of the study, research questions, the significance of the study, operational terms, the theoretical framework of the study, assumptions, limitation/scope of the study, and the purpose of the study. Chapter 2 will provide an exhaustive literature review of the theoretical framework and

variables associated with correctional education and prison reentry. Examining the various studies related to both guarantees a superior understanding of the reentry process as it relates to African American men.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Currently, it was uncertain how effective correctional education prepared African American men for reintegration into society after incarceration. According to the Pew Research Center (2018), prisons in the United States have a high population of African American men despite their participation in correctional education programs. One belief was that current educational programs in prisons did not adequately address the social dilemma that African American men experienced once returned to society (Cerde et al., 2015). Thus, the purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to better understand how young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceived their experiences of technical correctional education programs and how they perceived programs as to reducing recidivism during their reentry process. The literature review of Chapter 2 will consist of three general areas regarding African American men and correctional education. First, there will be an examination of the literature explored to determine the theoretical foundation of the study. Secondly, the literature review will examine literature associated with the social dilemma that African American men experienced after incarceration to determine the gap in current literature. Finally, the literature review will include the literature examined to support the methodology used in the study.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature review for this study explored the relationship between correctional education and African American men as a means of evaluating correctional education.

This study provided a better understanding of how young African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceived their experiences of technical correctional education programs by discussing their perceptions of how they had been useful when it came to reducing recidivism during their reintegration into society from incarceration. Theoretical research and philosophical perception relevant to the problem statement will be discussed in this chapter. Databases used for the literature review included ProQuest, A SAGE Full-Text Collection, Dissertations & Theses, Google Scholar, and PsycINFO. Search terms included: *education, prison education, employment, substance abuse, drugs, recidivism, reentry, community reintegration, prison reentry, inmates, Blacks, African American men, youth reentry, self-efficacy theory, social learning theory, and phenomenological research*. Additionally, reference materials from peer-reviewed journals and professional journal articles published after 2014 were utilized. For the literature review search, all the search terms were used throughout varied databases and search engines to yield valuable literature for the theory, gap in literature, and methodology. There were no specific search term, phrases, or concept applied in a specific search for specific results.

Institutional Theory

The theory that supported the present research was institutional theory (Scott, 1995), which explained the deeper and more resilient aspects of social structure. This theory described and conceptually organized a correctional educational program's institutional environment. This theory assumed that public institutionary situations in complicate as well as value-laden environments. In addition, the theory asserted in part that these environments may have the possibility of having a variable effect on individual

decision makers. Institutional theory focuses on the prospective impact of rules and norms of institutional environment on organizational decision-making. It also focuses on how perceptions as well as reactions to these organizational rules and norms also affect organizational decision-making (Anssen & Nannnenmann, 2017). Using this theory allowed for the greater possibility to have a more complex as well as comprehensive understanding of correctional intuitional programs and how the rules and practices within affected the incarcerated African American men's reentry experiences and processes. Institutional theory can be referenced for understanding how African Americans incarcerated made their decisions regarding their reentry process given their experiences in the correctional education programs (McGarrell, 1993).

Institutional theory has been proven useful by some studies for revealing situational and disposition factors that have the power to affect incarcerated individuals. According to Selznick, a pure organization can be considered a special purpose tool as well as a rational instrument designed to carry out certain tasks or jobs under a very serious system of activities that are consciously and deliberately intertwined and coordinated (Philips, 2003; Vorovov & Weber, 2020; Winter, 2017). While theorists and even government officials would like to view prisons or correctional facilities as pure organizations, this is not true. Correctional agencies instead, should be treated as an institutionalized organization. By this, it means correctional agencies are organizations that over time, become increasingly focused on realizing their goals while simultaneously realizing their value-laden goals that were exacted or established by external influences, or sources such as the public.

According to Perrow (1986), the most important contribution of the institutional theory is its highlighting of the cruciality of the institutional environment. Hall and Fagen (1956) have described environment as the set of all the objects that have attributes, when changed, can also change the system. At the same time, the behaviors within the system can also affect the objects themselves. Both the institutions themselves and the institutionalizing processes are core elements of the institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Zucker, 1987).

According to Scott (1987), institutions are those that have provided stability as well as meaning to certain social behaviors. Institutions are shaped by cultures, structures, as well as routines. These institutions can operate at differing levels of jurisdiction. Moreover, he asserted that institutions can be considered legitimate if they observe the three pillars of regulative, normative, and cognitive structures.

Under the first pillar of regulative structures, the type of institutionalizing influences is described as coercive (Swan, 2008). The possibility of court intervention is a prime example of institutionalizing influence under this pillar. Under this pillar, the core institutional influence is the political or inter-organizational pressure to observe certain rules and conform to certain forms. The risk of or the fear of facing either formal or informal organizational sanction when the organization did not conform is the main influence (Swan, 2008).

Under the second pillar, which is normative, the main influence is culture, values as well as norms on administrative intent. Normative beliefs in relation to how risky media interview is can affect the effectiveness or the use of correctional programs in high

profile cases. Professionalism or professionalizing forces such as education requirements, the need for certifications is also at play (Swan, 2008). Under the last pillar, which is cognitive, the main influences are the incarcerated or respondent's previous personal experiences, previous thoughts, and the correctional management philosophy at play. There is an interaction between previously held beliefs as well as the present experiences of the participants when it comes to the correctional programs. Based on the institutional theory, all pillars can be at work, simultaneously (Swan, 2008).

It is possible to link as well as provide equal weight to each pillar of this theory. This means that all three could reveal as well as explain crucial important variables linked to decision-making by correctional leaders (Swan, 2008). Conversely, it is better to understand corrective agencies or institutions from all three institutional perspectives when understanding what could influence correctional participants' behaviors and experiences. According to Swan (2008), in his study, institutional theory shed light on the possible regulative forces at play affecting the intent of the correctional program or agency as well as experiences of the participants. Mass media criticisms of correctional agencies' actions and activities can also influence correctional facilities' behaviors and the participants themselves. McCorkle and Crank (1996) conducted one of the first studies on prisons and correctional agencies using the institutional theory. The authors used the institutional theory of organizations to argue that historical changes that took place in relation to parole and probation proved ceremonial in their effects because they did not consider the complexities of prisons as institutions. According to the researchers, a tracing of community organizations' history in the US can show that parole and

probation can be categorized into four areas, each of which can be shaped by a specific institutional authority as well as changes in institutional structures. Even if there had been policies to improve parole and probation activities through the improvement of surveillance and information-gathering strategies, institutional forces prevented these from shaping the daily activities of parole and probation officers.

Another prison related study that used institutional theory is by Goga (2015). Goga approached how the architecture of incarceration can be improved using this theory and showed that this theory can shed what the best policies should be for desired rehabilitation and reintegration strategies to happen. These studies did not focus on how African American men described their experiences during the reentry process, given their involvement in correctional education programs. Institutional theory purports that institutions are considered social structures and are composed of cultural cognitive, normative, and regulative elements that provide stability and meaning to social life. Correctional education programs for African American men can assist them with mental health challenges, drug problems, family relationships, and employment opportunities (Jeffers, 2017). These are the institutional factors that cannot be overlooked in having an impact on incarcerated men's ability to live a social and economic life after incarceration.

Review of Related Research

To rehabilitate offenders, specifically African American men, correctional education is an involved and perplexing part of the rehabilitative struggles of the prison system. According to Baranger et al. (2018), since the Reagan Administration, the incarceration rate of prisons compounded where the average offender was uneducated or

employed at the minimum wage level prior to being incarcerated. Beginning in 1994, prisons experienced a high demand for educational programs while simultaneously witnessing a decrease in funding for desired programs (Wolfer, 2019). As Wolfer (2019) further claimed, many governments either reduce programming in prisons or eliminated the programs altogether to alleviate the shortage of budgets. Although the funding for correctional education remained relative low compared to other expenditures of government budget, the thought of criminals obtaining an education with tax dollars were negatively viewed (Baranger et al., 2018; Evans et al., 2018). The public's negative view of inmates receiving free education led to the federal government enacting legislation prohibiting public funding being used for postsecondary education to educate inmates in prisons (Gould, 2018; Mastroilli, 2016). As Hall et al. (2016) noted, this adversely affected nearly all educational programs in U.S. prisons where the majority of them were eliminated from prisons.

Because of the excessive number of inmates being uneducated, undereducated, and underemployed, correctional education became rooted in the fabric of correctional systems in the United States (Abrams & Lea, 2016). Ramakers et al. (2017) maintained that a significant number of former inmates continue to be unemployed or underemployed due to a deficiency in education and employment skills needed to meet the demands of today's job market. Data from a recent research indicated that approximately 68% of African American men will be rearrested where 56% of them will be imprisoned within three years of being released from prison (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2018) largely due to not having a basic education (high school diploma). Duwe

and Clark (2014) conducted a research study of 9,394 former inmates examining the effect of secondary and postsecondary education on recidivism and the outcome of postreleased employment. These authors concluded that obtaining a secondary or postsecondary education increased the likelihood of former inmates in obtaining employment which further provides “a better chance in conformity and conventional activities” (p. 474). Additionally, the findings suggested that inmates earning degrees in prison not only improved their employability but also help with the reduction in the allocation of resources for recidivist behavior. Other researchers reported findings concerning the advantages of prison-based education in reducing recidivism and decreasing the expense of incarceration (Baranger et al., 2018; Lockwood et al., 2015; Roth et al., 2017; Schnepel, 2018; Wolfer, 2019). These studies determined correctional education reduced recidivism, especially if former inmates obtained a postsecondary education (Rosário et al., 2016).

During the literature review of numerous relevant articles published between January 2014 and June 2019, the researcher identified five categories relevant to how correctional education potentially impacted the lives of African American men: (a) family structure, (b) education, (c) employment, (d) personal motivation, and (e) deviant social behavior. In examining these categories, several studies afforded greater understandings into the role of correctional education and the framework for its application and evaluation (Baranger et al., 2018; Clark, 2016; Paternoster et al., 2016; Schlager, 2018). More particularly, the social effects of correctional education for formerly incarcerated African American men and the degree their lived experiences

impacted them during the plight to community reintegration. Baranger et al. (2018) noted in a study in 2014 regarding the participation of men in prison programs that men were more likely to participate in education while incarcerated if it improved the social bond of their family. The authors' research expanded the concept that connection to family and dedication to prosocial standards play a significant part in decreasing risk for deviant behavior. In addition to family structure, another theme associated with correctional education and African American men was structural condition and motivation. Structural conditions of prison programs refer to program policies within the facilities, program accessibility, and the quality of the prison programs. Research related to personal motivation determined that participation in correctional education provided hope for inmates to improve their social worth in society in terms of salary, education, and the reduction of deviant behavior (Cid & Martí, 2017; Gould, 2018; Schnepel, 2018). The education aspect of participating in correctional education provides inmates, particularly African American men, the ability to think critically in dire situations that affects their socioeconomic level.

Reviewed Literature

Education

The first theme in this review of the literature includes that of education and how it can support reentry into communities after offenders have been released. Many of the studies that have been completed highlight how correctional education programs increase the success of reentry, as well as providing stability to offenders when seeking employment and other necessities to be a successful member of the community.

Walters (2018a) examined a sample of 1,016 men convicted of a felony offense to determine whether college participation helped them desist from criminal activities during the beginning of adulthood or after a cognitive control. Walters focused on two pathways from abstaining from crime: college participation at 19 years to cognitive control at 20 years to subsequently no criminal engagement at 21 years of age; and cognitive control at 19 years to college participation at 20 years to eventually no criminal activities at 21 years of age. Walters defined cognitive control as a “turning point” in the men’ lives such as marriage, employment, or military obligation. Walters determined that college could serve as a control agent in reducing criminal behavior in former inmates and it can achieve its outcome ultimately by enhancing cognitive control in the former inmates who participated in college during their beginning adult life. Moreover, participating in college can inspire change by providing former inmates with life skills that reinforce and sustain their desistance from crime comparable to how the negative thought process supported and maintained their criminal behavior initially. This article focuses on the first research question, as it examines how individuals can abstain from crime, which aids in exploring how education programs impact the reentry process and the success of being a contributing member of society. This current study’s subquestions were also presented within this article, as I discussed the different educational experiences that convicted felons have and how they are related to the reduction of criminal activity.

According to Walters (2018), an essential part of a successful reintegration program for former prisoners is education. Kim and Lee (2019) found that attempts to

improve the socioeconomic status of an individual on government assistance or recently released from prison cannot be successful unless there is improvement to the education level. Although these authors did not report that education eliminate criminal behavior, they did note that individuals without basic or sufficient education may experience challenges in society. Nevertheless, the depth of effective reintegration for offenders concerning correctional education, is the educational program's ability to make a productive citizen (Terry & Abrams, 2017). Furthermore, as (Ellison et al., 2017) asserted, literacy is the initial bond between employment, education, and economic growth. Therefore, a successful prison rehabilitation program comprised of an education program is significant because it grooms prisoners for their reentry into society (Powers et al., 2017). In corrections, the lack of education signifies a grave problem. According to Pompoco et al. (2017), this deficiency of education is a concern that prisoners recognize. Conceivably, prisoners who consider themselves illiterate are concern of the hardship they will experience after prison. Hence, this disadvantage is one factor that persuade prisoners to prison education programs (Pompoco et al., 2017). McElreath et al. (2018) asserted, "prisons have a significant population of individuals who were unemployed prior to incarceration, learning disabilities, high school failures, and African Americans" (p. 18). Perhaps low educational levels are one variable influencing these circumstances. Contrary, the more education or training prisoners receive while imprisoned, the greater their chances of obtaining legitimate employment thus lessen their opportunity to reoffend (Anderson et al., 2018; Kim & Lee, 2019). This article aids in examining all research questions (RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3, as it discussed both benefits and challenges that

individuals could experience when participating in prison education programs. This aided in providing the researcher with strong information regarding any barriers that could be experienced within the reentry process.

To highlight the significance of education for prisoners, Abrams and Lea (2016) examined the effects of a low educational level. The authors argued some prisoners are imprisoned because of their low educational level, which demonstrates their inability to obtain employment thereby participating in criminal behavior to survive in society. According to Duwe and Clark (2017), “offenders are likely to be employed, productive citizens, avoid criminality due to poverty, and remain free if they were educated” (p. 461). Duwe and Clark further stated that the U.S. government’s perspective on prison education is a bipartisan fiscal choice: either exhaust money to educate offenders thus diminishing their likelihood of reoffending or exhaust funds to keep them incarcerated thus decreasing their opportunity for a successful reintegration. Considering the importance of educating prisoners, prison education should be a main concern of correctional officials. Prisoners must be encouraged to participate in prison education while imprisoned. This article links outside influences of individuals reentering society in relation to the completion of prison education programs. For example, Research Question 1 can be examined by discussing fiscal issues as well as different reforms that the government have completed to attempt successful reintegration into society.

At some moment during incarceration, African American prisoners must decide to participate in prison educational programs. Certainly, the desire to participate must be prompted by some dynamics in the prison system. To highlight the effects of prison

education on reentry, it was significant for this research to examine the dynamics of prisoners' motivation in prison educational programs. Panitsides and Moussiou (2019) examined the significance of prisoners' motivation to attend college education programs while incarcerated. Given that prison educational programs are voluntary, if not court-ordered, it is significant for prisons to trigger the desire for prisoners to participate in the programs (Hetland et al., 2015). Although Panitsides and Moussiou highlighted inmates in college level education, the same concept regarding prisoners' motivation pertains to all prison educational programs. To further discuss the research of Panitsides and Moussiou (2019), the authors pinpointed prisoners' enthusiasm to attend college level education as a desire for change. Considering the desire for change, Panitsides and Moussiou found that external drive, e.g., easy prison duties or shorter prison term, seemed most important to prisoners thus inspiring them to attend and complete prison educational programs. By completing the programs, prisoners could receive extra credit towards their sentences as a way of decreasing their time incarcerated (Evans et al., 2018). According to Evans et al. (2018), "external drives give prisoners a motivation to enhance their education while incarcerated thus cementing opportunities during reentry" (p. 272). This study examined the first research question of this current study as it allowed for a discussion on how correctional education programs had an impact on incarcerated individuals. This discussion was completed from a standpoint of exploring issues related to education programs before reentry-where prisoners can opt to complete an education program. This also aided in a discussion in this current study's subquestions, where the focus was on motivation levels.

