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Perceptions of Incarcerated Individuals in a Men's Prison About the Impact of Educational Programs on Their Vocational Aspirations: A Narrative Inquiry

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Concordia University–Portland

College of Education

Doctorate of Education Program

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Perceptions of Incarcerated Individuals in a Men's Prison About the Impact of Educational
Programs on Their Vocational Aspirations: A Narrative Inquiry

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Concordia University–Portland

College of Education

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in

Transformational Leadership

Audrey Rabas, Ph.D., Faculty Chair Dissertation Committee

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2019

Abstract

Research projects concerning correctional education are common in the recent literature; however, little focus has been placed on the perceptions of the incarcerated students on the impact of correctional education programs on their post-release vocational aspirations. Men in a state prison, housed in the lower-risk classification unit, who were enrolled in both academic and vocational education programs participated. Qualitative narrative inquiry and self-determination theory (SDT) framed this study. Fourteen participants completed a researcher-developed open-ended question survey, which provided a forum for each to express his perceptions and experiences with the educational programming at the facility. Findings showed an abundance of the satisfaction of the needs for autonomy and competence. In some cases, the need for relatedness was satisfied. Themes throughout the findings demonstrated the satisfaction of some aspects of SDT; however, none of the themes indicated that all three of the elements of SDT had been met. Additionally, in the themes, participants demonstrated forms of autonomous, extrinsic motivation. The most common motivations were regulation through identification and integrated regulation. The participants were, in general, satisfied with their programs; however, each identified some areas for improvement. The participants demonstrated a desire to continue to learn and remain on a path toward personal transformation. The participants were also focused on successful community reintegration and long-term employment goals.

Keywords: inmate perceptions, correctional education, self-determination theory, post-release goals, motivation

Dedication

I want to dedicate this work to the most precious souls in my life; my nieces and nephew, Arin, Grace, and Max. You are truly amazing people, and you inspire me every day.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank my entire family and those dearest to me, Dave, Estella, Linda, Dan, and Jasmine, for their continued support throughout this amazing journey. I would also like to thank two of my former colleagues, Barry and Katie, who provided the assistance that helped me build the foundation that guided this study. Thank you to Nancy and Clay, who gave me some much-needed perspective for this project. Lastly, I am thankful for those who volunteered to participate in this study. It was an honor to be allowed to learn about your experiences. Without your help, I would not have been able to achieve this goal.

I am eternally grateful to my dissertation committee, without their support and guidance, this journey would have been very difficult. My dissertation committee provided a wealth of information that drove me toward the completion of this project. Dr. Rabas, my faculty chair, has been a wonderful source of support and encouragement. Dr. deValentino, my content specialist, provided me with feedback and support to complete this project, and Dr. Frankenhauser, my content reader, whose unique background and perspective provided me with the feedback I needed to bring this work into its final form. Finally, I would like to express my thanks to Concordia University for allowing me to pursue my goals.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The term *correctional education* could leave many people with questions about the definition of this type of education. Correctional education is made up of two categories, academic instruction and vocational training, which occur within a correctional facility. Most prisons in the United States offer some correctional education programming (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Participants in correctional education programs either volunteer to attend courses or, in some cases, the facility or court system mandates attendance in a program. At the prison, offenders are given the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) upon intake. Based upon the score an inmate receives, and whether prison officials can verify if an inmate has received a high school diploma, High School Equivalency Test (HiSET; HiSET, 2018) or General Education Development diploma (GED; GED Testing Service, 2018), an inmate is eligible to enroll in Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses corresponding to his TABE scores (Montana State Prison Operational Procedure, 2017b).

The prison offers correctional education through the education department, which provides both academic and vocational opportunities. This study was intended to shed light on the perceptions and motivations the students had regarding the impact the programs made on their post-release vocational aspirations. There has been little research over the past 15 years on the motivations and perceptions of offenders about correctional education. Since students enrolled in programs through the education department are volunteers, exploring these participants' perceptions of their education on their vocational aspirations could be affected by their motivation to enroll in courses (Montana State Prison Operational Procedure, 2017a).

Background, Context, History, and Conceptual Framework for the Problem

The incarcerated enter prisons with many needs and challenges. Facilities that are focused on rehabilitative efforts can contribute to successful reintegration. Through academic and vocational programming, offenders are given the opportunity to build skills and knowledge that could improve their lives in the community (Zoukis, 2015).

Background. Inmates have a wide range of educational needs and achievements. The broad range of offender needs or aspirations present challenges to correctional educators. One of the most pressing issues in correctional education is the need for inmates without a high school diploma or GED to earn their diploma. Achieving a diploma requires a focused effort on the part of the educators (Zoukis, 2015). Often, the diverse population of inmates, and the needs and challenges that come with each offender, present educators with difficulties in the classroom. Inmates have all levels of comprehension, and many may have the additional challenge of learning disabilities. With these disparities present in the learning environment, educators are presented with additional challenges. The broad spectrum of educational needs to address is difficult to achieve when an educator has all the offenders in one learning environment (Zoukis, 2015).

Additionally, Davis, Bozick, Steele, Saunders, and Miles (2013) noted disadvantages inmates face: a lack of educational achievement, the absence of vocational skills and irregular employment histories. These disadvantages pose a threat to the offender's reintegration success. By offering both academic and vocational programming, prisons increase the odds of offender reintegration success. Whether programming is mandatory or voluntary in a facility, the views and motivations of the offenders should be evaluated to help program administrators and

policymakers understand some of the elements to correctional education that lead to offender success in the community (Davis et al., 2013).

Offender motivations and perceptions can be affected by the choice, or lack thereof, to attend academic or vocational programs. Offenders may be less motivated and somewhat resistant to programming that was mandated by an external entity. Inmates who invest themselves in the learning process often have better odds of achieving reintegration success (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). The perceptions offenders hold while searching for employment after release contributes to successful or unsuccessful reintegration. Until formerly incarcerated individuals shift their attitudes from the challenges of stigmatization associated with having a criminal record to one of self-worth and a belief that he or she can overcome such obstacles is another path to a successful reintegration (Scott, 2010).

Context. In a survey by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), slightly more than one-quarter of state prison inmates participate in either academic or vocational training programs (Turner, 2018). Educational achievement could help offenders change their identity and self-concept. An inmate's lack of educational attainment can hurt employment prospects once they are released. Offenders with no motivation can have fatalistic attitudes toward their criminal behavior, whereas motivated offenders can identify and make sense of their criminal behaviors (Mohammed & Mohamed, 2015). By increasing positive views, the inmate could also form the motivation to choose a life that does not include criminal behavior (Bozick, Steele, Davis, & Turner, 2018).

History. Correctional education's first major review was conducted by Martinson (1974), who evaluated literature from 1945 to 1967 to determine what works in offender rehabilitation. During the last three years included in Martinson (1974), federal public policy on ABE was

taking shape. ABE first received federal funding, which was authorized by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 as part of the war on poverty. The federal efforts were designed to provide ABE to the poor and lowest-skilled population in the country (Belzer & Kim, 2018).

Poverty often affects individuals both before and after incarceration. The incarcerated have suffered the negative impact of their sentences on post-release outcomes, which leads to a reduction in the odds of employment and lower wages. The negative outcomes also have had adverse effects on the families and children of the offenders, as well as the community.

Participation in educational programs in prison presented a way of reducing the adverse effects offenders were suffering after release. Both academic and vocational programs are representative of a widespread effort toward rehabilitation (Travis, Western, & Redburn, 2014). Research conducted over the last 20 years showed the risk, needs, and responsivity (RNR) model for effective correctional programming had positive effects on offender outcomes. Whether the correctional education program is academic or vocational, the programs connect participants with a supportive and nurturing environment. Positive learning environments are critical to effective offender rehabilitation (Bozick et al., 2018).

Conceptual framework for the problem. Having worked with offenders in a prerelease center as a case manager, I had the opportunity to see offenders attempt to obtain employment that would provide a livable wage, work toward completing their GED or HiSET and overcome challenges in the community. The offenders were often subject to stigmatization based upon their criminal history, their living conditions, and sometimes, their appearance. Some inmates come from prison with tattoos that are in places that cannot be concealed, or they are obscene or gang-related tattoos.

The former inmates who possess a certificate in a trade that they obtained while in prison had an advantage over those inmates without certifications when they were searching for employment (Shoham, Zelig, Hesisi, Weisburd, & Haviv, 2017). Davis et al. (2013) noted that inmates who received education during incarceration had greater odds of obtaining employment. Offender change is attributable to several influences when prisons place a focus on rehabilitation, the likelihood of offenders experiencing personal change and transformation increases (Behan, 2014). McKinney and Cotronea (2011) showed that students are more motivated in class when they are aware of the course's value. Self-determination theory (SDT) relates to correctional education, which can be identified when the courses the offenders attend contribute to feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

After an extensive search of the literatures, the perceptions of men incarcerated at the prison about the impact of correctional education on their vocational aspirations remains unknown. Similar studies on offender perceptions have been conducted on the broad spectrum of correctional education. Richmond (2014) conducted a study that explored the perceptions of male and female inmates in the Pennsylvania prison industries. Inmates were asked about the impact of the programming on their behavior and the transferability of their training and skills to employment in the community. Much of the research on correctional programming had been quantitative and focused on the characteristics and outcomes of the participants to determine whether the program addressed specific risk factors (Richmond, 2014). According to Richmond (2014), there is significant information on programs and how the programs impact the offenders' lives.