According to several studies, the majority of offenders who occupy prisons in the United States lack a high school diploma (Evans et al., 2019; Gould, 2018; Peled-Laskov et al., 2019; Sokoloff & Schenck-Fontaine, 2017). Researchers and prison officials argue that if offenders are to desist from criminal activities then correctional education must be the centerpiece of their rehabilitation (Gould, 2018; Walters, 2018a). Excluding the federal prison system, which require offenders without a high school education or GED to participate in education programs (Duke, 2018), nearly all state prison systems provide correctional education programs on a voluntary basis (Evans et al., 2019). This logistic way of providing education to offenders in state prison systems place the critical decision to participate in correctional education on the offender and less on prison administration. Moreover, this practice by state prison system presents several problems and concerns for offenders: financing the education if not funded by the facility; low self-esteem from fear of succeeding; peer-pressure from family and other offenders; and lack of support from prison administrators. Indeed, these encouraging and discouraging influences derive from personal situations and experiences of each offender. Generally, court-ordered sentences as an incentive play a major role in offenders decisions and motivation to participate in correctional education to reduce their time incarcerated (Roth et al., 2017). This article was in alignment with RQ1, where the discussion laid on how correctional education programs had an impact on individuals when reintegrating into society. For example, this article highlighted how completing such programs could aid in reducing continued criminal behavior, postrelease.

Koo (2016) sought a need to examine a population of the prison system that have had limited awareness regarding correctional education and recidivism by correctional administrators, legislatures, and researchers. The author reported that despite offenders with learning disabilities are considerably represented in prisons, current practices with correctional education do not appropriately include programs geared to offenders with learning disability. Incorporating educational programs that centers on offender's learning disability and life skills potentially could teach offenders of their right to seek reasonable accommodations at work, school, or community in general (Koo, 2016). However, as Koo noted, prison systems across the United States attempt to meet the demands of offenders with learning disabilities considering any education opportunity during incarceration is an essential method to provide offenders education. Despite the need to provide offenders education in prison, there is no constitutional right for prisons to provide education to offenders (Koo, 2016). The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that education is not an explicit right under the U.S. Constitution; therefore, offenders lack a constitutional basis to argue inadequate education in prison. This article addressed motivation in relation to this current study's sub questions, where it was discussed that sometimes prisoners being offered educational programs may not be as motivated to complete, due to issues of learning disabilities. This was an important construct to keep in mind, especially since education has been an integral part of successful reintegration processes of offenders and prisoners.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012) (as cited in Duwe and Clark (2014), individuals without a high school diploma or G.E.D. had the highest

unemployment rate compared to those with at least a bachelor's degree. Considering the high rates of recidivism associated with unemployment for formerly incarcerated African American men in the United States, obtaining some form of education, especially a postgraduate degree, have become more crucial than once before. Duwe and Clark (2014) examined the effects of achieving a secondary and postgraduate degree on recidivism and postreleased employment of former offenders who were released from a Minnesota prison during 2007 and 2008. Data were collected from 9,394 offenders released from prison during this timeframe and compared to offenders who earned a high school diploma or G.E.D. in prison to offenders who did not obtain a secondary degree while incarcerated. Duwe and Clark found that offenders with a secondary degree experienced similar rearrest rates as those in the comparison group but the reconviction and reincarceration rates for offenders with a secondary degree were lower.

Also, offenders with a postgraduate degree experienced a much lower rate of rearrests, reconviction, and reincarceration than offenders in the comparison group. For as employment, a significant number of offenders whether secondary or postgraduate degree secured employment within 2 years of being released (Duwe & Clark, 2014). These results indicated offenders receiving educational degrees while incarcerated could positively affect recidivism and employment opportunities. This study was in alignment with research question one, where the impacts of correctional education programs were discussed.

Ellison et al. (2017) conducted a meta-analysis of 28 studies where vocational, basic academic training, secondary and postgraduate education were measured in prisons

to determine their effect on recidivism and employment of offenders. The authors used a Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) tool to examine the relationship between correctional education and postrelease results of offenders that participated in education in prisons. The review focused on employment and recidivism as desirable outcomes of engaging in prison education. The design of the research studies was primarily that of a nonrandom control versus treatment plan. Ellison et al. noted that it is impossible to state the type of education program most successful for offenders, the ideal interval in the prison sentence for participation, or the age group most appropriate for prison education. Furthermore, regarding employment, the authors reported that their findings were unable to determine if skills, qualification, or intangible proficiency played a significant effect. Overall, Ellison et al. determined that offenders participating in prison education decreases the probability of reoffending and increases the likelihood of securing employment after incarceration. Similarly, this article is in alignment with the first research question that aims to determine the impact of correctional education programs.

Since the legislation of the Violent Crime Control Act of 1994 and in the aftermath of the Second Chance Act of 2007, educational opportunities for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated offenders, specifically African American men, have drastically declined, according to Livingston and Miller (2014). These authors further noted that postsecondary education is mostly available to a limited population of offenders and former offender based on race and socioeconomics. Livingston and Miller attempted to determine what challenges formerly incarcerated offenders face in the society while attending higher education based on race and socioeconomics. The authors collected data

using in-depth interviews of 34 former offenders attending a major university in a northeastern area of the United States. Most of the participants were minorities who previously served an average sentence of about six years in a state prison. Livingston and Miller found that a common theme amongst the participants were their environment prior to incarceration dictated their adjustment and access to college after prison. Specifically, those offenders from disadvantage communities experienced a harder time assimilating with students whereas the opposite was true for offenders from privileged communities. Regarding financial and social support, offenders who upbringings were from an underprivileged environment lacked the necessary resources to prepare or participate in higher education. On the contrary, having the financial backing permitted former offenders many opportunities to secure higher education despite their criminal background.

Unemployed former prisoners present considerable danger to the safety of society. According to Keena and Simmons (2015), job steadiness and lower recidivism are positively linked to a successful reentry process for former prisoners. Many researchers consider stable employment is important for a productive life outside of prison for former prisoners. Traditionally, job readiness programs have centered on teaching offenders job-related or technical skills. Although these skills are essential for employment, there are other skills necessary (cognitive and personal) for offenders to adjust to the contingencies of life. Keena and Simmons noted that entrepreneurship education is a way former prisoners can combat the challenges. These authors attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of an entrepreneurship program, Ice House Entrepreneurship

Program, on the cognitive skills of former offenders in Mississippi. The Ice House Entrepreneurship Program was a 12-week program administered by professors from local universities to offenders with less than 24 or less months remaining on their prison sentence. Approximately 29 male offenders were evaluated in the program using open-ended, unstructured interviews. Keena and Simmons determined that correctional facilities should focus on the three Rs of offenders' life: rethink, reform, and reenter. Specifically, correctional education should help offenders be forward thinkers about their intellectual enhancement along with job-related skills. Additionally, correctional programs should teach offenders how to take ownership of their actions and seek ways to keep them from reoccurring. Finally, correctional education should seek to teach offenders perseverance in the workforce and not settle for menial jobs.

Employment

Employment is a second theme that emerged from the review of the literature and had been discussed through recent research where correctional education programs aided in better job or employment placements after reentry. Without correctional education programs, many offenders who are released from prison are only eligible for menial jobs; therefore, it is essential to increase educational experiences to provide support and motivation when they reenter society as productive community members.

Numerous studies have indicated that employment can assist with the high recidivism rate of offenders (Abrams & Lea, 2016; Duwe & Clark, 2014; Schnepel, 2018; Terry & Abrams, 2017). Cerda et al. (2015) argued that the absolute role of employment is indicative of the quality of the work such as length of employment or intensity of the

work. Additionally, extensive research on the role of work for former prisoners' recidivism is limited (Lockwood et al., 2015) while the majority of current research of employment for former prisoners is centered on whether the offender is either employed or unemployed; thus, leaving the subject of employment quality needing additional research. Ramakers et al. (2017) examined the relationship between recidivism and employment qualities amongst former prisoners. The study revealed that steady or longstanding employment and employments with an advance skill level could help deter deviant behavior, especially among high-risk offenders. Furthermore, the study determined that former prisoners experience a deficiency in a human capital that restricts their opportunity to high skill level jobs. The results of the study seem to back legislation and policies that connect former prisoners to permanent high level employment. This article examined RQ1, simply because it aligned with motivation and advanced skill levels through education and the deficits that felons experienced when reentering society.

Employment is a meaningful turning point in the assimilation of ex-offenders in the community, which also serves as a genuine source of wages and an essential element in the offenders' daily activities (Duwe & Clark, 2017; Sharlein, 2018). Prison programs, especially vocational training programs, allow offenders to acquire job-related experience, routine work habits, financial stability, connection with a constructive environment, and improve self-esteem throughout the rehabilitation and reentry process (Evans et al., 2018; Rosário et al., 2016). Peled-Laskov et al. (2019) discussed the need for prisoners to participate in employment programs in prisons and a continuation of such training once released into the community. Their research consisted of a program

designed to monitor offenders in an employment program for three years (including time spent in a halfway house). Peled-Laskov et al. (2019) found that former offenders demonstrated positive signs of retaining employment than those offenders who ceased the training once released from prison. Moreover, the results concluded offenders were able to not only sustain a longer employment record but increased their income level and decreased their recidivism. This article focused on RQ1 and the sub questions, as they both discussed how previous educational experiences and motivations for reentry. Additionally, the article was helpful when addressing RQ1, as it provided information on how correctional education programs impacted individuals reentering society.

When offenders are released from prison they experience challenges in securing employment and providing for their families (Potts & Bierlein Palmer, 2014). Perhaps this is the result of insufficient job-related skills and other factors associated with mental health, drug abuse, and low literacy level (Cid & Martí, 2017; Sokoloff & Schenck-Fontaine, 2017). Newton et al. (2018) performed a study to determine the impact of vocational training and specific employment programs on former prisoners in the United States. The authors examined 12 recent studies based on specific criteria which determined that the likelihood of offenders not reoffending and being gainful employed increase when the offenders participated in vocational training immediately after incarceration. Moreover, Newton et al. suggested that high-risk ex-offenders and offenders aged 27 and older benefit more from program participation than low-risk and younger offenders. Finally, the authors determined that additional and continuing research is needed to remain steadfast to the everchanging characteristic of correctional

populations and program budgets. This article was in alignment with both RQ1 and the subquestions, simply because of the importance of discussing education programs whether during incarceration or immediately after incarceration. Therefore, it was also important to highlight motivation factors when discussing reintegration processes.

According to Abrams and Lea (2016), correctional education is designed to offer offenders the necessary knowledge, training, and skills to be responsible and productive citizens upon their return to society. Nevertheless, formerly incarcerated African American men are extremely probable to experience limited employment probabilities because of being a felon, limited participation in the workforce, and living in areas of high unemployment. Given this understanding, Abrams and Lea attempted to understand how a life-skills program for men in jail prepared them for potential barriers after incarceration. The authors examined 16 classes from two urban jails with the classes comprising of nine different instructors. The racial makeup of the classes were African American and Hispanic men and data was collected through observing classes daily. Abrams and Lea determined that structural barriers African American men will experience were absent from the life skills program in jail. Instead, African American men were taught to concentrate on personal motivation to achieve suitable employment. Thus, this personal approach to life provided African American men ownership for their lives and self-efficacy toward their transformation. Although this article addressed RQ1 where a discussion on the impacts of correctional education was paramount, the subquestions were also highlighted when discussing the perceptions of importance of correctional programs during and after the reentry process.

According to Bender et al. (2016), the reentry process of offenders has attracted much awareness from criminal justice officials and policymakers. Nevertheless, little information still exists regarding offenders transitioning back to society, especially high-risk offenders. Bender et al. sought to examine a reentry program and the reentry process through the lens of high-risk offenders. Data from 25 high-risk offenders was collected using surveys and personal interviews from formerly incarcerated men in two mid-western cities: Cleveland, Ohio, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. These two cities were selected because at the time of the study the unemployment rate in these cities exceeded the national average. The participants experienced violent crimes ranging from robbery, aggravated assault, and battery where they have recidivated at least twice. The authors' research determined that several themes emerged regarding the implementation of a reentry programs. More specifically, the participants felt the value of social support in the programs and how program policies are designed and executed amongst participants. Also, the authors noted that participants desired for reentry programs to result in the placement of them in suitable employment. The participants of the research noted that previous reentry programs do not deliver the employment opportunities pledged in the programs thus creating distrust in them for the reentry programs. This article examined RQ1 and the sub questions.

In 2014, Richmond (2014) sought to understand prisoners' perceptions on correctional facilities employment programs, specifically whether it influenced their behavior while imprisoned and whether the training received benefited them after incarceration. After permission was granted by the Pennsylvania Department of

Corrections, 32 male inmates participated in the research where each were interviewed in a private location from the prison facility. The participants were assured that information discussed and obtained would be confidential and not shared to any prison staff or administrator. Using a qualitative approach, Richmond developed three themes from the inmates' responses: inmates' perception of the prison employment program, motivation for positive behavior, and improved interpersonal skills. Additionally, Richmond determined that quality work for inmates while imprisoned correlates to them being motivated to secure quality work in the community. Also, the inmates reported that the employment program enhanced their self-confidence, provided structure, and gave them a sense of responsibility. The inmates also reported that the shortage of skills and availability of job opportunities decreased their ability to use the training outside of prison.

Family Structure

Families can play a crucial role when it comes to the success of reentry programs, with many studies examining how correctional education programs alongside other factors- such as family involvement, family visits, and the structure of one's family can promote success or drawbacks in the outcomes of community reentry. According to Potts and Bierlein-Palmer (2014), in 2010 nearly 850,000 offenders were released from prison and experienced many challenges adapting to society due to a lack of education. Almost half of the offenders returned to prison within 3 years of being released because of not being able to secure employment or increase their level of education (Potts & Bierlein Palmer, 2014). Potts and Bierlein-Palmer further noted that limited research exist as to

why offenders participate in correctional education and how they perceive their experiences in prison. To fully understand offenders' experiences of correctional education, the authors conducted a phenomenological study of 11 offenders who participated in community college courses as part of a reentry program. Based on the research questions, Potts and Bierlein-Palmer identified several themes: being role models, family support, reared in dysfunctional family, product of a single parent home, support correctional and college staff, changed person as a college student, and a positive outlook on life. From these themes, Potts and Bierlein-Palmer drew conclusions significant to correctional education being accessible to prisoners. The offenders appreciated the socialization and encouragement of instructors, prison staff, and fellow peers as they participated in the reentry program. Additionally, many of the offenders became role models and improved the social bond with their families. The offenders reported many life-changing moments because of participating in correctional education. This article aligned with both the problem statement and the purpose of the study, highlighting the gap in the literature that made this study viable. Therefore, this study was in alignment with all research questions.

Fowler et al. (2017) noted the critical role fathers have in the social development of children and the impact of the absence of a father in families. Considering the impact of fathers being incarcerated, Fowler et al. attempted to understand the experiences male offenders faced parenting while incarcerated and after incarceration. These authors argued that limited knowledge existed concerning how to implement correctional programs aimed at providing incarcerated fathers the necessities to be good parents.

Fowler et al. obtained data from 64 participants using semi-structured interviews under an appreciative inquiry approach. Appreciative inquiry is a process where the researcher focuses on the positive aspect of the participants' situation as opposed to the negative part. From their research, Fowler et al. identified the following themes: prior knowledge of being fathered, prior knowledge of fathering, emotion of being separated from children, hope of being a better parent, and desiring an improved quality of life for their children. The authors found that the offenders desired to be good fathers, expected the best life for their children, and did not want their children' lives to duplicate their own lives. Therefore, correctional programs should emphasize that family support is vital to reduce the cycle of criminality in children. This article followed the alignment of RQ1, which discussed the impact that correctional education programs had on reentry.

Ohara et al. (2019) explored the effects of correctional education on incarcerated juveniles, to compare the inmates' academic performance and resilience from the time of admission until discharge. The aim of the study was to assess which interventions improved academic performance and resilience. Examining 238 diaries of incarcerated individuals, the study was completed at a self-reliance support facility in Japan, providing inmates with familial environments and comprehensive education programs. Participants were placed into one of two groups; improvement or no improvement, based upon their outcome that was assessed at discharge. The results of the study concluded that length of stay, academic performance, and the number of visits by family members were main factors of how they were placed into the improvement group. Although this study focused on younger individuals, it is important to note that family structure plays an integral role

when it comes to offenders and reentry into community. Although the authors reported more research needs to be completed within this area, this article focuses on research questions one and two in relation to the impact that correctional education programs have on offenders and additionally what motivates them to complete educational programs. Obviously, there appeared to be other factors of motivation as well, including that of family, which brought significant research into this arena.

McKay et al. (2016) discussed the importance of family involvement both pre- and post-release, especially within the African American community. The authors reported that due to incarceration individuals are more apt to experience a deterioration within their family structure; however, alongside correctional education programs and reentry programs, family involvement can provide a source of motivation to ensure that offenders are following structures upon their release. Therefore, the authors reported that it is essential for families to be involved alongside other models that have proven success- such as that of correctional education programs, as many offenders rely on housing, emotional support, financial resources, and overall sustainability upon reentry into the community. Therefore, this is a topic that was worthy of continuous research, as the authors reported that little to no relationships existed when it came to family trajectories of nonincarcerated individuals. This article aided in answering the research question, where a discussion on motivation occurred asking what programs were best suited for offenders who were reentering the community as productive members of society.

Personal Motivation

Miller et al. (2016) recognized the significance of an offender's desire or motivation to attend a drug treatment program. As with most treatment programs being voluntary in prison, it is imperative that offenders who desire to participate in any available treatment programs (Runell, 2017) have the determination to complete the programs while incarcerated or post-release (Miller et al., 2016). Although the research of Miller et al. largely centered on offenders in a substance abuse program, the concept is comparable to prison education. Considering drug programs in prison, Miller et al. noted offenders' commitment to attend treatment programs as a "desire to change." Indeed, the desire or will to change can be one that is internal or external. Incentives like early release from prison sentence or good time, prison work assignment less demanding, or additional wages on prison jobs are external motivation for offenders (Link & Williams, 2017). According to Link and Williams, judges or prison administrators can all provide external motivation for offenders to persuade them to participate in correctional education or other prison programs. This article provided a strong backdrop for a discussion on motivation through RQ2, where it was imperative that in conjunction with treatment programs, educational programs were also offered to persuade prisoners to complete other programs to be successful in the reentry process after release.

To consider how correctional education can best accomplish its specific goals, the offenders' drive or motivation to participate in any programs must be studied and measured. Roth et al. (2017) examined inmates in a Norwegian prison to determine their

motivations for participating in correctional educational programs. The authors determined that the main bases for the inmates participating in correctional education programs were their self-efficacy and the support from family members, peers, and instructors. Cid and Martí (2017) proposed that inmates believe correctional educational programs are necessary to acquire effective skills for a successful reentry into society. In another study, Potts and Bierlein-Palmer (2014) used a purposeful sampling of 11 participants from a pool of approximately 60 subjects from the Michigan Department of Corrections to examine a full range of perceptions and experiences of offenders who participated in community college under the Michigan Prisoner Reentry Initiative program. The authors sought information concerning offenders' experiences in the existing college courses; past educational level of family, peers, and themselves; and any support of family, friends, and correctional staff. The results of the study determined that the offenders enjoyed college and the learning environment. Additionally, the offenders reported that correctional staff, family, and peers encouraged them during the program which gave them a new attitude regarding life after prison. This article brought into alignment with RQ1, where a discussion on motivation and the perceptions of education were warranted in relation to correctional programs.

In an effort to provide awareness into prisoners' motivation to attend education programs, Runell (2018) performed a study of thirty-four formerly incarcerated males who participated in postsecondary education while incarcerated in a northeastern prison in the United States. Runell found that several factors inspired prisoners to participate in correctional education programs, specifically postsecondary education: ability to

associate with new peers of prosocial thinking; improved their overall self-esteem for a better life after incarceration; established a model/example for children and other family members; and means for access to conventional opportunities. The importance of achieving a correctional education is deep-rooted and the consequences of this effort are comprehensive considering the potential impact on prisoners' life while incarcerated and after reintegration into society (Tietjen et al., 2018). Certainly, involvement in correctional education programs can help balance the conflicts experienced by offenders whose lives have been plagued by crime and incarceration. Nevertheless, studies indicate that prisoner participation in education programs can aid in facilitating a desistance from criminal thinking during incarceration (Hall et al., 2016; Ramakers et al., 2017). This literature review was relevant to this current research because it highlighted and identified factors associated with motivating offenders to participate in correctional education.

The stigmatization of offenders having a criminal conviction has widespread effects on their lives after prison. The accessibility to employment, housing, obtaining economic resources, and family relationships suffer for offenders during the reentry process (Evans et al., 2018). Evans et al. (2018) noted that the level of stigmatization within offenders is crucial due to it impacting offenders' ability to reenter society after incarceration. These authors examined the self-stigma of a conviction and incarceration from the perspective of offenders who participated in correctional education while incarcerated. More specifically, their research sought to determine how correctional education influence stigmatization and to the extent offenders are empowered by

correctional education. Data were obtained from 18 formerly incarcerated men through personal interviews. Results suggested that offenders' participation in correctional education encouraged them to improve their lives outside of prison thus weaken their stigmatization of being a convict. Additionally, Evans et al. noted that because of "self-stigmatization consequences" and the condition of the offender some offenders experienced low self-esteem after incarceration which affected reentry integration into society (Hunter, Lanza, Lawlor, Dyson, & Gordon, 2016). In essence, offenders indicated that being incarcerated and labeled as a convict impaired their self-confidence. However, participating in correctional education inspired them to challenge the labeling of a criminal to be successful in society.

Deviant Social Behavior

Deviant social behavior is an important construct to examine when reviewing correctional education programs. Different factors through research have highlighted the fact whether an offender will return to criminal activity postrelease: these included age, marital status, education levels, socioeconomic and employment factors, etc. Therefore, when offering offenders programs while incarcerated, such as that of correctional education programs, research has demonstrated how they can provide both motivation, higher levels of employability, and a decrease in deviant social behavior, leading to success during reentry into the community.

The probabilities of recidivating for African American men depends on a variety of factors associated with the type of restrictions, if any, once discharged from prison, environment, and personal encounters after returning to society (Ramakers et al., 2017).

Hall (2015) performed a study to determine the factors that cause offenders to recidivate to develop an effective desistance plan. Hall noted that previous research reported that several factors such as age, marital status, educational level, socioeconomic, and employment status are good indicators of whether an offender will continue to participate in criminal behavior. Independently, these factors form an inadequate scope of recidivism. However, collectively, a more effective scope of recidivism is formed. Of these factors, Hall considered employment and education are synonymous of offenders being successful or unsuccessful after incarceration. Particularly, limited education decreases the opportunity for viable employment (Wolfer, 2019) which causes offenders to resort deviant behavior to produce income. Hence, education ascends as a risk for offenders to recidivate. Hall's study initially focused on research studies regarding correctional education and recidivism from 1995 through 2010. Due to the limited availability of research during this era, her research was narrowed to 10 studies from 2005 to 2010. Hall concluded that correctional education whether vocational or academic is a great means of reducing recidivism of offenders. This article highlighted the importance of many factors related to the successful reentry of African American men that were being released from prison; therefore, concentrating on RQ1 and the perceptions of correctional education programs and the impacts that they have when reintegrating into society.

According to Hunter et al. (2016), it was imperative to offer adequate programs and services to offenders when they transition back to society. In recent years, strength-based approaches to offender rehabilitation have identified the strengths of offenders and

focused on these strengths to stimulate positive changes in them. In their research, Hunter et al. (2016) sought to determine how strength-based programs are implemented into practice in prison and post-release for offenders, specifically the Community Reentry Initiative. The authors conducted a qualitative analysis of two focus groups consisting of 24 African American men enrolled in a reentry program. The data from the focus groups were examined for themes that suggested a constructive approach to the reentry process of offenders by emphasizing the obstacles each experienced after prison. Hunter et al. (2016) determined that the Community Reentry Initiative program and other strength-based programs allow prison officials a foundation to identify offenders' assets prior to being released. Additionally, the authors noted that the participants described a successful reentry program that comprised of programs responsible to their specific needs and focused on their strengths as opposed to their weakness.

In another research study, Zortman et al. (2016) examined the overall value of a reentry program administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections to assist inmates with reintegration into society after incarceration. The research consisted of 226 interviews and 226 surveys from inmates in four different prison facility in Pennsylvania. Data was abstracted about the reentry program regarding drug usage, quality of the program, and perceptions of prison staff. The findings from the research determined that the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections reentry program improved inmates' attitudes and behaviors for illegal drug abuse, mental health, and antisocial relationships. Particularly, participants described staying away from negative associates which improved their relations with family members and other associates. The participants also

reported that the reentry program helped them further their education and secure employment. It is noted that the participants obtained a greater appreciation for prison staff and depended deeply on their knowledge and support as they reentered society after incarceration.

The Current Literature Research Based Description

All the themes uncovered in this literature review were linked through the attendance and completion of proven prison programs, such as that of correctional education programs and reentry programs. Motivation increased educational achievement, better employment aspects, the involvement of family and the structure of one's family, all can lead to a decrease in deviant behaviors that can lead back to incarceration. African American men appeared to be a larger risk factor of being reincarcerated due to issues of socioeconomics, employment, lack of family involvement, and age; however, research also concluded that for African American men, the higher one's family involvement in conjunction with correctional education programs, the more likely they were to succeed, as this population tend to rely more heavily on housing, emotional support, financial resources, and overall sustainability upon reentry into the community.

The justification to include these themes in the current literature review was the fact that many of these themes were overarching and involved the different factors combined when studying the success of African American men and their reentry into society. For example, correctional education programs promote instances of external motivation, provide offenders with better educational qualifications, increase

employment opportunities post-release, decrease instances of social deviant behavior which can lead to incarceration, and can promote healthier family atmospheres.

Therefore, during this review, all themes were studied in full to provide a complete snapshot of the constructs that promote successful reentry through the completion of correctional education programs.

Many of the studies reviewed in this literature review highlighted how correctional education programs aided offenders with reentry into the community. Sharlein (2018), Smith (2017), and Sokoloff and Schenck-Fontaine, (2017) discussed the importance that correctional education programs had on African American men, where they stated that any education program needed to focus on skill-based training and prosocial behavior training. Additionally, correctional educational programs should also include other important factors that can aid offenders in the reentry process. This could include areas of self-confidence and self-discipline to remain on a positive pathway after reentry has occurred.

Employment was another key factor that was related to African American men and the reentry process when it came to correctional education programs. Many authors discussed the benefits of correctional education programs for offenders in relation to employment during the reentry process. For example, Abrams and Lea (2016), Duwe and Clark (2014), Schnepel (2018), and Terry and Abrams (2017) all have reported a link between correctional education programs, employment opportunities, and successful reentry. Cerda et al. (2015) argued that the absolute role of employment is indicative of the quality of the work, i.e., length of employment or intensity of the work. Additionally,

Ramakers et al. (2017) examined the relationship between recidivism and employment qualities amongst former prisoners. The study revealed that steady or longstanding employment and employments with an advance skill level could help deter deviant behavior, especially among high-risk offenders. Furthermore, the study determined that former prisoners experience a deficiency in a human capital that restricts their opportunity to high skill level jobs.

Finally, other factors appeared to be related to correctional education programs and success in reentry, such as that of family structure and deviant behaviors. For example, authors have discussed how African American men benefit from family involvement when they are incarcerated and completing any correctional education programs, simply because they are more reliant on family members during the reentry process. African American men are more apt to rely on family members for housing, emotional support, financial resources, and overall sustainability upon reentry into the community (McKay, 2016). Correctional education programs appear to have positive effects on offenders in such that it can additionally provide them with motivation and a lower likelihood of indulging in deviant social behaviors during and after reentry.

For the first research question in this proposed study, it aimed to explore the perceptions of correctional education programs and how they had had an impact on African American men during the reentry process. Many studies were able to provide meaningful information about such impacts. Research completed by Walters (2018), Kim and Lee (2019), and Terry and Abrams (2017) all discussed clear benefits of correctional education programs; however, the authors appeared to all agree that further research is

warranted, especially into African American men and the type or quality of the correctional education program being utilized. It was important to note that this research question found that the reentry success was aided by correctional education programs; however, it was important to understand the type and quality of the education program to receive a stronger snapshot of how this benefited African American men. Additionally, Roth et al. (2017) examined inmates in a Norwegian prison to determine their motivations for participating in correctional educational programs. The authors determined that the main basis for the inmates participating in correctional education programs were their self-efficacy and the support from family members, peers, and instructors. Cid and Martí (2017) proposed that inmates believe correctional educational programs are necessary to acquire effective skills for a successful reentry into society.

One of this current study's sub questions focused on what correctional education programs African American men perceived as important for success during the reentry process. There appeared to be limited information in this sub question; however, it was important to note that Cid and Marti (2017) purported that inmates believed that correctional education programs must be aligned so that they could receive the acquired skills when it came to reentry. This was also confirmed by Kim and Lee (2019) and Walters (2018) where they stated that more research needed to be completed into the types and quality of correctional education program to answer this research question.

Significant findings do indicate that correctional education programs appear to benefit men during the reentry process; however, limited studies focus specifically on African American men. The studies that aligned with the African American male

population appeared to require additional research to determine how they were specifically benefited by participating in correctional education programs. Two significant findings appeared from this literature review that included McKay (2016) where they stated African American men were more apt to rely on family members for housing, emotional support, financial resources, and overall sustainability upon reentry into the community, bringing an important conclusion from their research that requires correctional education programs to better understand this alignment when working with this population. Another additional and significant finding included that of Sharlein (2018), Smith, (2017), and Sokoloff & Schenck-Fontaine, (2017), who discussed the importance that correctional education programs had on African American men, where they stated that any education program needed to focus on skill-based training and prosocial behavior training. The literature also highlighted the importance of further research examining the type and quality of correctional education programs being offered to better understand how they can benefit this population.

Other findings that were significant in this review included the other factors that appeared in alignment with correctional education programs: employment opportunities, family structure, motivation, and deviant social behavior. These significant areas justified the need for this study, as the literature highlighted the importance of these other constructs that worked together with correctional education programs and the successful reentry into society.

Within the topic of this study, it was not known specifically how young African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years responded to technical correctional

education programs, especially because it was relatively unknown what type and quality level of the education program that they were receiving. Additionally, other constructs appeared alongside correctional education programs that could affect the reentry process for African American men. For example, motivation levels, family structure and involvement, employment opportunities, and the continuance of deviant social behavior all play a role, which required additional research. Therefore, this study ensured that these factors will be highlighted when completing the research and answering the research questions.

The areas mentioned above that were not known that provided the justification of this study was that African American men experienced these factors differently. This was evidenced by McKay (2016) when they reported that African American men were more apt to rely on family members for housing, emotional support, financial resources, and overall sustainability upon reentry into the community. With further research considering these factors, it would provide a broader and more robust understanding of correctional education programs.

This study filled the gap in the literature that appeared limited when focusing on young African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years and the completion of technical correctional education programs when exploring reentry processes into the community after incarceration. This study followed recommendations of future research that had been found in the studies identified in this review, ensuring that the African American population were represented in this study. Because of issues such as motivation, family structure (McKay, 2016), employment issues, and the continuance of

social deviant behavior, it was important to continue research to fill these gaps to ensure that there is a stronger understanding of how African American men react and experience correctional education programs and the reentry process.

Methodology Literature Review

Dâmboeanu and Ramakers (2019) completed a study that explored the perceptions of prisoners regarding post-release employment after the reentry process into the community. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the authors were able to collect data in the form of semistructured interviews from 154 Romanian prison inmates, asking them open-ended questions that focused on their perceptions regarding post-release employment prospects. Focusing on different factors that included finding a job, finding an un-skilled job, and finding a minimum-wage job; the results of the study indicated that there was a wide variety of feelings regarding these issues. When discussing prisoners' optimistic or pessimistic attitudes, using a qualitative approach allowed them to better understand these perceptions in alignment with prisoners' criminal history, human capital, expectations, and different characteristics that employers will be looking for throughout the hiring process. This would have been difficult to achieve using a quantitative approach or a statistical analysis

Evans et al. (2018) completed a qualitative study that focused on self-stigma and education opportunities while in prison. The authors discussed how a criminal conviction can lower levels of self-esteem, thereby effecting and highlighting barriers to reentry. Using semistructured interviews, the authors explored the perceptions of former prison inmates who participated in higher education programs while incarcerated. The results of

the study found that the perceptions of the prison inmates included that although criminal offences reduce and influences self-esteem, education programs completed during incarceration enhance empowerment and motivation, influencing a stronger reentry experience. When discussing self-stigma, the results also indicated that inmates experience negative self-stigma; however, the participating and completion in educational programs can aid in reducing these levels of self-stigma too, increasing positive experiences and mindsets during reentry into the community.

Linardatou and Manousou (2015) completed a study that explored the role of open and distance higher education in prison detainees in Greece. This study utilized a qualitative methodology, with the different forms of data collection being written surveys, face-to-face semi-structured interviews, and telephone interviews. The results of the study included that there are two forms of education programs found in Greek prisons: open learners and distance learners. The results further highlighted that although most Greek prisons offer educational programs to their inmates, their educational policy does not explicitly state how they can approach distance learning. Therefore, it was important from this research that inmates were offered stronger educational programs to ensure the equity of education as they are a socially excluded group. Using a qualitative methodology allowed for a more robust understanding of the issue, as perceptions, experiences, and thoughts are provided during the data collection process.

Donges (2015) completed a study that focused on juvenile delinquents and their educational experiences. Using a qualitative case study, the authors were able to understand the participants' lived experiences when it came to educational opportunities

while incarcerated. This case study approach allowed the researcher to examine different descriptions of educational experiences from the juvenile delinquents and factors that impacted learning from both a positive and negative approach. A case study allowed for a stronger approach and a more reliable data set, as the authors discussed they were able to complete data triangulation during the study. They utilized three different data collection methods, allowing them to better understand the lived experiences of the phenomenon being explored. This was useful to understand from this current study, as the researcher was also aiming to understand lived experiences, from a phenomenological perspective.