Recommendations made by Pryor and Thompkins (2013) sought to identify different barriers related to correctional education's capability to create a social opportunity for former inmates. An exploration of the amount of the correctional education that leads the formerly incarcerated to employment once released is necessary to further the body of knowledge about educational outcomes and post-release employment (Pryor & Thompkins, 2013). With continued exploration about the many facets of correctional education and the inclusion of inmate perspectives, stakeholders could benefit from the broad spectrum of data produced.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry was to explore the perceptions of the participants in a lower-risk classification unit about how correctional education impacts vocational aspirations once released. Prior research has not evaluated prison industries programs extensively, and the research that has been conducted showed mixed results about program efficacy. Further, the perspectives of program participants are often overlooked by researchers (Richmond, 2014). Exploring the information provided by the students will broaden stakeholders' understanding of the academic and vocational programs and how the programs affect inmates. According to Pryor and Thompkins (2013), few correctional education programs can demonstrate that their programs offer the students all the essential elements necessary for educational success. Additionally, the information obtained in the study could assist program administrators so that changes can be considered based on the participants' perspectives rather than an external view of the programs.

Research Questions

This study intended to understand better the views of the participants in academic and vocational programs at the prison by exploring the following research questions:

1. How do the incarcerated men in a low-risk classification unit of a Midwestern state prison describe their experiences with the correctional education options available to them?
2. How do the incarcerated men at the prison perceive the impact of the educational programs on their vocational aspirations?

Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Study

The consideration for this study was based on the notion that conducting a study that used data collected from correctional education program participants, as opposed to the views of the educators, administrators, and Department of Corrections personnel, could provide different insight into the prison's academic and vocational programs and the course offerings (Houston, 2013). Hall and Killacky (2008) evaluated inmate perspectives about the correctional education at Southern State Penitentiary (SSP), which reviewed similar attributes to the present study, such as motivation, inmate perceptions of success, and future educational and employment plans. The unique insight that appeared in the findings could positively impact the field of practice and future research.

Rationale. This study may provide insight into the various academic and vocational programs offered at the prison. The use of the participants' perceptions and comments could include information that stakeholders may not normally receive (Richmond, 2014). The administrator of the education department could use the study's findings as part of an internal audit of program efficacy. Policymakers could consider this new information when making decisions about allocations for the budget or new legislation and policy about correctional education in the state prisons (Montana Legislative Fiscal Division, 2019).

Relevance. The relevance of offenders' perceptions depends on the program the participant attends. Often, researchers have used comparisons of the outcome measures of the participants compared to nonparticipants (Richmond, 2014). Focusing on the opinions and views of the offenders and the outcomes each expects for himself, creates a space for a unique set of considerations.

Significance of the study. Offenders who participate in correctional education can have completely different experiences and perceptions (Richmond, 2014). This study was conducted from a qualitative approach, which provided room for a deeper understanding of the inner workings of the academic and vocational programs from the participant's point of view. In order to view correctional education at the prison from a more in-depth perspective, both the academic and vocational students were surveyed for their perceptions and experiences (Richmond, 2014).

Definition of Terms

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

Adult basic education (ABE). Adult basic education is defined as the instruction of basic skills, which are reading, writing, math, and other skills necessary to function in society. ABE can include any subject in the curricula of accredited elementary and secondary schools in the state (Montana Code Annotated, 2018). According to the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) (2019), ABE also prepares adults for the achievement of a high school equivalency diploma.

General educational development diploma (GED) and HiSET. A general educational development diploma is a high school equivalency diploma that was created by the GED Testing Service in a joint effort with the American Council on Education (GED Testing Service, 2018) that was used previously by the prison. It is comparable to the HiSET, which was created by

Educational Testing Service (ETS; ETS, 2018). The HiSET is a high school diploma equivalency, which is an affordable alternative to the GED. Both terms HiSET and GED are used within this study and considered equal tests to measure an individual's abilities to qualify for a secondary education diploma (HiSET, 2018).

Secondary education. The secondary level of education, or sometimes referred to as upper secondary education, is typically three to four years of high school. Secondary education consists of comprehensive work; there are no specialties. Although secondary students are often able to take vocational or college-preparatory courses, the instruction received does not directly lead to vocation-specific training or credentials in a given field. After the completion of secondary education programming, a student is awarded a diploma for successful completion of the coursework (National Center for Education Statistics, 1996).

Vocational training or career and technical education (CTE). Vocational training is defined as instruction and job experience for entry-level employment in the workforce (Montana Correctional Enterprises, 2017b). Vocational training is an organized instructional program that offers courses directly related to the preparation of an individual for work in a specific occupation (National Center for Education Statistics, 1995). Career and technical education is another way of referencing vocational training in this study. CTE is defined as academic and skills training to help students succeed in the workforce (Advanced CTE, 2018)

Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations

This study was based on the assumptions that inmate-students would answer the survey questions honestly, knowing that prison personnel would not have access to their survey information. The participants volunteered to participate in the research study, which set the expectation that each would provide detailed accounts of their experiences and perceptions in the

prison's academic and vocational programs. Further, it was assumed that the participants would be representative of the other correctional education participants at the prison.

The limitations of a study stem from the potential for areas of weakness or the problems that are not controllable (Ellis & Levy, 2009). This study has limitations based on the sample and the location of the individuals, which is the lower-risk classification unit in a state men's prison. The prison's Public Information Officer (PIO) limited the study to the inmates in this unit due to security and logistical reasons. The purpose of the sample limitations was set to avoid an undue burden on the prison staff. Sampling in qualitative studies typically relies on small numbers, which facilitates the collection of detailed information (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990; Tuckett, 2004).

Delimitations of a study are the result of deliberate choices about included and excluded characteristics, which help define the study's scope (Simon & Goes, 2013). This study was formed with delimitations to account for the limitations set by the facility and to maintain the integrity of the research. One prison was chosen for the study to collect a manageable amount of data. The study did not survey a sample of all of the inmates at the prison. A subset of the inmates was asked to volunteer for the study, which included the lower-risk classification unit inmates who were participating in either academic or vocational programs.

The education department enrolls approximately 20% of the prison population (Montana Department of Corrections, 2018). Within that 20% of inmates, the sample size for this study was 14 volunteers. The sample was adequate to meet the goals of this research with the rich data obtained about the participants' perceptions and experiences (Tuckett, 2004). No identifying information, such as Department of Corrections (DOC) identification numbers, demographic

information, or offense and sentencing information was collected on any participant as it was not relevant to the aim of the study.

The instrumentation for this study was a researcher-developed open-ended question survey. An expert review panel was used to evaluate the quality and comprehensiveness of the instrument before the administration of the survey. The participants' names were not used on the surveys. Each participant chose a pseudonym for himself for use throughout the study. The prison staff did not have access to the survey information or the pseudonyms. The inmates' names were only known for security and movement purposes.

The reader needs to understand the point of view of the researcher, and any impact the point of view may have on the study (Creswell & Poth, 2017). I was a case manager at a prerelease center from 2010 to 2014. During that time, I worked one-on-one with male offenders for approximately six months at a time. The perspectives and experiences I had during that time could present a researcher bias about the types of answers the volunteers may provide. To eliminate as much of the potential for bias as possible, I used bracketing. The methods I chose included the use of a reflexive journal and a memo process to discover areas that demonstrated preconceived notions so that each could be set aside to maintain objectivity throughout the research process (Tufford & Newman, 2010). None of the volunteers were known to me. I did not have any family or acquaintances incarcerated at the prison at the time of the data collection.

Summary

Chapter 1 provided an introductory view of the study, which provided an overview of the purpose of the study, a statement of the research problem, and the significance of the study. Additionally, the first chapter included the research questions, a definition of key terms, and a

review of limitations and delimitations associated with the study. Chapter 2 is a review of the relevant literatures that surround the topic of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Correctional education and the many facets of these educational programs have been studied for more than 40 years, as evidenced by Martinson (1974). Throughout the United States, many prisons offer some form of academic or vocational programming (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Davis, Bozick, Steele, Saunders, and Miles (2013) stated inmates who participated in correctional education programs had a greater chance of obtaining employment post-release, as compared to inmates who did not participate in any educational programming. Most commonly, the programs offered include Adult Basic Education (ABE), adult literacy, special education, English as a Second Language (ESL), preparatory classes for the General Educational Development diploma (GED), and vocational studies (Davis et al., 2013). According to Davis et al. (2013), studies of the perspectives of the offenders were less common in the literature.

The search of the literature was limited to the previous 15 years and included the Martinson (1974) study for background information on seminal work in this subject area. Literature in this review includes the content areas of academic and vocational programming and outcomes, the perceptions of offenders, the motivations of offenders and SDT, and the relation of the theory to the areas reviewed. I intended to find suitable and relatively current studies in the content areas.

The context of the study stemmed from a need to expand the body of knowledge with information obtained from the participants of correctional education programs at the prison. The information may be useful for policymakers, taxpayers, educators, and criminal justice system professionals. Further, the information obtained from the inmates may provide program

administrators with valuable feedback on the efficacy of the programs offered, which will allow these officials to make changes to the programs in the best interest of the participants.

The literature review will detail seminal research about correctional education and offender rehabilitation, the educational levels of inmates, ABE, vocational training, Florida Ready to Work (FLRTW) program, the state prison education department, inmate perceptions, inmate motivations, and SDT. A review of methodological issues discusses the central works included in the literature review. A synthesis of the central works is included, and a critique of the literature included in this review will follow.

Conceptual Framework

As a former case manager in a men's prerelease center, I had a unique opportunity to experience the challenges and triumphs that the former inmates experienced. The men struggled with finding employment when they arrived. If having a criminal record was not enough, the lack of a GED or high school diploma compounded the battle to find a "good job." Men who had a diploma faced some challenges; however, the opportunities for employment for those men were sometimes better. Davis et al. (2013) found former inmates who had received an education while incarcerated have improved odds of obtaining employment by 13% as compared to the former inmates who did not participate while incarcerated. Academic programs such as Adult Basic Education (ABE) focus on offenders with significantly lower levels of literacy and math skills. The GED most often targets the inmates with functional skills but have not yet achieved a high school diploma or equivalency (Reed, 2015). Men with vocational skills or certificates in the trades often found work more quickly.

According to Shoham, Zelig, Hesisi, Weisburd, and Haviv (2017), the formerly incarcerated who obtained certificates in specific work areas while in prison had an advantage

over the inmates lacking certificates when obtaining employment after release. Mohammed and Mohamed (2015) found that vocational training increases human capital that the formerly incarcerated can offer to potential employers. Trained individuals are worth more to employers than unskilled or untrained individuals. Further, former offenders who possessed licenses or certifications demonstrated a commitment to their chosen profession, which helped the offenders overcome the stigma of having a criminal record (Mohammed & Mohamed, 2015). Vocational education contributes to successful reintegration into the community and provides former inmates with better odds of obtaining employment. Improved communication and organizational skills are also derived from technical skills training (Mohammed & Mohamed, 2015).

The theoretical framework for this study was based on the application of SDT in correctional education. Additionally, the forms of the inmate-students' motivations as they relate to correctional education are discussed. The three elements of SDT: autonomy, competence, and relatedness can be evidenced when a formerly incarcerated individual finds employment in the community and achieves successful community reintegration (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The application of SDT in the academic portion of correctional education relates to an offender's desire to achieve a high school diploma or equivalency. Often, the mandate of secondary education can lead to a lack of motivation or even a feeling of a loss of one's free will if a correctional facility makes an effort to demonstrate the benefits of completing academic programming, the likelihood of an offender to be more driven to complete the course increases (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

The motivations of offenders are affected in many ways. One example of a situation that would not motivate an offender to invest entirely in a program would stem from a mandate to attend a course with a lack of information about the purpose of the mandate (McKinney &

Cotronea, 2011). In such a case, required programming can create tension and ambivalence toward the course. The likelihood of an offender investing into a program could be related to the knowledge provided about the content of the program, the applicability of the program and how the program is beneficial in the successful reintegration process (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). SDT encompasses culture motivation and the way social environments impact motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

SDT explains that people are motivated and have a sense of well-being when the three basic psychological needs are satisfied; these needs include autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT begins with the concept that the natural inclination and evolution of people are directed toward psychological growth, internalization, and well-being. However, the environment can aid or prevent the realization of this natural progression (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Van den Broeck, Ferris, Chang, & Rosen, 2016).

Intrinsic motivation can be a catalyst for psychological growth. Further, curiosity and exploration of activities that a person finds interesting and enjoyable can be done even in the absence of external actions (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Van den Broeck et al., 2016). Extrinsic motivation is a reason for demonstrating a behavior due to reasons other than enjoyment and personal interest. Three types of extrinsic motivation exist. External motivation is when a person takes part in behavior because he or she feels forced to do so out of concern for punishment or rewards another would provide for engaging in this behavior. Introjected motivation is when a person participates in an activity to feel pride, shame, or guilt if they did or did not participate in the behavior. Lastly, identified motivation is more self-imposed and holds importance to the individual and his or her values. With both external and introjected motivation, it is like

identified motivation in that engaging in the behavior is not considered enjoyable (Van den Broeck et al., 2016).

Given the many factors within SDT, the research leans toward a focus on the satisfaction of needs instead of strength. Whereas some need theories look at how strong the person needs something (Deci & Ryan, 2000), another part of SDT, and possibly a unique feature as compared to other needs theories, is that SDT has specific criteria for why some needs, but not others, are basic psychological needs. Psychological needs are critical to the process that allows for the expression of our natural urge that leads to psychological growth, internalization, and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Needs that contribute to psychological growth must demonstrate that enough evidence has been found to qualify as a need contributing to psychological growth, internalization, and well-being above other established needs (Van den Broeck et al., 2016).

Previous research has demonstrated the completion of academic or vocational programming while incarcerated, benefits the offender when they attempt to reintegrate into a community (Davis et al., 2013). Considering offender motivations for participating in correctional education, and the perceptions an offender has about the overall outcome of participation, the concepts of SDT become more relevant to the study. Examining the perceptions of offenders about correctional education, and the program's long-term effect on an offender's life could provide information for program administrators and policymakers on correctional education program efficacy and potential areas of a program that could be considered for review and improvement.

Review of Research Literature and Methodological Literature

The review of the current literature in the subject area of correctional education covered many aspects of the effects and benefits on inmates who may or may not have participated in

education programs. Correctional education has been a part of the prison system since the 19th century. The focus of prison education at the time was created to encompass math, literacy, and communication skills (Drake & Fumia, 2017). Currently, these skills have changed focus to classes that include ABE, GED, and English as a Second Language (ESL). Vocational programming also referred to as career and technical education (CTE), and sometimes apprenticeship training, has been made available to prisoners. Vocational programming provides prisoners with the necessary skills to re-enter society with viable and relevant skills needed in the job market (Drake & Fumia, 2017).

A shift in thought on the incarceration of offenders has changed from a more retributive system to one focusing on programs designed for personal change and transformation through a wide variety of rehabilitative programs, such as education, vocational skills, substance abuse treatment, and cognitive and behavioral programming (Behan, 2014). Many prison systems advocate education as one of the critical elements in offender change (Wright, 2008). Travis, Western, and Redburn (2014) noted that participation in correctional education programs during incarceration could have benefits extending after an offender's release from prison. Further, correctional education can impact the post-release negative effects, such as re-offense, adverse conditions for the offenders' families and children, and their communities (Travis et al., 2014).

Another aspect derived from discussions on correctional education surround participant motivation. In some cases, the offenders may have been court or institutionally ordered to complete a program (McKinney & Cotroneo, 2011). Motivation is an issue for participants in any classroom environment if the student is not aware of the benefits of the elements of a program and how the program can impact their future success. Evaluation of the research regarding both

primary and secondary education found that for students who fail to comprehend the value of a course, the motivation to excel is reduced (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

Research into various course materials using SDT showed that when participants in a course perceive a level of competence, autonomy, and relatedness, the participants' ratings of the class tended to be higher. Conversely, students without information about the value of the course material can create difficulty in relating to the content (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). Deci and Ryan (2008) stated that a feeling of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are needed for optimal performance in a wide range of cultures.

As seminal research, Martinson (1974) conducted a study on prison reform. The general purpose of Martinson (1974) was to explore "what works" in prisoner rehabilitation. An identified issue at the time of this study was that little systematic empirical knowledge about efforts to rehabilitate offenders existed, whether it demonstrated success or failure (Martinson, 1974). The first part of the Martinson (1974) project included a six-month literature search for published reports on attempts to rehabilitate offenders in American correctional facilities from 1945 through 1967. The researcher reviewed the collection of articles. The studies with interpretable findings and designs and execution that met the standards of social science research were selected to be evaluated with the study criteria in mind (Martinson, 1974). For inclusion in the study, the research project had to be an evaluation of a treatment method using an independent measure of the improvement taken by that method and had to use a control group with some untreated persons to compare to treated participants.

Martinson (1974) excluded studies on the basis of methodological reasons, like insufficient data, undescribed or small samples, samples that offered no real comparison between treated and untreated subjects, results impacted by extraneous factors, unreliable measures,

included only a summary of findings, drew false or questionable conclusions, did not provide enough data for a reader to recompute, or inappropriate statistical tests were used. Through this process, Martinson included 231 studies. Each of these studies' data were analyzed once again by Martinson (1974) and summarized in detail to facilitate analyses and comparisons for independent conclusions. The included studies used several measures of offender improvement: recidivism rates, adjustment to living in a prison, vocational success, educational achievement, personality and demeanor changes, and adjustment to release communities (Martinson, 1974).

Martinson (1974) indicated that all the measures were used in the study; however, recidivism and how rehabilitative efforts impacted the current treatment program's performance was his focus. Further, it was noted that the studied groups were disparate, creating a challenge when attempting to determine what worked. Another problem faced by Martinson (1974) was the varied definitions involved with the outcome measure of recidivism rates. For example, failure measures could include arrest rates or parole violations, or success measures could mean successful completion or discharge from supervision. Additionally, measures in several studies may not correlate highly with one another (Martinson, 1974).

New York State Division of Parole Department of Correction (1964) conducted a study that found for young males, academic programs, measured by changes in grade achievement levels, had no significant difference in recidivism (Martinson, 1974). Alternatively, when the subjects in the sample were compared, improvement was only found in those individuals who had higher intelligence quotient scores, evidence of positive records in prior schooling, and positive academic progress in correctional education programs. Glaser (1964) conducted a study that found, when controlled for sentence length, more time in correctional education programming demonstrated a small decrease in subsequent chances of parole violations;

however, it was not enough of a decrease to outweigh the disadvantage associated with the longest attendance in prison education programs. Further, students who attended correctional education programs the longest were also in prison longer and were likely the worst parole risks (Glaser, 1964; Martinson, 1974).