Bennett (2015) completed a study that focused on understanding offenders' perspectives when it came to educational programs in a southeastern state. Completing a multiple case study, the author collected data by completing semi-structured interviews to capture the participants' perspectives. Additionally, a multiple case study was beneficial as it allowed for triangulation of data- increasing reliability- as the data was collected from more than one site. The purpose of this study was to explore the correctional educational experiences within the context of post-incarceration employment. The results of the study indicated that offenders found that the completion of education programs while incarcerated allowed them to be supported during reentry and allowing them greater opportunities to secure employment after being released. The education programs found in the prison were helpful in the sense that it provided the participants with the skills and education to obtain a job and be successful at it at the same time.

Starnes (2018) completed a study that focused on understanding the perceptions of inmates who received education services while incarcerated. Exploring this issue

within prison systems throughout the state of Missouri, the author's aim was to explore the different education programs and understand the perceptions of inmates and how the education programs could affect their recidivism. Using a qualitative approach, the author collected the data by completing semi-structured interviews at two prisons within the state of Missouri. The findings of the study included that inmates found educational programs to be effective and beneficial while incarcerated, but also felt that recidivism would be declined by participating in such educational programs. Again, this study highlighted the importance of a qualitative methodology when approaching a topic such as educational programs found in correctional institutions. This was because it allowed the participants to describe in their own words their thoughts, perceptions, and lived experiences, providing with a more robust understanding of the problem and a more in-depth dataset.

The Methodology Literature Based Description

Many studies have been completed that were in alignment with this current topic and followed a similar methodology. Because the purpose of this study was to better understand how young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceived their lived experiences of technical correctional education programs and how such programs aided in reducing recidivism during their reentry process, a qualitative approach was best suited. It is difficult to understand in-depth perceptions when utilizing a quantitative methodology, as the participants are not necessarily in control of the information that they are providing, as the questions are typically presented in a closed-ended format. Therefore, studies such as Bennet (2015), Starnes (2018), Donges (2015),

and Linardatou and Manousou (2015) have completed qualitative studies that focused on perceptions and lived experiences of inmates, while also exploring the different constructs such as that of correctional education programs, reentry issues, and recidivism. All these studies utilized semistructured interviews as the main source of data collection, which was in alignment with this current study. Open-ended questions posed to participants during a semi-structured interview allowed for a robust collection of data, allowing the researcher to complete an in-depth qualitative analysis that aided in answering the research questions. Because this was a qualitative study, the research questions were open-ended in nature, signaling an importance to follow a qualitative methodology to appropriately answer them in alignment with the theoretical framework.

Conclusion

The findings of this literature review did indicate that correctional education programs appeared to benefit men during the reentry process; however, limited studies focused specifically on African American men. The studies that did align with the African American male population appeared to require more research to determine how they are specifically benefited by participating in correctional education programs. Significant findings appeared from this literature review included McKay (2016) where he stated African American men were more apt to rely on family members for housing, emotional support, financial resources, and overall sustainability upon reentry into the community, bringing an important conclusion from their research that required correctional education programs to better understand this alignment when working with this population. Another additional and significant finding included that of Sharlein

(2018), Smith, (2017), and Sokoloff and Schenck-Fontaine, (2017), who discussed the importance that correctional education programs had on African American men, where they stated that any education program needed to focus on skill-based training and prosocial behavior training.

Other findings that were significant in this review included the other factors that appeared in alignment with correctional education programs: employment opportunities, family structure, motivation, and deviant social behavior. These significant areas justified the need for this study, as the literature highlighted the importance of these other constructs that work together with correctional education programs and the successful reentry into society. The literature also highlighted the importance of further research examining the type and quality of correctional education programs being offered to better understand how they can benefit this population.

Within the topic of this study, it was not known specifically how young African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years responded to technical correctional education programs, especially because it was relatively unknown what type and quality level of the education program that they were receiving. Additionally, other constructs appeared alongside correctional education programs that affect the reentry process for African American men. For example, motivation levels, family structure and involvement, employment opportunities, and the continuance of deviant social behavior all play a role, which require additional research. Therefore, this study ensured that these factors were highlighted when completing the research and answering the research questions. The areas mentioned above that were not known and provided the justification

of this study was that African American men experienced these factors differently. With further research considering these factors, it was able to provide a broader and more robust understanding of correctional education programs.

This study filled the gap in the literature that appeared limited when focusing on young African American men between the ages of 20 and 30 years and the completion of technical correctional education programs when exploring reentry processes into the community after incarceration. This study followed recommendations of future research that had been found in the studies identified in this review, ensuring that the African American population were represented in this study. Because of issues such as motivation, family structure (McKay, 2016), employment issues, and the continuance of social deviant behavior, it was important to continue research to fill these gaps to ensure that there was a stronger understanding of how African American men reacted and experienced correctional education programs and the reentry process.

This chapter provided a robust review of the literature that focused on correctional education programs, reentry issues, and recidivism. The next chapter will present an overview of the methodology that will include a discussion on the research methodology and design, an overview of the research questions, and the sample and population from which this study was drawn from. Other discussions in the methodology chapter will include data collection procedures, the study's procedures, and the data analysis plan. The methodology will conclude with a discussion on the study's assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and ethical assurances.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

There was a dilemma in the criminal justice system in the United States regarding the lack of knowledge pertaining to how correctional education programs prepared African American men for the reentry process (Baranger et al. 2018). Despite the correctional education programs provided to them in prison, African American men continued to reoffend and be arrested at a rate higher than other races in the United States (Capers, 2016; Pew Research Center, 2018; Smith, 2017). Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to learn how young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceived their experiences of technical correctional education programs and how such programs aided in reducing recidivism during their reentry process from incarceration.

This chapter will provide an overview of the study's methodology that includes the design that the researcher is using as well as his role in the research. Additionally, the chapter will discuss the setting and sample, the data collection procedures used, and the data analysis plan. The chapter will then conclude with a discussion of the trustworthiness of the research, ethical considerations that will be followed, and will conclude with a summary of the presentation of the results.

Research Design and Rationale

This study was guided by the following research question and secondary questions:

RQ1: How do young, rural African American men perceive their lived experiences of technical correctional education programs during the reentry process?

SQ1: What are young, rural African American men's' perceptions of technical correctional education programs while incarcerated?

SQ2: What technical correctional programs do young, rural African American men perceive as being important for a successful reentry into society?

The phenomenon explored in this study was the problems that young African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years experienced when being released from incarceration after participating in technical correctional education programs. This phenomenon aided in addressing the problem, with the intent to create a strong purpose, which was to gain an understanding of the perspectives of young African American men concerning technical correctional education programs in reducing recidivism during their reentry process.

A qualitative research method best answered the research questions, as the questions posed were open-ended in nature and supported the participants in providing data to the researcher that is naturalistic in nature- aiding in gaining a broader understanding of the topic of the participants' lived experiences and perceptions about the phenomenon. Additionally, a qualitative study gathered non-numerical data, which allowed for a deeper study not only into what phenomenon individuals were experiencing, but also that of why they were experiencing the phenomenon (Moustakas,1994).

This study utilized a qualitative phenomenological design that allowed the researcher to complete open-ended interviews that allowed the participants to describe their experiences and perceptions. This allowed for robust data to be collected that answered the research questions in a matter that not only concentrated on what the phenomenon was, but how individuals described it through their experiences (Moustakas, 1994). The type of qualitative phenomenological approach that was used was hermeneutic phenomenology. Hermeneutic phenomenology was utilized for researchers to interpret a phenomenon, by shedding light and reflecting on a lived experience (Moustakas, 1994). Therefore, in this study, hermeneutic phenomenology focused on the lived experiences of young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years and their perceptions and lived experiences of technical correctional education programs and how such programs aided in reducing recidivism during their reentry process.

Other qualitative research designs were considered but ultimately rejected such as that of ethnography and grounded theory. Ethnography is a qualitative inquiry where data is collected via observations from the researcher. An observational study by itself would be difficult to answer the research questions, as the researcher aimed to better understand lived experiences and perceptions through conversational communication. Ethnography also considers experiences from a communal or collective perspective, whereas phenomenology aims to understand individual perspectives (Fetterman, 2019). Additionally, grounded theory was also considered for this study but rejected, as grounded theory aims to understand the meaning of a study by generating a theory.

Qualitative descriptive phenomenological designs are a more philosophical approach, where a meaning of a study is viewed through a theoretical model or lens. Therefore, grounded theory was rejected as this current study is following the theoretical theory of the institutional theory.

Using a qualitative phenomenological design was appropriate for this study, as the researcher aimed to gain an understanding of how young African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceived their experiences concerning technical correctional education programs in reducing recidivism during their reentry process. Because this study examined individual perceptions and lived experiences of the participants, this methodology and research design was appropriate. By using this methodology and research design, the researcher provided a more robust set of data from the participants that highlighted the participants' perceptions and lived experiences, more so than collective responses from other qualitative designs, or mathematical data for quantitative studies.

Role of the Researcher

In this study, the researcher assumed the role of a participant, where he used any knowledge that he had gained, to interact with the participants individually, gaining trust and a robust set of qualitative data (Moustakas, 1994). When in this role, the researcher additionally asked follow-up questions with tact and understanding to better understand the participants' responses, which aided in ensuring that the research questions were fully answered.

When collecting the data, the researcher used semistructured interviews. As the role of the researcher was to be a participant in the data collection procedures, the researcher was the major instrument that collected the data, by asking each participant the same 10 interview questions. Each interview was conducted in a private environment that supported confidentiality, as well as the interviews lasting for approximately 45 minutes each. The researcher did not have any preexisting relationships with the participants and did not know them personally. To limit personal bias entering the study, the researcher did not recruit any individuals as participants that he personally knew or had a pre-existing relationship with.

Researcher bias can occur in qualitative studies; therefore, it was important to find ways to limit this phenomenon over the course of the study. To limit researcher bias, the researcher created strict criteria that was used when selecting interested individuals into the study. Other ways that the researcher limited researcher bias was by creating an interview protocol, that allowed a panel of three individuals with similar educational and professional experiences to review the semi-structured interview questions and provide feedback to the researcher, discussing how the questions could be better aligned with the study's problem, purpose, research questions, theoretical framework, and methodology. The researcher would have made any changes as advised after discussing this with his university's chair. It is important to note that the panel of experts did not recommend the researcher to make any changes to the research questions.

Ethical issues that needed to be addressed by the researcher was the protection of private information that was collected during the study. The researcher highlighted how

confidentiality would be maintained throughout the study and had each participant sign a consent form and confidentiality agreement before participating. Additionally, each participant had an opportunity to remove themselves from the study at any time, as well as asking any questions to the researcher. When protecting confidential information, the researcher ensured that all private information was kept in a locked filing cabinet or a password-protected electronic file folder for a period of seven years after the study was completed. The data will be destroyed after this time, which is in accordance with the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

Data were gathered from five participants who had been released over the past year from a prison and who had completed a technical correctional education program. Data were gathered via semistructured interviews, as it allowed the participants to provide the researcher with their perceptions and lived experiences in their own words, providing a more robust dataset. The researcher followed a purposive sampling strategy, where he selected individuals to join the research study, if they met the criteria. This sampling method allowed the researcher to select individuals to the study using his own judgment and expertise (Etikan et al., 2016).

Because this study's purpose was to better understand how young, rural African American men perceived their lived experiences of technical correctional education programs and how such programs aided in reducing recidivism during their reentry process, the following criteria were used during recruitment:

1. Each participant identified as a male.
2. Each participant identified as an African American.
3. Each participant was between the ages of 20 to 30 years.
4. Each participant had been incarcerated for a period of one year.
5. Each participant had successfully completed a technical correctional education program while incarcerated.
6. Each individual had been released for a period of at least six months.

By meeting these criteria, the study stayed in alignment with the research questions and the problem being explored, which was that current correctional education programs tended to be inadequate to address problems African American men faced when reintegrating into society. Thus, two-thirds of African American men continue to engage in criminal activities once released from prison which negatively impact their families, communities, and economic resources. The target population of African American men being released from prison and meeting the criteria of this study was approximately 60 individuals; however, Moustakas (1994) reported that a qualitative phenomenological study should have a minimum of 10 to 15 individuals who participate throughout the data collection process. The final number of participants depended on data saturation, where the researcher identified a point during data collection where no new information was being collected from the participants. Data saturation signified redundancy in the data collection process, highlighting the need to stop collecting data, which occurred after the fifth semistructured interview (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Because the purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to better understand how young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceived their lived experiences of technical correctional education programs and how such programs aided in reducing recidivism during their reentry process, it was important to ensure that African American adult males participated in this study. Other characteristics that were important to this study included that each participant had successfully completed a technical correctional education program while incarcerated, as well as having been released for a period of six months. A six-month period of being released from prison was important, as it allowed the participants to discuss any reentry issues that they had experienced post release.

After the researcher's study was approved by his Institutional Review Board (IRB), the researcher reached out to halfway houses that provided support to inmates during reentry. The researcher obtained site approval to contact the individuals and recruited individuals via in person or through phone calls and electronic platforms. The researcher provided the site with a flyer highlighting the study's purpose and aims, as well as requesting interested individuals to contact the researcher to participate. Once an interested individual contacted the researcher and expressed interest in the study, the researcher ensured that they met the eligibility criteria and had them review and sign a consent form. The consent form provided information to the participant regarding the problem and purpose of the study, what their role in the research was, level of risk or harm in participating in the study, issues of confidentiality, and contact information.

Once signed, the researcher then made an appointment for them to complete a semistructured interview in a confidential setting.

Instrumentation

The researcher was the data collection instrument in this study as he followed a participatory role by completing semistructured interviews. Semistructured interview questions were used to collect data and were open-ended in nature to allow the participants to provide a robust dataset to the researcher that demonstrates a strong understanding of the perceptions and lived experiences in conjunction with the problem that was being studied. Semistructured interviews allowed the participants to take control of the data collection process, by providing the researcher with what they thought was important when it came to answering the questions. Therefore, by presenting open-ended questions to the participants that were in alignment with the study's problem statement, purpose, research questions, and methodology, aided in ensuring that sufficient data were gathered that was in each participants' own words is appropriate in length to obtain themes that could answer the research questions.

Each semi-structured interview lasted for approximately 45 minutes and were conducted via Zoom video conferencing to meet the CDC's guidelines on social distancing due to COVID-19. During each of semistructured interviews, the researcher asked open-ended interview questions that aided in answering the study's research questions. Each semistructured interview was electronically recorded and transcribed in preparation for data analysis.

After each participant completed their semistructured interview, the researcher met with them one week later for a period of 15 to 30 minutes and reviewed the interview transcripts. This was where each participant completed member checking, to increase the reliability of the data that were collected. When reviewing the transcripts, if the participants deemed that some information was inaccurate, then they had an opportunity to request changes made by the researcher, who would go through the electronic recording and make any necessary changes. During the final meeting, the researcher also discussed how the study had ended and reviewed the confidentiality aspects of the research. It is important to note that the participants did not report any inaccuracies in their interview transcripts.

Basis for Researcher Developed Instruments

It was imperative for the researcher to develop his own instrument, as this study explored a phenomenon aimed to better understand the perceptions of participants who were experiencing a unique phenomenon. Therefore, the researcher did not utilize a predeveloped data instrument collection method. To answer the identified research questions, the researcher utilized semistructured interviews with the participants, where he asked each participant the same 10 open-ended questions. When drafting the semistructured interview questions, the researcher created an interview protocol, where he requested three individuals with similar educational and professional experiences as him, to review the 10 open-ended questions that he asked each participant.

After reviewing the interview questions, the study's problem and purpose, the research questions, the theoretical framework, and the methodology, the three individuals

who acted as a review panel provided the researcher with any recommended changes that would be needed to ensure a stronger alignment. The researcher and his university Chair would review the requested changes and make any changes accordingly. Additionally, the interview protocol also mapped out an exact way to complete each semistructured interview. This ensured that each participant was asked the same questions, keeping the data collection method in alignment with the study.

To ensure of the semistructured interview questions' validity, the researcher completed a pilot study to ensure that the research questions could be answered based upon the identified interview questions that the researcher asked each participant. The aim of the pilot study was to determine the effectiveness of the semi-structured interview questions, as it allowed the researcher to be alerted to any interview questions that may not make sense, as well as troubleshooting any unforeseeable issues in the data collection process (Ismail et al., 2018).

Procedures for Pilot Study

The purpose of conducting a pilot study in this current research was twofold: (a) a pilot study alerted the researcher to any unforeseeable issues within the data collection process; and (b) a pilot study allowed the researcher to determine how the participants would answer the interview questions, if they made sense, and if they would answer the research questions (Ismail et al., 2018). Therefore, when conducting the pilot study for this study, the researcher recruited three individuals. The first three individuals who were recruited to participate in the pilot study were treated as actual participants; however, their responses to the semistructured interview questions were not used in the data

analysis that occurred outside of the pilot study. When completing the pilot study, the researcher followed the interview protocol that he had previously developed with the aid of the panel of experts, and then asked each of the three pilot study participants the same open-ended questions. Each pilot study interview was conducted on Zoom video conferencing and was electronically recorded and transcribed; the participants provided the researcher with feedback regarding the questions that they were asked. Within their feedback, the pilot study participants were able to provide the researcher with information on how they perceived the questions as being easy to understand and whether the questions made sense in relation to the phenomenon being explored (Majid et al., 2017). Before beginning the pilot study, the researcher received approval from his university's Institutional Review Board (IRB approval number: 05-17-21-0140054).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Before beginning the study and collecting any data, the researcher ensured that he had received approval from his university's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The researcher additionally obtained site approval to contact the individuals and recruited individuals via in person or through phone calls and electronic platforms. The researcher provided the site with a flyer highlighting the study's purpose and aims, as well as requesting interested individuals to contact the researcher to participate. Once an interested individual contacted the researcher and expressed interest in the study, the researcher ensured that they met the eligibility criteria and then had them review and sign a consent form. The consent form provided information to the participant regarding the problem and purpose of the study, what their role in the research was, level of risk or

harm in participating in the study, issues of confidentiality, and contact information. Once signed, the researcher then made an appointment for them to complete a semistructured interview in a confidential setting.

When completing data collection, the researcher scheduled each of the semistructured interviews with the participants at a time that was convenient for both parties; the interviews were conducted via Zoom video conferencing to ensure that the researcher followed the CDC's recommendations for social distancing in response to COVID-19. During each of the semistructured interviews, the researcher asked each of the participants the same open-ended questions. He additionally asked any follow-up questions to clarify any responses. Each of the interviews were electronically recorded via Zoom and then transcribed in preparation for data analysis. Once the researcher transcribed each of the semistructured interviews, he then forwarded a copy of the transcript to each participant and had them review the transcript for accuracy. The participants then provided recommendations for the researcher to amend the transcripts if they did not portray exactly what the participant said.

Data Analysis Plan

Because the data collected occurred during semistructured interviews that aided in answering both research questions, each interview was electronically recorded and transcribed in preparation for data analysis. When preparing the data for analysis, the researcher ensured that each semistructured interview question was in alignment with the research question that they were aiming to answer. This ensured that he was following

the interview protocol that was initially set-up to support the data collection and subsequent analysis.

Once the semistructured interviews had been transcribed, the researcher began open coding via a constant comparative method. Because the researcher was completing a phenomenological study, a constant comparative method was best used as the researcher could then breakdown, examine, compare, conceptualize, and categorize the data (Lin, 2017). A constant comparative method fitted best within a phenomenological framework as it allowed the researcher to better understand the participants' derived everyday experiences as highlighted by the data (Knotten et al., 2017). This was because the purpose of a phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2016). When completing the data analysis, the researcher completed the coding process by labeling concepts, defining, and developing categories, to identify any themes that emerged from the dataset. The researcher additionally utilized an inductive approach to coding, allowing him to ensure that the study stayed in alignment with the theoretical framework that it was following. An inductive coding approach was also in alignment with phenomenological research, as it allowed the researcher to convert raw, qualitative data into more manageable experiences, which could be studied within the theoretical framework that guided the study (Liu, 2016). Following these procedures ensured that the researcher linked the interview protocol with the theoretical framework and research questions. To ensure continuous alignment while coding, the researcher utilized a simple coding framework as identified in Table 1 below:

Table 1*Coding Framework*

Theory	Primary Code	Secondary code	Interview question
Bandura's Theory of Self Efficacy	Primary Code #1	Secondary Code #1	1, 2, 3, 4, etc.
Institutional Theory	Primary Code #2	Secondary Code #2	1, 2, 3, 4, etc.

The researcher used NVivo, version 12, which was a qualitative software program used to assist in data analysis at most research universities. NVivo can assist researcher with organizing and analyzing data, as well as aiding in the coding of text via words and phrases that the participants have used. In addition, the researcher also used a qualitative codebook that highlighted the emerged themes from NVivo, while highlighting participant quotations that supported the themes.

When discussing the findings, the researcher also discussed any discrepant cases by highlighting them in the text. Because qualitative research involves themes that have emerged from the dataset, it does not necessarily mean that all individuals who were interviewed agreed on the same issues or experiences. Therefore, it was important to highlight these instances in the discussion of the findings.

Issues of Trustworthiness

In this study, the researcher ensured of trustworthiness by highlighting credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility ensured that the results of the study were believable; transferability discussed how the research could be generalized or transferred to other locations or settings; dependability aided in ensuring that the

interview questions that were asked to each of the participants were in alignment with the study's problem, purpose, and research questions; and confirmability ensured that the results were credible, where the researcher completed member checking (Connelly, 2016).

When establishing credibility, the researcher ensured the triangulation of data. The triangulation of data ensured that there was more than one form of data collection (Noble & Heale, 2019). In this study, although the primary form of data collection was that of semi-structured interviews, the researcher also took notes on any non-verbal signals during the interview. This included body movements, emotions, and/or other areas of non-verbal behavior that may not necessarily be found through written format.

Transferability discusses how the research can be generalized or transferred to other locations or settings; however, was a limitation in this study, as the researcher was only concentrating on African American males who had been released from incarceration over the past one year (Hadi & Closs, 2016). Therefore, to ensure transferability, the researcher created criterion that was followed during participant selection. The criterion included:

1. Each participant identified as a male.
2. Each participant identified as African American.
3. Each participant was between the ages of 20 to 30 years.
4. Each participant had been incarcerated for a period of one year.
5. Each participant had successfully completed a technical correctional education program while incarcerated.

6. Each individual had been released for a period of at least six months.

Dependability aided in ensuring that the interview questions that were asked to each of the participants were in alignment with the study's problem, purpose, and research questions (Connelly, 2016). In this instance, the researcher ensured that a panel of experts reviewed the interview questions and provided feedback as to how to ensure that they were in alignment with the study (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). After receiving feedback from the panel of reviewers, the researcher discussed the recommended changes with his chair and would have made any changes accordingly.

Finally, confirmability ensured that the results were credible, where the researcher completed member checking. Member checking occurred when the researcher provided a written transcript of the interview to each participant for them to provide feedback that ensured that the content of each interview was correct (Birt et al., 2016). Again, if a participant reported that the transcript was not accurate, the researcher returned to the audio transcript to determine if any inaccuracies existed, while discussing the issue with his university's chair.

To determine the trustworthiness of the data, the researcher followed intra and intercoder reliability. Intracoder reliability occurred when the researcher ensured that there were two processes in relation to the coding and analysis that was taking place (MacPhail et al., 2016). In this study, the researcher utilized NVivo 12.0 and a qualitative codebook to ensure that the data were analyzed with limited bias. NVivo is a qualitative software program that aids in developing codes and themes from participant responses and is utilized at most research universities. A qualitative codebook allowed the

researcher to become familiar with the content and place the codes into themes while highlighting participant responses that substantiated each theme.

Additionally, the researcher also followed intercoder reliability, where two different individuals completed the coding process. In this instance, the researcher hired a qualitative analyst who had no stake in the researcher, to code the data to increase reliability. The researcher ensured that the second qualitative analyst signed the appropriate confidentiality form to protect the participants' private information.

Ethical Procedures

Before beginning this study, the researcher obtained approval from his university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) as well as site approval for where he interacted with and recruited participants. After approval had been obtained from both bodies, the researcher presented a consent form to interested individuals that highlighted their rights to privacy and protection from harm. In this study, the level of harm was minimal, as the researcher asked open-ended questions to young adult African American males between the ages of 20 to 30 years who had previously been incarcerated in a prison. Open-ended questions allowed the participants to provide as much or as little information as they felt comfortable with, and the consent form highlighted how they could remove themselves from the study at any time, without any repercussions. During the semistructured interviews, the participants did not have to answer any question that they felt uncomfortable in answering, which was provided and agreed to in an overview during the reviewing of the consent form.

There were many permissions that were required before starting the study, such as IRN, IRB, and site approval. The researcher's chair and university's committee approved this study before it is sent to the Institutional Review Board. This allowed for changes and revisions to be made to ensure that the protection of human participants in this research was strong. After the proposal had been approved, the researcher then applied for IRB approval, further discussing how would carry out the study and protect the rights of the participants. Finally, the researcher obtained site approval from a halfway house that housed recently released inmates. This is where the researcher submitted a flyer where interested individuals could contact him at their convenience. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved all manners in which recruitment of a research study took place. The IRB required a copy of any materials that were posted at approved sites, including site approval letters, which aimed to ensure that the treatment of human participants was ethical and confidential.

Before the participants completed their semistructured interviews, each had an opportunity to review, agree, and sign a consent form. This form highlighted how the research would be carried out, along with what was expected from each of the participants. For example, the consent form highlighted how confidentiality would be maintained during this study, as well as the low or minimal risk that was involved in participation. Additionally, each participant had the right to refuse to participate and could remove themselves from the study at any time and without any repercussions. If this occurred within this study, the researcher agreed for the participant to not answer the question or remove themselves at any time. Any information that was collected from the

participant prior to deciding to remove themselves from the study would be deleted, and another participant could then be recruited. When gaining access to participants, each individual participating in this study signed a consent form (See Appendix A). Additionally, the researcher also obtained site approval to recruit individuals (see Appendix B).

All data that were collected in this study remained confidential. To maintain confidentiality, participants were not referred by their full name, instead being referred to in a numerical fashion (e.g., Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.). Additionally, any other identifying information was excluded such as the prison that they were associated with, exact names of correctional education programs they completed, or family member names.

All hard copies of data that were collected (signed consent forms, etc.) were stored in a locked filing cabinet located inside the researcher's personal home office located at his residence. All electronic data were stored on a password-protected and encrypted removeable hard-drive, locked inside the same filing cabinet. Only the researcher had immediate access to this data, and all data will be destroyed after a period of seven years. Electronic data will be destroyed by deleting the content off the removeable hard-drive and then from the computer, while hard copies of data will be shredded by the researcher.

Presentation of the Results

After completing the data analysis, the researcher will present the results in the form of tables, charts, and the exact quotation of participant statements collected during

the interviews. Tables and charts can help highlight any demographic variables that are collected during the study to determine participant eligibility criteria, whereas participant quotations can aid in assisting the researcher in displaying how exactly themes emerged from the data that was collected.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to learn how young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceived their experiences of technical correctional education programs and how such programs aided in reducing recidivism during their reentry process from incarceration. This study followed a qualitative phenomenological design and followed a purposive sampling procedure when recruiting participants. The researcher acted as the main instrument in the data collection process, as he conducted semistructured interviews with five participants. The final number of participants was determined by data saturation, where the researcher experienced redundancies when it came to collecting the data. To ensure trustworthiness of the study, the researcher ensured that he followed an interview protocol, completed member checking, and followed the sampling criteria to increase the reliability of the dataset. Ethical assurances with the participants were highlighted, as the researcher had each participant sign a consent form that discussed confidentiality, level of harm to be experienced in the study, contact information, and statements that allowed the participants to remove themselves from the study at any time. The researcher followed an interpretive analysis approach using both NVivo, version 12 and a qualitative codebook.

The next chapter is Chapter 4 that will provide the presentation of the results. The chapter will begin by providing an overview of the data collection process, and the instruments that were used to collect the data, along with demographic information that was collected from the participants. The findings will also be discussed by the researcher highlighting the different themes that emerged from the dataset, as well as demonstrating how these themes emerged in relation to direct quotations of the participants. Chapter 4 will conclude with an overview of the research questions being answered in full.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to learn how young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceived their experiences of technical correctional education programs and how such programs aided in reducing recidivism during their reentry process from incarceration. This study was guided by the following research questions and secondary research questions:

RQ1: How do young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceive their lived experiences of technical correctional education programs during the reentry process?

SQ1: What are young, rural African American men's' perceptions of technical correctional education programs while incarcerated?

SQ2: What technical correctional programs do young, rural African American men perceive as being important for a successful reentry into society?

This chapter will provide an overview of the study's results. The chapter will begin by discussing the participant demographic characteristics, as well as restating the data collection procedures, how the data were analyzed, and evidence of trustworthiness. The chapter will then conclude with an overview of the results, and the identification of any discrepant cases.

Demographics

This study included five participants. Initially, the researcher had aimed to collect data from 10 to 15 participants; however, during the data collection process he

experienced data saturation on the fifth interview. When experiencing data saturation, the researcher identified redundancies in the collected data, signally no new information that was collected. The five participants presented to the semistructured interviews with a variety of demographic characteristics as identified in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Participant Demographic Data

	Age	Program Attended	Length of Incarceration	Time Released	Number of Times Incarcerated
Participant 1	29	GED	30 months	2 years	2
Participant 2	30	GED	120 months	1 year	2
Participant 3	25	Drug Program	7 months	2 years	4
Participant 4	24	MRT	84 months	1 year	25
Participant 5	25	MRT	21 months	6 months	3

As depicted in Table 2, the participants presented to the study representing a variety of ages, ranging from 24 to 30 years. The mean age for all participants was that of 27 years. Additionally, the participants reported attending programs while incarcerated. Two participants reported completing their GED, while one participant reported attending a drug program. One of the participants who received their GED reported that they had asked the prison if they could attend a technical program; however, the participant reported that they did not offer one. Instead, he reported that he opted to take the GED course instead. The other two participants reported that they attended a moral reconnection therapy (MRT).

When it came to the length of incarceration, the participants reported that they were incarcerated anywhere between 7 months and 120 months. The mean length of incarceration for all participants was that of 52.4 months. The participants also reported that they had been released from anywhere between six months to 2 years. The mean length of time released of all participants was that of 1.3 years. Finally, the participants reported that they had been incarcerated from two times to 25 times in their life. The mean number of times incarcerated between all participants was that of 7.2 times.

Data Collection

The researcher only began the data collection after he had received approval from both his university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and site approval from the halfway house where he completed recruitment. When recruiting participants for this study, the researcher provided the site with a flyer highlighting the study's purpose and aims, as well as requesting interested individuals to contact the researcher to participate. Once an interested individual contacted the researcher and expressed interest in the study, the researcher ensured that they met the eligibility criteria and had them review and sign a consent form. The consent form provided information to the participant regarding the problem and purpose of the study, what their role in the research would be, level of risk or harm in participating in the study, issues of confidentiality, and contact information. Once signed, the researcher then made an appointment for them to complete a semistructured interview in a confidential setting. Each participant met the following criteria when participating in this study:

1. Each participant was a male.
2. Each participant identified as an African American.
3. Each participant was between the ages of 20 to 30 years.
4. Each participant had been incarcerated for a period of one year.
5. Each participant had successfully completed a technical correctional education program while incarcerated.
6. Each individual had been released for a period of at least six months.

The researcher conducted semistructured interviews with each participant via a private Zoom video conferencing session, which was in alignment with the CDC's social distancing guidelines in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the interviews, the researcher asked each participant the same 10 open-ended questions where the participants could answer in any manner that they saw fit. The researcher electronically recorded and transcribed each interview in preparation for data analysis and completed member checking to ensure the information reflected exactly what each participant said. The researcher aimed to collect data from 10 to 15 participants; however, experienced data saturation on the fifth interview, signaling the need for the data collection process to come to an end.

Data Analysis

Once the semistructured interviews had been transcribed, the researcher began open coding via a constant comparative method. Because the researcher was completing a phenomenological study, a constant comparative method was best used as the researcher could then breakdown, examine, compare, conceptualize, and categorize the

data (Lin, 2017). A constant comparative method fitted best within a phenomenological framework as it allowed the researcher to better understand the participants' derived everyday experiences as highlighted by the data (Knotten et al., 2017). This is because the purpose of a phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2016). When completing the data analysis, the researcher completed the coding process by labeling concepts, defining and developing categories, to identify any themes that emerged from the dataset. The researcher additionally utilized an inductive approach to coding, allowing him to ensure that the study stayed in alignment with the theoretical framework that it was following. An inductive coding approach is also in alignment with phenomenological research, as it allowed the researcher to convert raw, qualitative data into more manageable experiences, which could be studied within the theoretical framework that guided the study (Liu, 2016). Following these procedures ensured that the researcher linked the interview protocol with the theoretical framework and research questions.