Educational levels. Inmates, on average, possess less education than the general population. It is nearly twice as common for the incarcerated to have an eighth-grade education or less. Therefore, a high percentage of inmates do not hold a high school diploma or equivalency (Zoukis, 2015). Another concern with the incarcerated population is the prevalence of learning disabilities.

Ethnicity is also a factor in the spectrum of educational attainment of the incarcerated. Minority backgrounds often have lower academic achievement levels. An example of three ethnic groups shows 44% of African American inmates do not have a high school diploma or equivalency as opposed to 53% of Hispanics and 27% of Caucasian inmates (Zoukis, 2015). Additionally, the wide range of academic achievement and the presence of learning disabilities present significant challenges to correctional educators. The priority is to focus on the prisoners lacking a high school diploma or equivalency; therefore, this area often receives the most effort (Zoukis, 2015).

The most reliable information about inmate education levels is provided by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS; Zoukis, 2015). The BJS issued a special report that indicated a 14% difference between male and female inmates with an eighth-grade education or less. Sixty percent of incarcerated males, as opposed to 58% of incarcerated females, possessed a high school diploma or equivalency (Zoukis, 2015). Comparatively, approximately 18% of the general population do not have a high school diploma or equivalency. Overall, 47% of

individuals in county jails, 40% of state inmates, and 27% of federal prisoners are lacking high school diplomas or an equivalency (Zoukis, 2015). The findings further indicate that the incarcerated individual who earned a GED in a state facility is approximately 47%, 55% in federal facilities, and approximately 32% for those in county jails. These percentages may be representative of shorter-term sentences in jails and inadequate educational programs (Harlow, 2003; Zoukis, 2015).

According to a study conducted by Davis et al. (2013), the incarcerated have three disadvantages: lower educational achievement, a lack of vocational skills, and inconsistent employment history. These disadvantages presented a considerable challenge for individuals returning to their communities. Students in vocational education had about 28% greater odds of obtaining employment than nonparticipants. Students in academic programming were found to have an 8% better chance of obtaining a job than nonparticipants. Despite the suggestion that vocational education had a better effect than academic programs, there was no statistically significant difference because the number of vocational programs was relatively small (Davis et al., 2013).

Davis et al. (2013) cited that education, job training, and employment were commonly needed by the formerly incarcerated for successful reintegration with society; however, it is a challenge to prepare inmates with the necessary tools to be successful. The BJS and the National Assessment of Adult Learning (NAAL) demonstrated 36.6% of prisoners in state facilities, who were the age of 16 or above, had achieved less than a high school education when compared to 19% of the general U.S. population who were of the same demographic (Davis et al., 2013). The wide range of educational backgrounds of offenders, varying from a lack of educational achievement, often associated with learning disabilities, creates a challenge for correctional

educators. Prisoners come to programming with their own needs and goals, which is an additional challenge for educators (Zoukis, 2015).

The NAAL assessed the English literacy in a sample of 1,200 inmates, aged 16 and above, in the state and federal prison systems and a sample of 18,000 individuals from the general U.S. population in the same demographic range on three different literacy scales. Included in this assessment were prose, document, and quantitative literacy scales (Davis et al., 2013). The NAAL findings indicated that a higher percentage of the incarcerated population was near the basic level for writing literacy, compared to 29% of the U.S. general population. In quantitative literacy scores, the findings showed 39% of inmates compared to 33% of the general population, and scores in document literacy explained 35% of the prison population, as opposed to 22% of the U.S. general population. All these comparisons were deemed statistically significant (Davis et al., 2013; Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner, 2007).

The lack of vocational skills and lower levels of educational attainment, in conjunction with poor work history, presented a considerable challenge for releasees. Incarceration impacted employment and earnings. According to data presented by Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing, the effects of imprisonment on the income and employment in a sample of poor fathers were approximately six percentage points lower than poor fathers with no history of incarceration. Incarceration was also associated with a 14 to 26% decrease in hourly wages (Davis et al., 2013).

The indicators in studies such as Davis et al. (2013) showed the incarcerated are less educated. Ethnic factors and learning disabilities plague the correctional education system. Educators are faced with the challenge of trying to educate the incarcerated effectively, but with such a wide variety of challenges, it can become cumbersome. When the formerly incarcerated reenter the community equipped with skills, the road to success is less complicated. Further

exploration into the educational history of the incarcerated and the effective delivery of education is an important topic to study further.

Adult basic education. The following studies evaluated various academic outcome measures. Examples of outcome measures found in the studies were correctional education's impact on recidivism, skill attainment, academic achievement, and offenders' views of the programming. The outcome measures were examined in various ways, which included: systematic reviews, meta-analyses, empirical quantitative studies, and qualitative inquiry. Both seminal research and studies published over the past 15 years were reviewed.

The most commonly offered programs in prisons are ABE, vocational training, and GED programs. Of these programs, those focusing on necessary academic skills and the achievement of a high school diploma or equivalency provide students with basic literacy and math skills, reasoning through language, writing skills, mathematical reasoning, science, and social studies (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006). According to Reed (2015), individuals typically placed in ABE programming have very low levels of literacy and math skills. GED preparatory classes focus on those prisoners who have functional academic abilities that have not yet obtained a high school diploma or an equivalency (Reed, 2015).

ABE encompasses several areas which include basic literacy and basic mathematics, English as a second language (ESL) instruction, GED preparation, GED, and adult learning skills. Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), adult education is defined as preparation for employment, higher quality employment, or education that leads to employment (Belzer & Kim, 2018). This narrowing of the scope of ABE can be detrimental to some individuals. Learners who have difficulty reading, writing, doing math, or using technology to solve problems have not been adequately addressed. Without these necessary skills, the

current scope of the essential benefits of increasing basic skill levels for reasons unrelated to employment could be minimized by the narrow employment-focused programming. Adults scoring in the lowest levels of literacy present a personal burden, as well as a burden to the programs that aid them in the pursuit to increase their skill level to a point where it will impact their earnings (Belzer & Kim, 2018). Bozick, Steele, Davis, and Turner (2018) stated intellectual and moral development are integral to behavior modification through education, which provides knowledge and challenge that would build vital skills and expand an offender's sense of purpose and focus their life goals. Inmates in academic courses could potentially learn, through theoretical contexts, how to transition to a more mature state and have a chance to understand the consequences of their behaviors further (Bozick et al., 2018).

Depending upon the state, education during incarceration may be voluntary or mandatory (Ewert & Wildhagen, 2011). At the study site, the intake assessments determine the level of education an inmate requires; the ABE programming is voluntary. Ultimately, it is the goal of the education department to assist offenders in passing the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET), to obtain a high school equivalency diploma. The inmate is responsible for attendance and demonstrated improvement in periodic skills tests (Montana State Prison Operational Procedure, 2017a).

The prison utilizes the Adult Basic Education Content Standards as directed by the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) to govern all classroom curriculums. The TABE Survey Assessments in all subject areas are administered to participants within the first 12 hours of instruction to monitor educational gains or areas of need for a student. The pretest establishes the baseline to measure each student's educational gains (Montana State Prison Operational Procedure, 2017a).

The prison's high school equivalency exams transitioned from the GED exam to the HiSET. The HiSET was created by Educational Training Service (ETS) as an affordable high school equivalency option in 2014. The HiSET was formed by the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education, which provides out-of-school youth and adults with the chance to prove skill proficiency and to earn a state-issued high school equivalency diploma (Educational Testing Service, 2018). ABE programming at the prison is geared to raise the skill levels of the students to the point that will provide them with the necessary skills to pass the HiSET (Montana Department of Corrections, 2018). The skills required to pass the exam are focused on five core content areas: language arts, both reading and writing, mathematics, science, and social studies (Educational Testing Service, 2018).

In the state of Ohio, inmates are first sent to a reception center before transport to the facility where the inmate will serve his or her sentence. New inmates will be given a battery of assessments within the seven calendar days of orientation at the reception center (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2018). All inmates, with the exclusion of death row inmates, are required to undergo assessment. The standardized testing used in the state includes Nationally Recognized Standardized Assessment, Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS), the TABE, the GED test or GED Ready, and the proficiency test or Ohio Graduation Test (OGT; Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2018).

Individuals under the age of 22 that were identified as requiring special education programming will be provided with the special education services needed. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires such accommodation for the identified inmates. Ohio facilities use a variety of criteria to determine which offenders are placed in a specific program, the level of priority for enrollment, and the required term of enrollment (Ohio Department of

Rehabilitation and Correction, 2018). Inmate attendance requirements for most programs offered in Ohio facilities is at least two quarters. This requirement applies to the inmate's current term of incarceration. Inmates do have the opportunity to continue their education voluntarily. The interested inmates are placed on a waiting list and enrolled as class space becomes available. CTE and a voluntary Transitional Education Program (TEP) are available to inmates meeting sentence requirements (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2018).

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) offers various types of programming to those incarcerated in the State's prisons. All inmates are first sent to a reception center. Each inmate undergoes a battery of assessments which include mental and physical examinations, disability identification and corresponding accommodations, and each offender is given the TABE reading assessment (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2018). During the classification process at the offender's home facility, the inmate meets with a correctional counselor. Through the classification process, the classification committee determines what programming is appropriate for the inmate. If a need for academic programming is identified, the offender is placed on the list for the appropriate level of academic courses based on the results of the offender's assessment results. The educational assessments used by CDCR are the TABE and CASAS (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2018).