The researcher used NVivo, version 12, which is a qualitative software program used to assist in data analysis at most research universities. NVivo can assist researcher with organizing and analyzing data, as well as aiding in the coding of text via words and phrases that the participants have used. In addition, the researcher also used a qualitative codebook that highlighted the emerged themes identified from NVivo, while highlighting participant quotations that supported the themes. After completing the data analysis, four themes emerged from the dataset that included:

1. Lack of choices on technical correctional programs.

2. Helps provide employment opportunities to inmates postrelease.
3. Strengthens family relationships.
4. Reduces recidivism

Evidence of Trustworthiness

When establishing credibility, the researcher ensured the triangulation of data. The triangulation of data ensured that there as more than one form of data collection (Noble & Heale, 2019). In this study, although the primary form of data collection was that of semistructured interviews, the researcher also took notes on any nonverbal signals during the interview. This included body movements, emotions, and/or other areas of nonverbal behavior that may not necessarily be found through written format. Transferability discusses how the research can be generalized or transferred to other locations or settings; however, this was a limitation in this study, as the researcher was only concentrating on African American males who had been released from incarceration over the past one year (Hadi & Closs, 2016).

Dependability aided in ensuring that the interview questions that were asked to each of the participants were in alignment with the study's problem, purpose, and research questions (Connelly, 2016). In this instance, the researcher ensured that a panel of experts reviewed the interview questions and provided feedback as to how to ensure that they were in alignment with the study (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). After receiving feedback from the panel of reviewers, the researcher discussed the recommended changes with his chair and would make any changes accordingly. It is important to note that the

panel of experts did not recommend any changes to be made to the semistructured interview questions.

Finally, confirmability ensured that the results were credible, where the researcher completed member checking. Member checking occurred when the researcher provided a written transcript of the interview to each participant for them to provide feedback that ensured that the content of each interview was correct (Birt et al., 2016). Again, if a participant reported that the transcript was not accurate, the researcher would return to the audio transcript to determine if any inaccuracies existed, while discussing the issue with his university's chair. It is important to note that none of the participants reported any inaccuracies within their interview transcripts.

To determine the trustworthiness of the data, the researcher followed intra and intercoder reliability. Intracoder reliability occurred when the researcher ensured that there were two processes in relation to the coding and analysis that was taking place (MacPhail et al., 2016). In this study, the researcher used NVivo 12.0 and a qualitative codebook to ensure that the data were analyzed with limited bias. NVivo is a qualitative software program that aided in developing codes and themes from participant responses and is utilized at most research universities. A qualitative codebook allowed the researcher to become familiar with the content and place the codes into themes while highlighting participant responses that substantiated each theme.

Additionally, the researcher also followed intercoder reliability, where two different individuals completed the coding process. In this instance, the researcher hired a qualitative analyst who had no stake in the researcher, to code the data to increase

reliability. The researcher ensured that the second qualitative analyst signed the appropriate confidentiality form to protect the participants' private information.

Results

The results of this analysis were in alignment with the study's research question and secondary research question.

RQ1: How do young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceive their lived experiences of technical correctional education programs during the reentry process?

SQ1: What are young, rural African American men's' perceptions of technical correctional education programs while incarcerated?

The first secondary research question under Research Question 1 aimed to understand what the perceptions were of young, rural African American men regarding technical correctional education programs while incarcerated. Within this secondary research question, two themes emerged from the dataset: (a) lack of choices in technical correctional programs, and (b) helps provide employment opportunities to inmates' post release.

Finding 1: Lack of Choices in Technical Correctional Programs

The first finding that emerged from the dataset highlighted how the participants perceived that there was a lack of choices when it comes to technical correctional programs when incarcerated. Table 3 highlights the participants that contributed to this finding, and Table 4 highlights the codes that supported the finding.

Table 3*Finding 1: Participant Contribution*

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total	Percent
Finding 1: Lack of Choices in Technical Correctional Programs		X			X	2	40%

Table 4*Finding 1: Codes*

	Codes
Finding 1: Lack of Choices in Technical Correctional Programs	They just stopped Don't help It wasn't a selection No choice You have no choice

As depicted in Table 3, two of the five participants contributed to this theme (40%). Within this theme, the participants discussed how that there is a lack of choices when it comes to selecting technical correctional programs while incarcerated. For example, Participant 2 (P2) reported that over time, he noticed that the prison would provide fewer choices and now there are really limited selections of technical correctional programs. P2 stated:

Yes, they used to have all those classes, but they just stopped. That's why the murder rate inside of prison's so high because they have nothing to do. You have to give these folks something to do. You just can't just put a man in the prison, 10,

15 years, don't teach him nothing, then kick him back out into society with just \$25. That's what the state of Georgia is doing, and they need to something because they are getting ... that prison make a billion a year. Why aren't any technical colleges ... I mean, its colleges, but it's all over online. Now, they have everything online, so that's not really ... It's teaching nobody how to get out here in the world and just interact with people (P2).

P2 continued to discuss how prisons need to assist people with providing them with hands on training. He perceives that prisons are not really interested in rehabilitating people:

They got get them people some hands-on training, sitting in the class, they got to ... it's something that they have to do because you're just looking at it in these books, and you're sitting in the class just talking about it. But it must be more hands on. They must start allowing people to interact with people, so when people do get out, you know what I'm saying, they won't have that same mind frame they had when they went in. Well, see all they're doing is constantly the same thing. You know what I'm saying? So, after a while, you have to ... If you want people to change, you have to change yourself, and actually running the same program, you know what I'm saying, but they have to start actually just ... So, because all prisons don't rehabilitate. Some prisons just don't help (P2).

Additionally, Participant 5 (P5) stated that technical correctional programs are not a choice, as they are assigned to inmates upon entering the prison system and the parole board:

Actually, it wasn't a selection. The parole board gives it to you as a class that is needed. You have no choice (P5).

Finding 2: Helps Provide Employment Opportunities to Inmates Post-Release

The second finding that emerged from the dataset highlighted how the participants perceived that their technical correctional programs could assist in providing more employment opportunities to inmates after being released. Table 5 highlights the participants that contributed to this finding, and Table 6 highlights the codes that supported the finding.

Table 5

Finding 2: Participant Contribution

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total	Percent
Finding 2: Helps Provide Employment Opportunities to Inmates Post-Release	X	X	X	X		4	80%

Table 6

Finding 2: Codes

	Codes
Finding 2: Helps Provide Employment Opportunities to Inmates Post-Release	Help you get a better job More opportunities Working Get a job Helped me get a job

As depicted in Table 5, the participants perceived that the technical correctional programs that they completed assisted them in being provided with employment opportunities after being released from prison. Four out of the five participants contributed to this theme (80%). For example, Participant 1 (P1) reported that it can help you get more views when it came to applying for jobs:

It would help you get a better job, but I already was established before I got out, went back into logging, so I didn't necessarily need it. It'll get you a better view and get you more opportunities with the jobs (P1).

P2 discussed how by him receiving a GED, it was much easier to secure employment post release. P2 stated:

As soon as I got out, I apply for a job, and first thing, they were like, "Do you have a high school education, GED?" I was like, "Hey, I have a GED." That was in the conversation. \$17.50, right then. It wasn't no, "I don't have a ..." Right then, as soon as I said I had a GED, the man said, "Do you know how to drive a cherry picker?" I said, "I could drive everything you have in this building." He said, "Start you at 17.50. You're hired. When can you start?" I said, "I can start right now." GED was the last question. He didn't even ask ... there was nothing about no conviction, selling, none of that. As soon as he saw that I had a GED and I showed it to him, "Hey, you're hired" (P2).

Participant 4 (P4) stated that it helped him obtain employment. He stated, "but it did help me get a job." Finally, Participant 4 reported that he obtained employment on his own

and without any assistance from a technical correctional program, providing an alternative view from the other participants. He reported:

The program still didn't help me, but I helped myself by, working (P4).

SQ2: What Technical Correctional Programs Do Young, Rural African American Men Perceive as Being Important For A Successful Reentry Into Society?

The second secondary research question aimed to understand what technical corrections programs young, rural African American men perceive as being important for a successful reentry into society. Within this research question, two findings emerged from the dataset: (a) strengthens family relationships, and (b) reduces recidivism.

Finding 3: Strengthens Family Relationships

The third finding that emerged from the dataset highlighted how the participants perceived that the importance of technical correctional programs is that they tend to strengthen family relationships. Table 7 highlights the participants that contributed to this finding, and Table 8 highlights the codes that supported the finding.

Table 7

Finding 3: Participant Contribution

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total	Percent
Finding 3: Strengthens Family Relationships	X	X	X	X	X	5	100%

Table 8*Finding 3: Codes*

	Codes
Finding 3: Strengthens Family Relationships	Everybody was happy It got me back good with my family It got me closer Brings you closer Brings you closer and closer Boost my self-esteem

As depicted in Table 7, all participants contributed to this theme (100%). Within the theme, the participants were able to discuss how their technical correctional program strengthens their relationships with their families. For example, P1 reported that by obtaining his GED, it made every person in his family happy. P1 stated:

It made it better because they were glad that I had got my GED (P1).

Additionally, P2 discussed how his family was happy because it allowed him to secure employment and have more choices in his life:

Everybody was happy. See, I didn't tell nobody I had it. I didn't tell my momma. I didn't tell my dad, my brother, nobody. I just got out and went and framed it and hung it in the living room. When they see it, they see it. But it most definitely brought a smile to everybody's face, and it gave me some boost my self-esteem because now I feel like I can walk in any job and apply and get it. I have a good job right now because of that GED (P2).

Similarly, P3 stated, “it got me back good with my family”, while P4 reported that “it got me closer”. P5 was able to discuss how by completing the program it made him closer to his family:

It brings you closer, especially once you've been in prison a while, people don't even have communication with their family at all. The programs bring you closer and closer (P5).

Finding 4: Reduces Recidivism

The fourth finding that emerged from the dataset highlighted how the participants perceived that the importance of technical correctional programs helped reduce recidivism. Table 9 highlights the participants that contributed to this finding, and Table 10 highlights the codes that supported the finding.

Table 9

Finding 4: Participant Contribution

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total	Percent
Finding 4: Reduces Recidivism		X	X	X	X	4	80%

Table 10

Finding 4: Codes

	Codes
Finding 4: Reduces Recidivism	Reduces recidivism Boosts self-esteem Not making dumb decisions Understanding of life Better their minds Want to change

As depicted in Table 9, four of the five participants contributed to this finding (80%). Within this finding, the participants were able to discuss the importance of technical correctional programs in the fact that they assist in reducing recidivism. For example, P2 was able to discuss how recidivism was reduced because it helped him learn how to apply himself post-release. P2 stated:

I don't know about anybody else, but me, now, once I got my GED and you get out here and apply yourself, and once people see that, hey, you apply yourself and it isn't all about street life no more. Then, you know what I'm saying, you're going to making money and you're independent, that'll help a lot. It helped me. It helped me. I don't even think about the streets. I just go to work. I come home, and that's it. So, if you have the ... They have to want to learn. People have to want to change, so if you're going in and do a bit, and you get out and you apply yourself, then you shouldn't have to worry about anything. I apply myself. I'm good. New car, bank account. I mean, I can't complain (P2).

P2 continued to report:

It most definitely boosts your self-esteem because now it's like, "Hey, I accomplished something. I might didn't get to walk across that stage, but I got the next best thing to it." So, I'm good, man. You know what I'm saying? From a 10-year period to what I'm doing now, man, I can't complain. I'm not going to complain. I just thank God. See? (P2)

P3 stated the programs can help him stay off drugs and make better decisions as he stated:

Staying off drugs and not making dumb decisions (P3).

Finally, P4 reported that the programs “gave me an understanding of life”, while P5 stated “for some people, it helps them to better their minds”.

P5 was able to expand on how for the most part, programs do not assist in reducing recidivism. He concluded:

I honestly can say the program isn't going to help... Nobody stuck going to prison, it's really you as a person, because people do the program to get out. It is really about how that person's mindset changes once he gets released from prison. He going to keep doing the same thing or he can go change his ways, so he won't have to go through that again. Because then in prison, it's worse being on the inside than it is being on the outside. People on the outside who have never been to prison wouldn't know that because they haven't' ever been on the inside before. There's a lot of stuff that goes on in prison that a lot of people don't see on the outside (P5).

Discrepant Cases

Within this study, there was one participant that took a different view on some of the findings that emerged from the dataset. For example, Participant 5 reported that although technical correctional programs could assist people in reducing recidivism rates, that he did not perceive that they do. In this instance, the participant reported that it is up to the individual to change their own mind, and programs do not necessarily do that for you. He concluded this statement by stating that there are lots of events and issues that are found in the prison, and technical correctional programs do not necessary deal with

these things, which he perceives is a bigger issue that needs to be addressed. That is, what happens on the inside and the outside of the prison system.

Another discrepant case that was identified within this study was that of Participant 3. Although the findings highlighted that most participants perceived that technical correctional educational programs could assist in providing employment opportunities to inmates post release, the participant reported that it did not help him. In his case, the participant reported that he found employment by himself, and he simply worked hard by himself post release to become employed.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to learn how young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceived their experiences of technical correctional education programs and how such programs aided in reducing recidivism during their reentry process from incarceration. This study was guided by the following research questions and sub-research questions:

RQ1: How do young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceive their lived experiences of technical correctional education programs during the reentry process?

SQ1: What are young, rural African American men's' perceptions of technical correctional education programs while incarcerated?

SQ2: What technical correctional programs do young, rural African American men perceive as being important for a successful reentry into society?

This chapter provided an overview of the study's results. The chapter began by discussing the participant demographic characteristics, as well as restating the data collection procedures, how the data were analyzed, and evidence of trustworthiness. The chapter then concluded with an overview of the results, and the identification of any discrepant cases. Four findings emerged from the dataset that included:

1. Lack of choices on technical correctional programs.
2. Helps provide employment opportunities to inmates' postrelease.
3. Strengthens family relationships.
4. Reduces recidivism

The next chapter is that of Chapter 5 that will conclude this study. Chapter 5 will provide a discussion of the results in relation to previous literature and the theoretical frameworks, the implications of the results, recommendations, the limitations experienced, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The problem being studied was that in the United States, there was limited knowledge of how correctional education programs prepared African American men for reentry into society after incarceration (Cid & Martí, 2017). Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to learn how young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceived their experiences of technical correctional education programs and how such programs aided in reducing recidivism during their reentry process from incarceration. This study collected data from five participants where they completed semi-structured interviews. The participants included individuals who identified as African American, were between the ages of 20 to 30 years, had been incarcerated for a period of at least one year, had successfully completed a technical correctional education program, and had been released for at least six months. The results of this study found four themes:

1. Lack of choices on technical correctional programs.
2. Helps provide employment opportunities to inmates' postrelease.
3. Strengthens family relationships.
4. Reduces recidivism

This chapter will conclude this dissertation. The researcher will begin by interpreting the results of the study to that of previous literature and the theoretical framework on institutional theory, as well as discussing the limitations that were experienced when completing the research. The chapter will then conclude with a

discussion of the recommendations for both practice and future research, as well as the implications.

Interpretations of the Findings

This study was guided by the following researcher questions and sub-research questions:

RQ1: How do young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceive their lived experiences of technical correctional education programs during the reentry process?

SQ1: What are young, rural African American men's' perceptions of technical correctional education programs while incarcerated?

SQ2: What technical correctional programs do young, rural African American men perceive as being important for a successful reentry into society?

This section of the chapter will discuss the research questions in relation to the emerged themes from the dataset.

RQ1: How do young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceive their lived experiences of technical correctional education programs during the reentry process?

The first research question aimed to understand the perceptions of young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 year on technical correctional education programs during the reentry process. Within this research question there was one theme that emerged from the dataset which included: a lack of choices on technical

correctional programs. Many of the participants reported that there is a lack of choice on technical education programs because they either assign them to you, or do not offer many different choices. The participants reported that it is helpful for prisons to offer a variety of technical correctional education programs because they can assist with learning new skills as well as keeping inmates productive during the day.

This finding is in alignment with previous literature. For example, Roth et al. (2017) examined inmates in a Norwegian prison to determine their motivations for participating in correctional educational programs. The authors found that inmates participating in correctional education programs did so because of their self-efficacy and the support from family members, peers, and instructors. Additionally, Cid and Martí (2017) proposed that inmates believed correctional educational programs are necessary to acquire effective skills for a successful reentry into society. Finally, Starnes (2018) explored the different education programs to understand the perceptions of inmates and how technical correctional education programs could affect their recidivism. The findings of the study concluded that inmates found educational programs to be effective and beneficial while incarcerated.

SQ1: What Are Young, Rural African American Men' Perceptions of Technical Correctional Education Programs While Incarcerated?

The first secondary research question aimed to understand the perceptions of young, rural African American men on the perceptions of technical correctional education programs while incarcerated. Within this study, one themes emerged from the

findings: (a) helps provide employment opportunities to inmates post release. The participants in this study reported that technical correctional education programs can provide inmates with improved job opportunities when they are released because they have stronger skill sets and employers look more favorably upon education.

These results appear in alignment with previous literature. For example, Ramakers et al. (2017) has argued that a significant number of former inmates continue to be unemployed or underemployed due to a deficiency in education and employment skills needed to meet the demands of today's job market. Therefore, by having inmates complete technical correctional education programs while incarcerated can assist in preparing them to join the job market after their release with skills and education relevant to the discipline in which they want to work. Additionally, Kim and Lee (2019) found that attempts to improve the socioeconomic status of an individual recently released from prison cannot be successful unless there is improvement to the education level. Although these authors did not report that education can eliminate criminal behavior, they did note that individuals without basic or sufficient education may experience challenges in society. As reported by Terry and Abrams (2017), the depth of effective reintegration for offenders concerning correctional education, is the educational program's ability to make a productive citizen. According to Duwe and Clark (2017), "offenders are likely to be employed, productive citizens, avoid criminality due to poverty, and remain free if they were educated" (p. 461). Duwe and Clark further stated that the U.S. government's perspective on prison education is a bipartisan fiscal choice: either exhaust money to educate offenders thus diminishing their likelihood of reoffending or exhaust funds to

keep them incarcerated thus decreasing their opportunity for a successful reintegration. Considering the importance of educating prisoners, prison education should be a main concern of correctional officials.

SQ2: What Technical Correctional Programs do Young, Rural African American Men Perceive as Being Important for A Successful Reentry Into Society?

The second secondary research question aimed to explore the perceptions of young, rural African American men on what kinds of technical correctional education programs are important for a successful reentry into society. This sub-research question had two themes emerge from the dataset: (a) strengthens family relationships and (b) reduces recidivism. Within this study, the participants reported that it is important for technical correctional education programs to focus on strengthening family relationships and to reduce recidivism. These findings are in relation to previous literature. For example, when it came to the importance of reducing recidivism, multiple researchers have highlighted the importance of how technical correctional education programs should focus on recidivism. Both Anderson et al. (2018) and Kim and Lee (2019) argued that the more education or training prisoners receive while imprisoned, the greater their chances of obtaining legitimate employment thus lessen their opportunity to reoffend. Additionally, according to several studies, the majority of offenders who occupy prisons in the United States lack a high school diploma (Evans et al., 2019; Gould, 2018; Peled-Laskov et al., 2019; Sokoloff & Schenck-Fontaine, 2017). Researchers and prison

officials argue that if offenders are to desist from criminal activities then correctional education must be the centerpiece of their rehabilitation (Gould, 2018; Walters, 2018a).

In relation to strengthening family relationships, previous research is aligned with this finding. For example, Fowler et al. (2017) noted the critical role fathers have in the social development of children and the impact of the absence of a father in families. Considering the impact of fathers being incarcerated, Fowler et al. attempted to understand the experiences male offenders faced parenting while incarcerated and after incarceration. Fowler et al. identified the following themes: prior knowledge of being fathered, prior knowledge of fathering, emotion of being separated from children, hope of being a better parent, and desiring an improved quality of life for their children. The authors found that the offenders desired to be good fathers, expected the best life for their children, and did not want their children's lives to duplicate their own lives. Therefore, correctional programs should emphasize that family support is vital to reduce the cycle of criminality in children.

Institutional Theory

This study was guided by institutional theory. Scott (1995) purported that institutions are often organizations look to their peers for cues on appropriate behaviors, which can include optimizing decisions, practices, and structures. Therefore, this theory was beneficial to guide this study, as correctional institutions may not be examining efficient and needed correctional education programs, basing such programs on the fests of other correctional institutions and not on the populations for which they serve. A key component of institutional theory was that for an organization to survive, it must conform

to the rules and belief systems that prevail in the environment. Therefore, the results did appear in alignment with institutional theory, because it appeared that the participants reported being served in a manner to what they needed to be successful post release. For example, the participants were able to report that the technical correctional education programs that they were exposed to, really did assist them when it came to reducing recidivism, obtaining strong employment, and strengthening family relationships.

However, where the correctional institutions fell short, appeared in the type or variety of technical correctional education programs offered. For example, the participants in this study reported that at times they could not select an education program, more so they were assigned to one. Therefore, it would behoove correctional institutions to offer more of a variety of technical correctional education programs so that it is in alignment with the theory. That is, correctional institutions must work to optimize decisions, practices, and structures that are in alignment with the population for which they serve.

Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations that must be discussed in this study. The first limitation focuses on the geographical region and population being studied. For example, because this study focused on African American men between the ages of 20 and 30, had attended a technical correctional education program, had remained out of prison for a period of one year, and had been released for at least six months, the results may not be generalizable to other populations and geographical regions outside of the researched parameters. Future research would need to be conducted to examine other racial or ethnic backgrounds and different age ranges, geographical regions, and length of time released

from prison. Another limitation for this study is the number of participants. This researcher reached data saturation on the fifth interview, signaling the need to end data collection, it was still a rather smaller sample size. Therefore, future studies could include larger sample sizes. A final limitation of this study could include the experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because the researcher started this study before the COVID-19 pandemic and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some individuals may have not been afforded with strong technical correctional education programs due to social distancing measures that prisons followed. For example, some prisons limited contact between inmates and staff; thus, limiting programs that they provided to inmates. Therefore, the effects of COVID-19 could have affected the results to some degree based upon the lack of services offered to inmates.

Recommendations

Based upon the limitations, there are some recommendations that need to be identified for future research. The first recommendation for future research is to continue researching this topic in relation to specific technical correctional education programs. For example, because the participants in this study reported that the programs they benefited from the most included those that were focused on recidivism and strengthening family relationships, future research should explore these programs in full from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective. Additional future research should also focus on larger sample sizes. For example, future researchers could complete quantitative research on larger sample sizes that can aim to predict the benefits of specific technical correctional education programs that inmates can experience. Future research

could also focus on the perceptions of larger sample sizes in different geographical regions.

Final recommendations include a longitudinal study and a study that considers the effects of COVID-19. Future researchers could also complete a longitudinal study that explores the effects of technical correctional education programs over longer periods of time. Because this study only focused on inmates who had been released for a minimum of six months, future research could shed light into the benefits of technical correctional education programs over the course of many years. Finally, completing this research topic again would be beneficial while considering COVID-19. Because many prisons had to limit or cancel programs for their inmates due to the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing measures, future research could examine the effect that the pandemic has had on inmates in relation to recidivism rates.

Implications

There are some implications that must be discussed due to the results of this study. For example, because the participants of this study reported that many correctional facilities tend to assign technical correctional education programs to inmates, it would behoove them to offer more of a variety of programs that suit the needs of the inmates. Research has concluded the many benefits that can be experienced from technical correctional education programs, such as providing new job skills, strengthening family relationships, and decreasing recidivism rates. By offering a variety of programs to their inmates, correctional facilities can work in motivating their inmates while also decreasing recidivism rates.

Another implication is that prisons should work to continue to provide these services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Because many prisons had to limit services to their inmates at the height of the pandemic due to social distancing measures, prisons should work at creating a plan that can continue educational programs during major public health crises. Following these two major implications, prisons can ensure that they are offering their inmates effective educational programs that benefit many aspects of their lives and reduce recidivism rates within their communities. This creates positive social change for the community, as inmates can work towards reentering society as productive members with decreased chances of returning to an imprisoned lifestyle.

Conclusion

The problem being studied was that in the United States, there was limited knowledge of how correctional education programs prepared African American men for reentry into society after incarceration (Cid & Martí, 2017). Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to learn how young, rural African American men between the ages of 20 to 30 years perceived their experiences of technical correctional education programs and how such programs aided in reducing recidivism during their reentry process from incarceration. This study collected data from five participants where they completed semi-structured interviews. The participants included individuals who identified as African American, were between the ages of 20 to 30 years, had been incarcerated for a period of at least one year, had successfully completed a technical correctional education program, and had been released for at least six months. The results of this study found four themes:

5. Lack of choices on technical correctional programs.
6. Helps provide employment opportunities to inmates postrelease.
7. Strengthens family relationships.
8. Reduces recidivism

This chapter concluded this dissertation. The researcher began by interpreting the results of the study to that of previous literature and the theoretical framework on institutional theory, as well as discussing the limitations that were experienced when completing the research. The chapter then concluded with a discussion of the recommendations for both practice and future research, as well as the implications. It is important that prisons continue to examine the technical correctional education programs that they offer their inmates so that they can return to society as functioning members, experiencing a decreased rate of recidivism, which is beneficial to all community members.

References

- Abrams, L. S., & Lea, C. H. (2016). Becoming employable. *The Prison Journal*, 96(5), 667– 687. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885516662627>
- Anderson, A. Y., Nava, N. J., Cortez, P. (2018). The conduits and barriers to reentry for formerly incarcerated individuals in San Bernardino. *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry*, 5(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.25771/sdf0-1631>
- Bandura, A. (1965). Influence of models' reinforcement contingencies on the acquisition of imitative responses. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1(6), 589–595. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0022070>
- Bandura, A. (1995). *Self-efficacy in changing societies* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Bandura, A., Ross, D., & Ross, S. A. (1961). Transmission of aggression through imitation of aggressive models. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 63(3), 575–582. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0045925>
- Baranger, J., Rousseau, D., Mastroilli, M. E., & Matesanz, J. (2018). Doing time wisely: The social and personal benefits of higher education in prison. *Prison Journal*, 98(4), 490-513. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885518776380>
- Bender, K. A., Cobbina, J. E., & KayGarrell, E. F. (2016). Reentry programming for high-risk offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 60(13), 1479–1508. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X15578204>

- Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: A tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation? *Qualitative Health Research, 26*(13), 1802-1811. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316654870>
- Burr, V., & King, N. (2019). Qualitative analysis of repertory grids: Interpretive clustering. In *Sage Research Methods Foundations*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Castillo-Montoya, M. (2016). Preparing for interview research: The interview protocol refinement framework. *Qualitative Report, 21*(5), 811-831. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2016.2337>
- Cerda, J. A., Stenstrom, D. M., & Curtis, M. (2015). The role of type of offense and work qualifications on perceived employability of former offenders. *American Journal of Criminal Justice, 40*(2), 317–335. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-014-9244-8>
- Chamberlain, A. W., & Wallace, D. (2016). Mass reentry, neighborhood context and recidivism: Examining how the distribution of parolees within and across neighborhoods impacts recidivism. *Justice Quarterly, 33*(5), 912-941. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2015.1012095>
- Cid, J., & Martí, J. (2017). Imprisonment, social support, and desistance: A theoretical approach to pathways of desistance and persistence for imprisoned men. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 61*(13), 1433–1454. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X15623988>
- Clark, V. A. (2016). Predicting two types of recidivism among newly released prisoners: first addresses as “launch pads” for recidivism or reentry success. *Crime and Delinquency, 62*(10), 1364-1400. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128714555760>

- Cobbina, J. E., Huebner, B. M., & Berg, M. T. (2012). Men, women, and post release offending. *Crime & Delinquency*, 58(3), 331–361.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128710382348>
- Connelly, L. M. (2016). Trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Medsurg Nursing*, 25(6), 435-436.
- Crabtree, J. L., Ohm, D., Wall, J. M., & Ray, J. (2016). Evaluation of a prison occupational therapy informal education program: A pilot study. *Occupational Therapy International*, 23(4), 401-411. <https://doi.org/10.1002/oti.1442>
- Devilly, G. J., Sorbello, L., Eccleston, L., & Ward, T. (2005). Prison-based peer-education schemes. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 10(2), 219–240.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2003.12.001>
- DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48(2), 147-160. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2095101>
- Duke, B. (2018). A meta-analysis comparing educational attainment prior to incarceration and recidivism rates in relation to correctional education. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 69(1), 44–59. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26508040>
- Duwe, G., & Clark, V. (2014). The effects of prison-based educational programming on recidivism and employment. *The Prison Journal*, 94(4), 454-478.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885514548009>

- Duwe, G., & Clark, V. A. (2017). Nothing will work unless you did: The predictors of post prison employment. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 44(5), 657-677.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854816689104>
- Ellison, M., Szifris, K., Horan, R., & Fox, C. (2017). A rapid evidence assessment of the effectiveness of prison education in reducing recidivism and increasing employment. *Probation Journal*, 64(2), 108-128.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0264550517699290>
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>
- Evans, D. N., Pelletier, E., & Szkola, J. (2018). Education in prison and the self-stigma: Empowerment continuum. *Crime & Delinquency*, 64(2), 255–280.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128717714973>
- Evans, D. N., Szkola, J., & St. John, V. (2019). Going back to college? criminal stigma in higher education admissions in Northeastern U.S. *Critical Criminology*, 27(2), 291–304. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-019-09443-x>
- Fowler, C., Rossiter, C., Dawson, A., Jackson, D., & Power, T. (2017). Becoming a “better” father: Supporting the needs of incarcerated fathers. *The Prison Journal*, 97(6), 692–712. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885517734495>
- Fusch, P. I., & Ness, L. R. (2015). Are we there yet? data saturation in qualitative research. *The qualitative report*, 20(9), 1408-1416. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2281>

- Gideon, L. (2010). Drug offenders' perceptions of motivation. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 54(4), 597–610.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X09333377>
- Goga, N. (2015). *Rethinking the architecture of incarceration: A proposed pre-release center for female offenders in Durban* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Gotto, S. T. & Martin, C. (2009). Psychology for success. Overcoming barriers to pursuing further education. *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, 57(1), 10–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07377360902810744>
- Gould, M. R. (2018). Rethinking our metrics: Research in the field of higher education in prison. *The Prison Journal*, 98(4), 387–404.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885518776375>
- Hadi, M. A., & Closs, S. J. (2016). Ensuring rigor and trustworthiness of qualitative research in clinical pharmacy. *International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy*, 38(3), 641-646. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11096-015-0237-6>
- Halimi, M.; Brosens, D.; De Donder, L.; Engels, N. (2017). Learning during imprisonment: Prisoners' motives to educational participation within a remand prison in Belgium. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 68(1), 3–31.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26508015>
- Hall, A. D., & Fagen, R. E. (1956). Definition of system. *Introductory chapter to systems engineering, New York, Bell Telephone Laboratories [reprinted In: (1956). General Systems 1: 18-28, 81-92.*

Hall, L. L. (2015). Correctional education and recidivism: Toward a tool for reduction.

Journal of Correctional Education, 66(2), 4-29.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26507655>

Hall, R. S., & Killackey, J. (2008). Correctional education from the perspective of the prisoner student. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 59(4), 301–320.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/23282597>

Hall, T. L., Wooten, N. R., & Lundgren, L. M. (2016). Post incarceration policies and prisoner reentry: Implications for policies and programs aimed at reducing recidivism and poverty. *Journal of Poverty*, 20(1), 56–72.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10875549.2015.1094761>

Healy, D., & O'Donnell, I. (2008). Calling time on crime: Motivation, generativity, and agency in Irish probationers. *Probation Journal*, 55(1), 25–38.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0264550507085676>

Hetland, H., Iversen, A. C., Eikeland, O. J., & Manger, T. (2015). Former welfare clients in prison: Education and self-reported learning problems. *European Journal of Social Work*, 18(2), 198–210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2014.897219>

Hlavka, H., Wheelock, D., & Jones, R. (2015). Exoffender accounts of successful reentry from prison. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 54(6).

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10509674.2015.1057630>

Houts, S., & Kassab, C. (1997). Rotter's social learning theory and fear of crime:

Differences by race and ethnicity Rotter's social learning theory and fear of

crime: Differences by race and ethnicity. *Social Science Quarterly*, 78(1), 122–

136. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42863679>

Hunter, B. A., Lanza, A. S., Lawlor, M., Dyson, W., & Gordon, D. M. (2016). A

strengths-based approach to prisoner reentry: The fresh start prisoner reentry

program. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative*

Criminology, 60(11), 1298-1314. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X15576501>

Ismail, N., Kinchin, G., & Edwards, J. A. (2018). Pilot study, does it really matter?

Learning lessons from conducting a pilot study for a qualitative PhD

thesis. *International Journal of Social Science Research*, 6(1), 1-17.