Offenders with no verifiable high school diploma or GED will be placed on a list for the appropriate level of ABE. In the California prison system, ABE consists of basic literacy, ESL, and high school equivalency or high school diploma programs. The average length of a course is one year per grade-level (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2018). A voluntary education program is also offered for students, which provides the opportunity for

additional tutoring and individualized instruction through peer tutoring, correspondence work and large and small group instruction (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2018).

CDCR also provides CTE opportunities for offenders. Courses take approximately six to 18 months and lead to industry-recognized certification. CDCR has 22 different CTE programs. There are no eligibility requirements for entry into one of the programs; however, priority placement is given to those offenders who have less than five years left to serve. The courses are open-entry and open-exit. Students can learn the necessary skills to obtain entry-level jobs as well as begin non-traditional careers (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2018). CDCR offers additional opportunities for educational improvement in the facilities. Library services are used to provide inmates with various publications, reference materials, CTE and college-level textbooks, and basic literacy materials. Post-secondary education (PSE) is available to inmates at their own cost. Often grant funds are available to help offenders attend college. The reentry programming is designed to aid offenders in the reintegration process, which includes the Transitions Reentry Program that offers a diverse curriculum to teach community skills for day-to-day life (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2018).

Change does not come solely from facts and information; change requires an emphasis on problem-solving skills that drive offenders to a different frame of mind than they previously had. Problem-solving in a new way is far from the norm for these students; however, this transformation could prove itself to be essential in lasting change (Bozick et al., 2018; Duguid, 1982). The “desistance paradigm” indicates that correctional programming needs to make sense to students in order to allow them to lead a better life (Maruna & LeBel, 2010). Obtaining

educational credentials may allow offenders to change their sense of identity and self-image that leads them to be more motivated to lead productive lives free from crime. Academic programs can be one tool for a newly released offender to build a stronger resume, which in turn can improve their chances of obtaining employment (Bozick et al., 2018).

Most commonly ABE, vocational training, and GED preparatory courses are used in correctional education. Using these programs to improve the self-image, educational achievement, and motivation of the inmate is a positive way to help offenders reintegrate. The downside of this programming is the lack of fluidity. Inmates with deficient levels of education or those with learning disabilities can burden an educator and classroom. Without special assistance for these individuals, a barrier exists for both types of students. By exploring correctional education and how the offenders perceive their programming, a potential solution to the disparities that currently exist in the classrooms may be possible.

Vocational education. Vocational education or CTE is training designed to equip prisoners with skills in a chosen occupation. Vocational education is also part of a prisoner's rehabilitative programming. Offenders who complete these types of programs increase their odds of successful reintegration into the community and a reduction of the risk of reoffending. CTE provides motivated prisoners the skills that improve the offender's life through discipline and by supporting confidence and stability in their lives (Mohammed & Mohamed, 2015).

Some vocational programs provide a formal certificate, which helps the formerly incarcerated gain acceptance into a workplace. Certificates provide ex-offenders an advantage over nonparticipants, which increased their chances of finding employment in the competitive job market (Shoham et al., 2017). Vocational training will likely help offenders integrate into the

labor market, boost their ability to bring home a livable wage in a legal manner, provide job stability, and provide a sense of belonging to the community (Shoham et al., 2017).

Through vocational education, the incarcerated may address cognitive changes, not unlike those experienced by academic program students. CTE is designed to provide the occupational skills that employers are looking for in applicants. Furthermore, those inmates with certificates and training could potentially have more job prospects when they are released (Bozick et al., 2018). The comprehensive training that employers are looking for is likely to require the licenses and certificates coming from these programs. The expectation of a reduction in reoffending through the use of vocational programs is intended to ease the transition into the community and workforce (Bozick et al., 2018).

Florida ready to work program. The increasingly global and highly technical economy requires reading and math skills in the workplace. The skill level needed in the workplace is the equivalent to the skills needed for the first year of college (Olson, 2006). Workplace credentialing is a concept that led to the creation of a uniform certificate. The offender who has achieved this credential has demonstrated proficiency in reading, applied mathematics, the ability to research and find the information needed for a particular task or comprehension, decision-making abilities, and communication (Brown & Rios, 2014). The workplace credentialing is meant to be complementary to a GED or high school diploma (Cavanagh, 2005).

In Florida, the Department of Economic Opportunity manages a program called the Florida Ready to Work (FLRTW) program. The FLRTW operates on Worldwide Interactive Network (WIN) Career Readiness courseware. The courseware builds skills in three subject areas: applied mathematics, reading for information, and the location of information. WIN is consistent with the objectives set by the Florida Sunshine State Standards, the TABE 9 and 10,

the Comprehensive Student Assessment Systems, the GED, and other standardized guides (Brown & Rios, 2014).

The FLRTW program takes approximately 60 to 70 hours of self-guided study to complete, possibly more if a student needs to repeat a section. Students in this program work a minimum of five hours per week on the courseware. The courseware tracks the progress and assessment scores for each student, which are closely monitored by a full-time teacher that facilitates the program. The teachers are quite involved in the student's progress; teachers provide each with feedback and support throughout the program (Brown & Rios, 2014). Once a student completes the FLRTW program, he will receive a gold, silver, or bronze credential signed by the governor. Many of the individuals who complete this program go on to work on their academic achievements. As of March 2012, two percent of all people in Florida who completed the program were in a correctional setting. Overall, the state of Florida had 121,144 credentials awarded in 2012, meaning 2,414 were in a correctional facility (Brown & Rios, 2014). Since little scholarly information on the efficacy of a workplace credentialing program exists, the study completed by Brown and Rios (2014) is the first scholarly research project on FLRTW or any similar program in a correctional facility.

Prison education department. The education department of the Department of Corrections provides offenders with vocational education, industry, and agricultural programming. The program is designed to develop marketable employment skills, life skills, a strong work ethic, and helps to build the offender's self-esteem through a sense of pride in the achievements made through this work. Often, it is the first time in the lives of the offenders to experience these positive feelings (Montana Correctional Enterprises, 2017a).

The prison provides opportunities in many programs. The vocational education program, partnered with the Department of Labor and a state university, created a welding and fabrication pre-apprenticeship program. Programs offered in both the men's and women's prisons vary (Montana Department of Corrections, 2018). The educational department offers vocational programming in agriculture, classroom education programs to correspond with the various vocational programs, and practical work for the various vocational programs. Vocational programs offered by the DOC include motor vehicle maintenance, various agricultural-related programs, tire services, auto body repair, welding, and computer-aided plasma cutting services. The education department developed nationally recognized certification programs to aid vocational education students with marketable job skills that meet industry standards (Montana Department of Corrections, 2018).

Inmates that participated in either academic or vocational programming had the opportunity to learn the necessary skills to obtain sound employment (Davis et al., 2013) but were also given transitional services during their reentry (Montana Correctional Enterprises, 2017a). Transitional programs include services such as assistance with obtaining birth certificates and social security cards, obtaining a state identification card, assistance with renewing their driver's license, obtaining a commercial driver's license, and housing and employment resources and assistance. The newly released individuals cannot obtain employment without the necessary identification to complete new hire paperwork, so the assistance provided for reentry aids the formerly incarcerated with finding and securing employment (Montana Correctional Enterprises, 2017a).

The perceptions and opinions of the participants in these programs are essential to understand the efficacy of the programming and how that programming helps the offenders with

reentry. The results of such an investigation could prove beneficial to the education department administrator and educators who could view the perceptions of their students and consider changes, eliminations or additions to programming for the best interest of the offenders in the programs.

Perceptions of inmates. The incarcerated often have limited services available to them for many reasons. Two common examples of these limitations are the lack of funding and a culture that does not accept individuals who have committed crimes (Baillargeon, Hoge, & Penn, 2010). With the research surrounding the various opinions of incarcerated individuals, the perceptions of these individuals about the available programs, program efficacy, or their opinions about possible program improvements could be useful to the officials who are creating and implementing correctional education programming. The information might also be useful to the public by providing insight into the rehabilitative efforts being used to help the incarcerated make positive changes in their lives (Houston, 2013).

Research conducted by Hall and Killacky (2008) featured inmate perspectives about correctional education at SSP. The students felt their perceptions of success had an impact on their study habits, the motivation to attend courses and continue to work on the study material, and the participant's future education and employment plans. Success meant different things to each participant. The students stated that success was more intrinsic than just the ability to find a job. True success to the participants meant doing something enjoyable, instead of working a job that pays the bills. The students defined success as the ability to take care of themselves and their families. Another definition given was taking care of their responsibilities as an indication of success. Other comments were made that associated success with individualism, individual contentment, and the motivation to study (Hall & Killacky, 2008).

One theme that emerged from the Hall and Killacky (2008) study was regret. The participants referred to how their life choices and experiences impacted their correctional education experiences: each inmate reflected upon the decisions and subsequent consequences as the reason for their incarceration. Additionally, the inmates thought about their prior educational experiences and teachers. There was a familiar feeling of regret about their behavior and lack of effort at that time. The participants were able to identify at least two former teachers that had positively impacted their lives, even if it was for a brief period. The regret expressed by the participants indicated they wished that they had chosen to participate in one of the opportunities presented when they were in school. Further, the participants stated that they should have made wiser decisions (Hall & Killacky, 2008).

Additionally, Tewksbury and Stengel (2006) completed a study regarding inmate perceptions of the importance of programming and the tools and resources in the programs. They studied students in 14 programs offered at the Kentucky State Reformatory, which included both academic and vocational programs. The study included 281 students for one month in 2004. The academic programs consisted of 63.7% of inmates. The vocational programs held 36.3% of the inmates. The vocational programs offered at the facility included welding, plumbing, electrical, upholstery, masonry, carpentry, interior finishing, auto body repair, auto mechanics, small engine repair, and graphic arts (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006).

Like other literature on this topic, the sample in this study reported the low educational achievement of offenders before they entered prison. More than one in three of the students had less than a 10th-grade education. The researchers used a scale of zero, meaning not at all likely, to 10, meaning they will undoubtedly finish, to measure how the students felt about their success

in the program. The rating for the academic program students was 8.68, and the vocational program student rating was 9.27 (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006).

The participants were asked to consider how they considered the skills or content in their programs. The participants were asked to consider how critical these skills and content were to their education. The content areas the students were asked to rate included: math, reading, writing, literature, listening, speaking, history, science, spelling, grammar, and life skills (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006). The top five content areas listed as very important to the academic students were math, listening, reading, science, and spelling. The vocational students listed the following as their top five content areas: math, listening, reading, life skills, and science. Additionally, the academic students indicated the most helpful tools available to them were the teachers and textbooks (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006).

Another perception the researchers evaluated was what resources the students found to be helpful. The list of resources included: textbooks, dictionaries, encyclopedias, study materials, computers, videos, cassette tapes, educational television, teachers, teachers' aides, and libraries (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006). The scale used to measure the helpfulness was zero, meaning not at all helpful, to 10, the resources were beneficial. The top five resources rated as very helpful for academic students were: teachers, textbooks, dictionaries, libraries, and teachers' aides. The vocational students found the following resources very helpful: teachers, textbooks, computers, encyclopedias, and homework. Vocational students rated the quality of their teachers higher than academic students. The vocational students' quality rating was 9.37. The ratings for the quality of the academic teachers was 8.85. The ratings for the quality of the programs were rated higher by vocational students at 9.14, and the academic students rated the programs at 8.64 (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006).

The attitudes of the offenders are formed because of the way they internalize and think about their personal experience with crime and the consequences of their actions. Further, their life events and personal situations at the time they were offending are contributing factors to the offender's attitude. Offenders experience a feeling of stigmatization, and they also feel labeled, which holds significant importance in the process of having a successful reintegration (Scott, 2010).

In a study conducted by Eley (2007), the participants indicated the jobs they believed were available to them were monotonous, manual labor jobs with poor wages. Additionally, offenders may perceive themselves as victims of an unfair society. Some felt the employers' attitudes were the reason they did not get hired, instead of thinking they were less qualified than the chosen candidate (Eley, 2007). Eley (2007) reviewed the situations of school-aged youth that had been placed in adult correctional facilities. The study indicated the youthful offenders did not receive adequate education to help them abstain from a life of crime once released.

Further, Eley (2007) argued that the school-aged incarcerated individuals have a fundamental right to education, as the individuals would have when they were not incarcerated. The author noted the rise in the number of these youthful offenders entering the adult correctional system further complicates the issue of correctional education. Eley (2007) indicated that programming in adult facilities does not meet the needs of incarcerated youth.

Scott (2010) focused on adult inmates who had been surveyed about the importance of crime and employment. Eley (2007) addressed youthful offenders in adult correctional facilities. The views of the youth, as compared to the adults, showed different perceptions about employment after incarceration. The contrast between youthful offenders and adults present another area of need for further examination.

Scott (2010) conducted pretests on inmates who had been released for approximately three to six weeks. One topic explored was the perceived advantages of steady employment while still incarcerated. The top five answers included: financial security, material gain, a personal sense of satisfaction or fulfillment, the ability to provide for themselves, family and friends, and self-development and enhancement. Alternatively, on the same pretest, the participants were asked about the perceived disadvantages of steady work before release. The top five responses were: a lack of enough leisure and recreational time, a structured schedule, conflict in the workplace, an adverse impact on their physical and mental health, and time away from family and friends (Scott, 2010).

Scott (2010) conducted a posttest six months after the participants were released. The subject for the posttest was the advantages and disadvantages of steady employment. The top five advantages on the posttest regarding a steady job were: financial security, material gain, the ability to provide for themselves, family and friends, personal satisfaction and fulfillment, and community involvement (Scott, 2010). The top five disadvantages to steady employment on the posttest were: having a structured schedule, a lack of leisure and recreational time, none, and an adverse impact on their physical and mental health (Scott, 2010).

The participants' attitudes about rehabilitative programming within the prison produced both positive and negative comments. The participants indicated the availability of programs that facilitate personal prosocial change is an advantage. Alternatively, pro-criminal behaviors that lead to re-incarceration provided offenders more access to programming if they wanted to attend these programs (Scott, 2010).

An exploration of offender perceptions could expand the body of knowledge, which could have an impact on how offenders are educated. Using the participants' views as an

evaluation tool for program efficacy would be one approach that could be included in research projects aiming to improve what is already known in this subject area. For researchers seeking inmate perceptions, it would be a possible advantage to weigh the views of the inmates against statistical data on the various outcome measures related to the programming.

Motivations. Motivation is the process of being moved to do something. A motivated person has the drive to accomplish the desired outcome. The orientation of motivation evaluates the reason for an action. Motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is driven by interest or enjoyment. Extrinsic motivation often comes from an external force to do something (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Additionally, autonomous motivation relates to the extent that an individual experiences goals and decisions that are self-generated and freely chosen, rather than through external or internal pressures. Self-determination theory (SDT) focuses on basic psychological needs and the quality of motivation that form an understanding of the way personal values contribute to an individual's life (Hope, Holding, Verner-Filion, Sheldon, & Koestner, 2019). The following studies relate to offender perceptions and motivations.

According to Hall and Killacky (2008), the SSP participants were internally and externally motivated to change. Hall and Killacky (2008) aimed to find the importance of education in the criminal justice system. The study examined the offender's perceptions about adult education and the many aspects of correctional education. A qualitative inquiry was used to discover the offenders' perceptions about class attendance, interactions with educators, interactions with prison staff, and the benefits the offenders felt they would receive from the classes (Hall & Killacky, 2008). The purpose of the research was to obtain the perspectives of offenders about their correctional education programs. Further, Hall and Killacky (2008)

reviewed prior educational and work histories to determine what factors contributed to the educational experience in prison. The researchers aimed to find what motivates the offenders to attend courses (Hall & Killacky, 2008).

The participants indicated they had a desire to impress their loved ones. Those participants with children included their children in their overall motivation. Some parents were motivated by being able to demonstrate to their children that school was a positive endeavor for everyone; and for others, the motivation came from the ability to obtain sound employment and care for their families (Hall & Killacky, 2008).

Hall and Killacky (2008) found that regret played a part in a participant's motivation to change. The inmate-students who felt regret for failing to pay attention while they were in school or did not graduate indicated they could have attended college if they had applied themselves. The motivation to commit fully to their studies is a possible result of their missed opportunities in the past (Hall & Killacky, 2008).

To attend vocational programs, the students must have completed their GED. According to the participants, this prerequisite motivated them to continue their studies, so they could move on to a program that would provide them an opportunity to have a better chance at obtaining employment, and to make more money to support their families. The participants also felt to be truly successful; it was necessary to do more than get by; they needed to do something they enjoyed instead of making enough money to pay the bills. Additionally, the students recognized that success was only achievable through obtaining a high school equivalency diploma or learning a trade. Thus, they were motivated to continue educational or vocational programming to reach the goal of becoming a successful man in society (Hall & Killacky, 2008). Hall and Killacky (2008) explored the offenders' motivations for continuing their education while

incarcerated. In a similar study, Behan (2014) evaluated offenders' motivations for attending educational programs.

Behan (2014) conducted a study of 50 men in a prison of 150 inmates in Dublin, Ireland. The intent was to explore the inmates' motivations for attending educational programs. Adults have numerous reasons for attending school. Some individuals attend to gain knowledge or learn a skill or trade. Others use this opportunity as a second chance at getting an education. Some inmates use the courses to pass the time, to refocus their minds on something other than the prison or to gain personal or political transformation (Behan, 2014; Thompson, 1996).

Interviews revealed that many of the inmates participated in school for the same reasons adults who are not incarcerated attend. Other views showed that inmates are seeking to maintain some of their individuality or to use the time to develop a new identity (Behan, 2014). The research produced four categories as major themes, but within each, there were several sub-themes. The largest group had 19 respondents who sought a second chance at education, creating a path to prepare them for post-release employment opportunities. The next group consisted of 13 individuals who used this chance to escape the monotony and boredom they experience in their daily lives (Behan, 2014). Seven inmates stated education was a means of passing the time. Six felt education was primarily a place for critical thought and personal transformation. Overall, the researcher received multiple motivations from the participants about their participation in education; many perspectives began to emerge after a period had passed. The inmates needed to feel safe to express themselves (Behan, 2014).