<https://doi.org/10.5296/ijssr.v6i1.11720>

Janssen, B., & Nonnenmann, M. W. (2017). New institutional theory and a culture of

safety in agriculture. *Journal of agromedicine*, 22(1), 47-55.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1059924X.2016.1249444>

Jeffers, A. R. (2017). Reflections of academic experiences from formerly incarcerated

African American males. *Journal Equity & Excellence in Education*, 50(2), 222–

240. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2017.1301834>

Keena, L., & Simmons, C. (2015). Rethink, reform, reenter: An entrepreneurial approach

to prison programming. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and*

Comparative Criminology, 59(8), 837-854.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X14523077>

- Kim, H., Sefcik, J. S., & Bradway, C. (2017). Characteristics of qualitative descriptive studies: A systematic review. *Research in nursing & health*, 40(1), 23-42.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.21768>
- Kim, J., & Lee, Y. (2019). Does it take a school? Revisiting the influence of first arrest on subsequent delinquency and educational attainment in a tolerant educational background. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 56(2), 254–302.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427818801053>
- Knotten, V., Hansen, G. K., Svaalestuen, F., & Lædre, O. (2017). Learning across disciplines-Use of the constant comparative method. In *Proceedings of the 9th Nordic Conference on Construction Economics and Organization* (pp. 273-284).
- Koo, A. (2016). Correctional education can make a greater impact on recidivism by supporting adult inmates with learning disabilities. *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, 105(1), 233–269.
<https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/jclc/vol105/iss1/6>
- Lee, K., Harding, D. J., & Morenoff, J. D. (2017). Trajectories of neighborhood attainment after prison. *Social Science Research*, 66(1), 211–233.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2016.12.004>
- Lin, C. S. (2017). Revealing the “essence” of things: Using phenomenology in LIS research. *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries*, 2(4), 469-478.
<http://www.qqml-journal.net/index.php/qqml/article/view/123>>

- Link, A. J., & Williams, D. J. (2017). Leisure functioning and offender rehabilitation. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 61(2), 150–170. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X15600695>
- Liu, L. (2016). Using generic inductive approach in qualitative educational research: A case study analysis. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 5(2), 129-135. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/jel.v5n2p129>
- Livingston, L., & Miller, J. (2014). Inequalities of race, class, and place and their impact on post incarceration higher education. *Race and Justice*, 4(3), 212–245. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2153368714532952>
- Lockwood, S. K., Nally, J. M., Ho, T., & Knutson, K. (2015). Racial disparities and similarities in post-release recidivism and employment among ex-prisoners with a different level of education. *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry*, 2(1), 16–31. <https://doi.org/10.15845/jper.v2i1.703>
- MacPhail, C., Khoza, N., Abler, L., & Ranganathan, M. (2016). Process guidelines for establishing intercoder reliability in qualitative studies. *Qualitative Research*, 16(2), 198-212. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794115577012>
- Majid, M. A. A., Othman, M., Mohamad, S. F., Lim, S. A. H., & Yusof, A. (2017). Piloting for interviews in qualitative research: Operationalization and lessons learnt. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 7(4), 1073-1080. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v7-i4/2916>

- Martin, J. (2004). Self-regulated learning, social cognitive theory, and agency. *Educational Psychologist, 39*(2), 135–145.
https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep3902_4
- Mastrorilli, M. E. (2016). With pell grants rising: A review of the contemporary empirical literature on prison postsecondary education. *Journal of Correctional Education, 67*(2), 44–60. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26506636>
- Matejkowski, J., Conrad, A., & Ostermann, M. (2017). Does early onset of criminal behavior differentiate for whom serious mental illness has a direct or indirect effect on recidivism? *Law & Human Behavior, 41*(1), 68–79.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/lhb0000231>
- McElreath, D. H., Doss, D. A., Jensen, C., Mallory, S., Wigginton, M., Lyons, T.,
McElreath, L. S. (2018). Failed hopes of education. *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology, 9*(1), 15–30.
<https://doi.org/10.4018/IJAVET.2018010102>
- McGarrell, E. F. (1993). Institutional theory and the stability of a conflict model of the incarceration rate. *Justice Quarterly, 10*(1), 7-28.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07418829300091681>
- Miller, J. M., Miller, H. V., & Barnes, J. C. (2016). Outcome evaluation of a family-based jail reentry program for substance abusing offenders. *The Prison Journal, 96*(1), 53–78. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885515605482>

- Morenoff, J. D., & Harding, D. J. (2014). Incarceration, prisoner reentry, and communities. *Annual Review of Sociology, 40*, 411–429.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071811-145511>
- Muth, B., Warner, K., Gogia, L., & Walker, G. (2016). A critique of the prison reentry discourse: Futurity, presence, and commonsense. *Prison Journal, 96*(3).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885516635100>
- Newton, D., Day, A., Giles, M., Wodak, J., Graffam, J., & Baldry, E. (2018). The impact of vocational education and training programs on recidivism: A systematic review of current experimental evidence. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 62*(1), 187–207.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X16645083>
- Noble, H., & Heale, R. (2019). Triangulation in research, with examples. *Evidence Based Nursing, 22*(3), 67-68. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/ebnurs-2019-103145>
- Noble, H., & Smith, J. (2015). Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Evidence Based Nursing, 18*(2), 34-35. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/eb-2015-102054>
- Panitsides, E. A., & Moussiou, E. (2019). What does it take to motivate inmates to participate in prison education? An exploratory study in a Greek prison. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education, 25*(2), 157-177.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1477971419840667>

- Paternoster, R., Bachman, R., Kerrison, E., O'connell, D., & Smith, L. (2016). Desistance from crime and identity: An empirical test with survival time. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 43*(9), 1204-1224. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854816651905>
- Patterson, E. J., Wildeman, C. (2015). Mass imprisonment and the life course revisited: Cumulative years spent imprisoned and marked for working-age black and white men. *Social Science Research, 53*, 325–337. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2015.06.011>
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative Research & Evaluations Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice* (4th ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Peled-Laskov, R., Shoham, E., & Cojocar, L. (2019). Work-related intervention programs: Desistance from criminality and occupational integration among released prisoners on parole. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 63*(13), 2264-2290. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X19845762>
- Philips, L. A., & Spencer, M. W. (2013). The challenges of reentry from prison to society. *Journal of Current Issues in Crime, Law, and Law Enforcement, 6*(2), 123–133.
- Phillips, N. (2003). Discourse or institution? Institutional theory and the challenge of critical discourse analysis. *Debating organization: Point-counterpoint in organization studies, 220-231*.
- Pompoco, A., Wooldredge, J., Lugo, M., Sullivan, C., & Latessa, E. J. (2017). Reducing inmate misconduct and prison returns with facility education programs.

Criminology & Public Policy, 16(2), 515–547. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9133.12290>

Potts, K. S., & Bierlein Palmer, L. (2014). Voices of parolees attending community college. *Community College Review*, 42(4), 267–282.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0091552114534725>

Powers, R. A., Kaukinen, C., & Jeanis, M. (2017). An examination of recidivism among inmates released from a private reentry center and public institutions in Colorado.

The Prison Journal, 97(5), 609–627. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885517728893>

Ramakers, A., Nieuwebeerta, P., Van Wilsem, J., & Dirkzwager, A. (2017). Not just any job will do: A study on employment characteristics and recidivism risks after release.

International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative

Criminology, 61(16), 1795–1818. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X16636141>

Rhodes, W., Gaes, G., Luallen, J., Kling, R., Rich, T., & Shively, M. (2016). Following incarceration, most released offenders never return to prison. *Crime and*

Delinquency, 62(8), 1003-1025. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128714549655>

Richmond, K. M. (2014). Why work while incarcerated? Inmate perceptions on prison industries employment. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 53(4), 231–252.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10509674.2014.902005>

Rosário, P., Núñez, J. C., Pereira, J., Fuentes, S., Gaeta, M., Cunha, J., & Polydoro, S.

(2016). Studying while doing time: Understanding inmates' conceptions of learning. *British Educational Research Journal*, 42(1), 151–167.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3194>

- Roth, B. B., Westrheim, K., Jones, L., & Manger, T. (2017). Academic self-efficacy, educational motives, and aspects of the prison sentence as predictors for participation in prison education. *The Journal of Correctional Education*, 68(3), 19–40. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26508031>
- Rubin, H.J. and Rubin, I. S. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (3rd ed.) (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Runell, L. L. (2017). Identifying desistance pathways in a higher education program for formerly incarcerated individuals. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 61(8), 894–918. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X15608374>
- Runell, L. L. (2018). Arrested development: Pursuing a higher education in carceral contexts. *The Prison Journal*, 98(4), 470–489. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885518776379>
- Schlager, M. D. (2018). Through the looking glass: Taking stock of offender reentry. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 34(1), 69–80. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1043986217750443>
- Schnepel, K. T. (2018). Good jobs and recidivism. *Economic Journal*, 128(608), 447–469. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ecoj.12415>
- Scott, K. J. (2016). Corrections and education: The relationship between education and recidivism. *Journal of Intercultural Disciplines*, 15, 147–169.

- Scott, P. L. (2016). *African American men speak: Unheard perspectives of the self-paced in class education (SPICE) program & reentry in the 21st century*. Drexel University.
- Scott, W. R. (1987). The adolescence of institutional theory. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 32(4), 493-511. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2392880>
- Sharlein, J. (2018). Beyond recidivism: Investigating comparative educational and employment outcomes for adolescents in the juvenile and criminal justice systems. *Crime & Delinquency*, 64(1), 26–52.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128716678193>
- Shaul, L., Blankers, M., Koeter, M. W. J., Schippers, G. M., & Goudriaan, A. E. (2019). The role of motivation in predicting addiction treatment entry among offenders with substance use disorders under probation supervision. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 63(14), 2453-2465.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X19849554>
- Shaul, L., Koeter, M. W. J., & Schippers, G. M. (2016). Brief motivation enhancing intervention to prevent criminal recidivism in substance-abusing offenders under supervision: a randomized trial. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 22(9), 903–914.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2016.1202248>
- Shivy, V. A., Guion, D. B., Green, B. A., & Wingate, J. A. (2019). Intuit: A career decision-making intervention for female offenders in reentry. *Journal of Career Development*, 46(2), 144–156. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845317731156>

- Skarbek, D. (2016). Covenants without the sword? Comparing prison self-governance globally. *American Political Science Review*, 110(4), 845-862.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055416000563>
- Skinner-Osei, P. and Stepteau-Watson, D. (2017). A qualitative analysis of African American fathers' struggle with reentry, recidivism, and reunification after participation in re-entry programs. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 28(2), 240–255. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2017.1402724>
- Smith, C. (2017). Complex sentences: Searching for the purpose of education inside a Massachusetts state prison. *Harvard Educational Review*, 87(1), 81-98.
<https://doi.org/10.17763/1943-5045-87.1.81>
- Sokoloff, N. J. (2017). College programs in prison and upon reentry for men and women: a literature review. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 20(1), 95–114.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580.2016.1262772>
- Swan, R. T. (2008). *Challenging the new penology: A case-study analysis of correctional management, interstate inmate transfers, and administrative intent. (Doctoral dissertation)*. <https://doi.org/10.15760/etd.5707>
- Taylor, C. J. (2016). The family's role in the reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals: The direct effects of emotional support. *Prison Journal*, 96(3), 331-354. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885516635085>
- Terry, D., & Abrams, L. S. (2017). Dangers, diversions, and decisions: The process of criminal desistance among formerly incarcerated young men. *International*

Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 61(7), 727–750.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X15602704>

Tewksbury, R., Erickson, D. J., & Taylor, J. M. (2000). Opportunities lost: The consequences of eliminating Pell Grant eligibility for correctional education students. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 31(1/2), 43–56.

https://doi.org/10.1300/J076v31n01_02

Thorne, S. (2016). *Interpretive description: Qualitative research for applied practice*. Routledge.

Tietjen, G. E., Garneau, C. R. H., Horowitz, V., & Noel, H. (2018). Showing up: The gendered effects of social engagement on educational participation in U.S. correctional facilities. *The Prison Journal*, 98(3), 359–381.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885518764921>

Vacca, J. S. (2004). Educated prisoners are less likely to return to prison. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 55(4), 297–305. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23292095>

Vaismoradi, M., Jones, J., Turunen, H., & Snelgrove, S. (2016). Theme development in qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, 6(5), 100–110. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/jnep.v6n5p100>

Visher, C. A., Lattimore, P. K., Barrick, K., & Tueller, S. (2017). Evaluating the long-term effects of prisoner reentry services on recidivism: What types of services matter? *Justice Quarterly*, 34(1), 136–165.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2015.1115539>

- Voronov, M., & Weber, K. (2020). People, actors, and the humanizing of institutional theory. *Journal of Management Studies*, 57(4), 873-884.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12559>
- Walters, G. D. (2018a). College as a turning point. *Emerging Adulthood*, 6(5), 336–346.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696817739019>
- Walters, G. D. (2018b). Mediating the relationship between parental control/support and offspring delinquency: Self-efficacy for a conventional lifestyle versus self-efficacy for deviance. *Crime & Delinquency*, 64(5), 606–624.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128716686357>
- Winter, J. (2017). *Images of prison: Managing institutional complexity in the Austrian penal system* (Doctoral dissertation, WU Vienna University of Economics and Business). <https://epub.wu.ac.at/id/eprint/5570>
- Wolfer, L. (2019). Current inmate expected post-release needs and perceived barriers to future voluntary after-care program attendance. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 45(1), 102–111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2018.1479675>
- Wooditch, A., Tang, L. L., & Taxman, F. S. (2014). Which criminogenic need changes are most important in promoting desistance from crime and substance use? *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 41(3), 276–299.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854813503543>
- Wright, B. J., Zhang, S. X., Farabee D., & Braatz, R. (2014). Prisoner reentry research 2000 to 2010: Results of a narrative review. *Criminal Justice Review*, 39(1), 37–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734016813501192>

Zortman, J. S., Powers, T., Hiester, M., Klunk, F. R., & Antonio, M. E. (2016).

Evaluating reentry programming in Pennsylvania's board of probation & parole:

An assessment of offenders' perceptions and recidivism outcomes. *Journal of*

Offender Rehabilitation, 55(6), 419–442.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10509674.2016.1194945>

Zucker, L. G. (1987). Institutional theories of organization. *Annual Review of Sociology*,

13(1), 443-464. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2083256>

Appendix A: IRB Approval

Dear Robert Reddick,

This email is to notify you that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved your application for the study entitled, "Correctional Education: A Response to Prison Reentry of African American Men."

Your approval # is 05-17-21-0140054. You will need to reference this number in your dissertation and in any future funding or publication submissions. Also attached to this e-mail is the IRB approved consent form. Please note, if this is already in an on-line format, you will need to update that consent document to include the IRB approval number and expiration date.

Your IRB approval expires on May 16, 2022 (or when your student status ends, whichever occurs first). One month before this expiration date, you will be sent a Continuing Review Form, which must be submitted if you wish to collect data beyond the approval expiration date.

Your IRB approval is contingent upon your adherence to the exact procedures described in the final version of the IRB application document that has been submitted as of this date. This includes maintaining your current status with the university. Your IRB approval is only valid while you are an actively enrolled student at Walden University. If you need to take a leave of absence or are otherwise unable to remain actively enrolled, your IRB approval is suspended. Absolutely NO participant recruitment or data collection may occur while a student is not actively enrolled.

If you need to make any changes to your research staff or procedures, you must obtain IRB approval by submitting the IRB Request for Change in Procedures Form. You will receive confirmation with a status update of the request within 10 business days of submitting the change request form and are not permitted to implement changes prior to receiving approval. Please note that Walden University does not accept responsibility or liability for research activities conducted without the IRB's approval, and the University will not accept or grant credit for student work that fails to comply with the policies and procedures related to ethical standards in research.

When you submitted your IRB application, you made a commitment to communicate both discrete adverse events and general problems to the IRB within 1 week of their occurrence/realization. Failure to do so may result in invalidation of data, loss of academic credit, and/or loss of legal protections otherwise available to the researcher.

Both the Adverse Event Reporting form and Request for Change in Procedures form can be obtained on the Tools and Guides page of the Walden website: <https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/research-center/research-ethics/tools-guides> Doctoral researchers are required to fulfill all of the Student Handbook's [Doctoral Student Responsibilities Regarding Research Data](#) regarding raw data retention and dataset confidentiality, as well as logging of all recruitment, data collection, and data management steps. If, in the future, you require copies of the originally submitted IRB materials, you may request them from Institutional Review Board.

Both students and faculty are invited to provide feedback on this IRB experience at the link below:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=qHBJzkJMUx43pZegKlmdiQ_3d_3d

Sincerely,

Elyse V. Abernathy, MSL, MSM
Research Ethics Support Specialist
Office of Research Ethics and Compliance

Walden University
100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 1210
Minneapolis, MN 55401
Email: irb@mail.waldenu.edu
Phone: (612) 257-6645
Fax: (612) 338-5092

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Demographic Questions

1. Age
2. Type of Technical Correctional Education Program Completed
3. Length of Time Incarcerated
4. Length of Time Released
5. Number of Times Incarcerated in Life

Semi Structured Interview Questions

1. Discuss the type of technical correctional education program you completed while incarcerated.
2. How did this technical correctional education program assist you after being released?
3. What do you think is necessary for people to reintegrate back into society after being released from prison?
4. Was your technical correctional education program in alignment with this?
5. Why did you select the technical correctional education program that you completed?
6. What were your expectations of the technical correctional education program that you completed?
7. How did the completion of the technical correctional education program help your post-release in terms of finances?
8. How did the completion of the technical correctional education program help your post-release in terms of your family relationships?

9. How did the completion of the technical correctional education program help your post-release in terms of social relationships?
10. How do you think the completion of a technical correctional education program can decrease recidivism or being sent back to a prison environment?