The motivation changed for some of the participants from a perspective of just passing the time to a preparation process for release. Additionally, some saw a chance for personal transformation. Personal transformation was a more common motivation in inmates who had

been in and out of prison throughout their lives with a significant portion of inmates attending school to gain a new skillset or to acquire the knowledge they did not get before incarceration. These inmates hoped for productive lives after prison (Behan, 2014). One respondent, who had a life sentence, stated his motivation was to become educated. Another prisoner with a life sentence indicated he had a desire to improve his English writing skills and to gain a basic competency with computers (Behan, 2014).

Self-determination theory and offenders. According to McKinney and Cotronea (2011), it is difficult to determine how to react to previous SDT research on prison educational programming. Regardless of the style or approach a program was created from, that program will not be a path to offender success unless the inmates are willing to invest themselves in the learning process. One theory is to introduce the program content before the beginning of the course, to demonstrate the value of the content to the students' reintegration process. This informative step might be an incentive for more inmates to participate and explore other educational opportunities (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

Research that has focused on primary and secondary education shows students fail when they do not understand the value of a particular class. This concern is reduced considerably when the course's value is clear, which, in turn, creates a student's motivation to excel. In correctional education, instructors experience challenges in their classrooms when the students do not understand the reason for a mandated course, or the potential value the class holds for them. Ultimately, the goal is to foster a sense of interest and motivation to learn, so the inmates will be able to achieve success when they are released (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

The three elements of SDT, autonomy, competence, and relatedness, must be met for the student to build a sense of psychological well-being. Autonomy is a universal drive to take

charge of one's own life and circumstances. Autonomy does not mean that the person has to be independent of others; it means the person has a sense of being able to choose for themselves (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). Competency is when a person is effective in a particular situation or environment (Filak & Sheldon, 2008). When used concerning education, it closely correlates to achievement, doing well on an exam, or in a specific content area with an overall successful outcome for the student (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). Lastly, relatedness is the universal need to connect with others and to feel a connection with a group. For example, this could be described as the feeling a student experiences when he or she feels connected and accepted by an instructor (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

As the theory developed, a difference between autonomous motivation and controlled motivation began to stand out (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Autonomous motivation is created with intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation about activities and goals an individual sees as valuable to their success (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). Autonomous motivation can lead to improved psychological health and the ability to have lasting behavioral changes over a continued period (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Controlled motivation brings parts of behavior based on social norms, beliefs, and the avoidance of shame. These components are critical factors when exploring successful educational outcomes (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

Further exploration of SDT and its application in correctional education would broaden the body of work that aims to understand offender learning and the motivations that drive participation or the failure to participate. An essential factor in offender motivation to participate in programming is the force that provokes an offender's investment into a particular program and the offender's understanding of the course's value. Future research based on the McKinney and Cotronea (2011) leaves a wide range of questions to be answered. The area of correctional

education could benefit from the tenets of SDT by incorporating the concepts into the creation or revision of program curricula with the intent to improve the offender's odds of successful reintegration.

Review of Methodological Issues

Throughout the review of methodological issues, studies reviewed were conducted in various ways. The respective researchers chose both quantitative and qualitative studies. Meta-analyses and systematic reviews covered a wide range of studies over several different periods, which also included differences in the studies' set range of years. Qualitative narrative inquiry was used to evaluate several aspects of correctional education and offender perceptions. Quantitative, mixed-method, and repeated-measures designs were conducted to measure the numerical data and summarized the analysis of that data. Each study identifies limitations, the characteristics of the samples, and identified areas for future research.

The Reed (2015) study was designed to focus on the proximal outcomes of improved academics and class completion. Her focus was to gain new insight into the benefits of correctional education and the possibility that such programs provided inmates with the support to meet societal standards for success in education. Reed (2015) systematically reviewed the published literature from several databases. The wide search of the published literature within these databases created an extensive collection of studies to review for inclusion in the current study (Reed, 2015).

The first stipulation was that only peer-reviewed articles selected through specific criteria would be considered for inclusion in the research. The researcher chose to include only peer-reviewed literature because it provided additional assurance of each publication's methodological rigor and scientific merit (Reed, 2015). The studies were further limited to those

published between January 2003 through June 2014. The update to the GED in January 2014 somewhat limited the timespan for included publications. Further, participants in the studies were required to have demonstrated educational progress, as indicated by test scores and course credits. The relevant studies were also required to have effect sizes that were considered medium to strong. Five studies met all the inclusionary guidelines (Reed, 2015).

Reed (2015) reviewed several designs. The intervention had to focus on academic or vocational skills. Outcome measures included academic testing, earned credits, trade certifications, or vocational tests. Finally, enough data on the outcomes had to be present to produce an adequate calculation of effect sizes. Reed (2015) chose studies with designs that did not allow for the evaluation of the impact of the treatments, such as correlation, factor analyses, survey, and program description.

Reed's (2015) synthesis covered several outcome measures related to academic and vocational programming. Using peer-reviewed studies to create a strong foundation for the synthesis, the researcher included studies with varied research designs. Alternatively, Shoham et al. (2017) used qualitative investigation to review vocational programs carefully.

Shoham et al. (2017) critically examined the "black box" (p. 432) behind six vocational programs used in the Israel Prison Service (IPS). The research project approached the area of vocational programming from multiple points of view. The research included the years 2004 to 2012; however, the number of participants was relatively low (Shoham et al., 2017). Researchers interviewed all the supervisors of the vocational programs, which presented several factors needed for the success of the programs. The researchers chose the following programs to evaluate electrical trades, aluminum welding and building, construction, landscaping, training for the job market, and cosmetology. The group conducted interviews with the head of the

employment division, the head of training and human resources, all district officers at the IPS National Training Center and the instructors for the vocational programs (Shoham et al., 2017).

Shoham et al. (2017) was performed ethically, with an appropriate design and produced information that was beneficial to stakeholders. Despite the multi-faceted views of the subjects interviewed, no offender information was obtained. The research provided inferential conclusions about the vocational programs included in the study. Additionally, the researchers accomplished the goal of finding out more about what works in these programs. Shoham et al. (2017) found that by using the principles of a holistic approach, the psycho-social needs of the prisoners and their ability to cope with their environment when they returned to the community were improved.

Similarly, Behan (2014) sought to examine whether inmates had the potential for personal reform and transformation within the prison system. The researcher used semi-structured interviews that contained open-ended questions to maximize the information obtained from the participants, which consisted of current inmates and former inmates. Behan (2014) started by questioning the relationship between education and rehabilitation in a more authoritative type of facility. The information obtained from the narrative inquiry presented an argument that an educational approach, the culture, and the atmosphere of the facility were significant when considering creating a learning environment (Behan, 2014). The participants interviewed were diverse in terms of the lengths of their sentences, and their prior stays in prison were described. The researcher compared the various participants and the characteristics of each, with some focus on how the length of their sentences impacted the study's findings (Behan, 2014).

Behan's (2014) design was appropriate for the aim of the research project. The study left room for further investigation of the topic, to clarify and expand the existing body of research. The study provided anonymity to the participants, made additional accommodations to be sure the informed consent was fully understood before the participants signed the document. The study produced information that was beneficial to all stakeholders (Behan, 2014).

Behan (2014) as compared to Hall and Killacky (2008), offender perceptions were examined differently. The data collected did describe the views of the participants about the impact of the facility environment, the participants' length of time in the facility and the unique characteristics of each participant to form the findings of the effects of these factors on the participant's ability to achieve personal change and transformation. Hall and Killacky (2008) viewed offender perceptions of education about successful community reintegration.

Hall and Killacky (2008) were driven by a focus on the determination of inmates' perceptions of their educational experiences emphasizing the effect of their programming on post-release reintegration success. The study was a narrative inquiry, which used field notes, interviews, and questionnaires to collect data. The sample of participants came from 10 students and two administrators who met the study participation criteria. Hall and Killacky (2008) chose to include only male inmates housed at SSP who were currently enrolled in one of the pre-college adult education programs, and half of those subjects had to be eligible for parole at some point in their sentence.

For Hall and Killacky (2008) to collect the necessary data for their study, they focused on three areas that would contribute to the findings of the research questions. The areas of focus included: prior education and employment experiences, the perceptions of the inmate students about the course offerings, the course environments, the instructors, and how the combination of

the educational experience and prior experiences with education led to successful reentry into their communities. During the study, field notes recorded the observations made in the classrooms (Hall & Killackey, 2008). The questionnaire used open-ended questions to collect the participant perceptions and to understand the correctional education process. Finally, the interviews were used to obtain personal information at length. Interview questions were designed to solicit data that could not be obtained in a multiple-choice question. The researchers' audio-recorded and transcribed the interviews verbatim (Hall & Killackey, 2008).

Once the data were collected, the researchers were able to analyze the data, and four main themes emerged. Through these themes, the researchers derived the key factors that coincided with the original research questions. The implications of this study are a benefit to three aspects of American education: elementary, secondary, and correctional education (Hall & Killackey, 2008). The researchers indicated that this study did reveal inmate perceptions and created a basis for further research into the topic from the inmate's perspective. The researchers stated that additional research from the inmate's point of view would assist prison administrators and policymakers in designing and implementing programs in the future (Hall & Killackey, 2008).

Hall and Killackey (2008) was further exploration of similar aspects surrounding correctional education. Tewksbury and Stengel (2006) expanded on Moeller, Day, and Rivera (2004), which in both cases, studied the students' perceptions of the programming, the resources available, the inmates' background during incarceration, and the demographics of the samples. The three studies were not identical; however, the work in each expanded upon the factors that led to the inmates' perceptions.

Tewksbury and Stengel (2006) designed a study using narrative inquiry to understand the importance of the programming and tools used in the correctional education department at

Kentucky State Reformatory. The study took place in one month in 2004. The researchers evaluated all students who were enrolled in any of the 14 academic or vocational programs. The total sample size was 281 prisoners. The mean age of the students was 40.8, which was a median of 40 years of age (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006). The report stated that the students' average time in prison was 74.8 months, with half of those in prison for 48 months or longer. The range of sentences for the participants spanned from one month to 23 years. The mean length of incarceration was 38 months, with a median length of 24 months. Further, only 8.5% of the sample reported having more than three disciplinary write-ups; conversely, 58.4% had no disciplinary write-ups (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006).

Tewksbury and Stengel (2006) used a survey that consisted of 43 items, which were administered to the students during their regularly scheduled class times. The items that were included in the survey were designed to capture and evaluate the students' perceptions of the programs, resources, institutional history, and demographics. Tewksbury and Stengel (2006) focused on all the programs instead of narrowing their survey to one specific form of correctional education programming. The decision to choose the wide range of classes prevented them from generalizing the results. Further, the results provided an accurate depiction of the perceptions gathered for use in policy and programmatic decisions (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006).

Tewksbury and Stengel's (2006) research was an extension of the Moeller et al. (2004) study. Tewksbury and Stengel (2006) evaluated a larger sample of inmates and explored a broader range of perceptions and experiences. The researchers were successful in furthering the body of research with a better understanding of the programs and offered more generalizable results.

Moeller et al. (2004) used a mixed-method design that explored the perceptions of a group of offenders about their educational environment. The study was based on Fetterman's (1994) ideas about empowerment evaluation. Moeller et al. (2004) randomly selected 16 male students from GED and adult basic education courses at a high minimum-security correctional facility in Illinois (Moeller et al., 2004).

The researchers used a self-administered questionnaire and interviews that covered five topics, which included introductory background information, the curriculum, classroom interactions, the classroom environment, and the students' attitudes toward school. The purpose of this research was to evaluate how the students felt about their educational courses and the class environment. Moeller et al. (2004) were seeking suggestions from the students for improving the facility education system. Fetterman (1994) suggested that both groups, as well as individuals, must be empowered to be agents of change and to solve their problems (Moeller et al., 2004).

Moeller et al. (2004) sample of students came from a population of 50 GED and 90 ABE participants. Once the researchers had a list of the students from each of the eight courses, a table of random numbers was used to select the study participants. Two students from each of the courses were ultimately included in the sample. All the study participants were 18 years of age or above (Moeller et al., 2004).

The self-administered questionnaire had four multiple-choice questions, followed by two questions that required students to use a Likert scale rating system, and the final 10 questions were open-ended, which were designed to elicit information about the classroom environment and the students' feelings toward school (Moeller et al., 2004). The interviews consisted of 10 questions that focused on whether the students felt they had enough class time between tests to

feel confident that their scores would improve, whether the students felt they would continue their education, and the students' goals (Moeller et al., 2004).

The study had limitations due to the small sample size and the inability to generalize the results. The study made suggestions for future studies (Moeller et al., 2004). A fundamental problem with the study was the timing of the study. Students had been informed that college and vocational courses were being eliminated just before the commencement of the study. The results of the data collection could have been impacted by this news, which had the potential to make the findings less reliable (Moeller et al., 2004).

The limitations in Moeller et al. (2004) showed that, despite efforts to the contrary, limitations could impact findings. In Gillis and Andrews (2005), the researchers encountered several challenges and experienced a fair amount of attrition. The circumstances behind some of the attrition were documented; however, the study's findings were not generalizable and left room for future research to improve the design and examine the topic differently.

Gillis and Andrews (2005) conducted a mixed-method study that evaluated 302 male offenders who had been released from institutions in six Canadian urban centers. The offenders included in the research were federal male offenders. The researchers approached a total of 548 offenders and obtained 55% for participation. The researchers included inmates who had been sentenced to two or more years, from December 1998 to September 1999. Data were collected at two points in time after the offender's release (Gillis & Andrews, 2005). The first contact, which was for the pretest information, took place approximately three to six weeks after the offender's release. The second contact, for the posttest, took place about six months after release. The sample size changed between the pre and posttests. At the time the posttests were conducted, only 106 men from the original group of offenders participated. The researchers associated the

high attrition rate with events such as offender relocation or a suspension or revocation of the participant's conditional release (Gillis & Andrews, 2005).

The Gillis and Andrews (2005) study limitations stemmed from participation rates and subsequent attrition rates. Attrition was somewhat challenging to control, as the lives of the offenders became busier, thus creating a barrier to communication and meetings. The population chosen for evaluation was primarily comprised of high risk and high need offenders. The study lacked complete buy-in from some agencies that were relied upon to maintain contact with and track offenders. Further, the offenders were not compensated for their participation. Additional concerns with the research project were created by the lack of information about the competency of the research assistants and the research assistants' ability to align with the intent of the researchers (Gillis & Andrews, 2005).

Scott (2010) conducted further analyses on the work of Gillis and Andrews (2005). Scott (2010) used a repeated-measures design to collect the self-reported qualitative answers of the offenders from both the pre and posttests administered to the offenders in Gillis and Andrews (2005). The purpose of the Scott (2010) study was to evaluate the perceptions of the offenders on the value of employment and crime (Scott, 2010).

Scott (2010) expanded upon the Gillis and Andrews (2005) research by taking a closer look at the qualitative data obtained from the questionnaires. The researcher used all available data that were initially collected. For Scott (2010) to analyze the qualitative data from the open-ended questions on the Work Attitudes Questionnaire, the researcher entered the responses into a database to code and analyze the data. The data were then linked to the original information, where it generated additional variables. After the coding was completed, offender responses were coded as either yes or no. Through this process, the researcher was able to ascertain the

frequency and percentages of individuals who had the characteristics of one of the themes. Tallies of the responses within each theme were recorded and displayed in Scott (2010). The results of this analysis provided a clearer picture of the themes that emerged (Scott, 2010).

Scott (2010) revealed that the offenders' attitudes toward crime and employment provided some insight into issues that needed to be addressed to aid offenders with employment and reintegration success. Findings further revealed that the most common themes were financial security and materialistic gain; however, the findings also indicated the offenders associated these themes with a steady job. Self-development, physical and mental well-being, satisfaction, and community involvement were identified in the analyses; however, the information demonstrated insight on the importance of goal attainment beyond the realm of materialistic gain (Scott, 2010).

Scott (2010) found that the offender comments expressed suggested that deficits and significant needs existed when relating to their employability. The importance of offenders obtaining employment is a substantial factor in the successful reintegration into their communities. The value gained from the investment into offender employability consists of two parts, the investment creates additional chances for reintegration, and the offender can become a productive member of the community (Scott, 2010). Similar research in Brown and Rios (2014) examined an alternate type of programming that demonstrated different programming that helped offenders in the reintegration process.

Brown and Rios (2014) conducted a study that intended to determine the effects of the FLRTW program on reading, language, and math grade-level equivalent (GLE) scores of a group of imprisoned men. The population considered for this study consisted of 212 inmates between the ages of 20 and 70, who lived in privately-run work release centers (WRC) in South Florida

completing the final two years of their sentence (Brown & Rios, 2014). The sample for the study included 53 male inmates, of which, 25% resided at the WRC during the study period. Due to the program's open enrollment, the sample fluctuated continuously. The following criteria were set for participant inclusion: the individual began the program after September 1st, 2010, scored below 9.0 on any of the three subject areas on the TABE test, completed the FLRTW program, completed the TABE posttest in any of the three subject areas prior to March 1st, 2012, and the individual voluntarily signed the consent form (Brown & Rios, 2014).

The education program required the participants to complete the pretest, but the posttests were not mandated. The researchers were unable to determine what happened with each of the 53 participants due to the lack of posttest completion. Some of the reasons participants did not complete the posttest included: the individual had already obtained a GED, the participant was transferred to another institution, or the participant was not ready to retest in some subject areas (Brown & Rios, 2014).

The actual sample evaluated after all inclusionary criteria were applied, resulted in various sample sizes for different subject areas—40 of the 53 participants qualified for evaluation in the subject area of language. Thirty-three of the participants were evaluated in the math subject matter. Finally, 19 of the participants were evaluated for the reading test. The actual age range in the study was from 23 to 54 years of age. The sentence lengths of the inmates were at an average of 90 months; however, the actual range was from 30 to 305 months (Brown & Rios, 2014).

Brown and Rios (2014) narrowed their sample, which consisted of a specific subgroup of inmates. Their study narrowed the focus by eliminating individuals with higher pretest scores, so the study would include participants who had been in the FLRTW program as a literacy tool. The

Florida Department of Corrections, the Florida Atlantic University IRB, and the administration of the WRC gave the researchers detailed guidelines about their data collection. The teacher and education director at the WRC chose the eligible candidates for the study through the evaluation of TABE pretest scores (Brown & Rios, 2014).

Each of the identified candidates spoke privately with the researchers and were invited to participate. The participant's consent provided researchers with access to test scores. Initially, each inmate's Department of Corrections identification number was used when Brown and Rios (2014) collected background information on each participant. Once this information was obtained and entered into a spreadsheet, the identification number was replaced with a case number, to eliminate all personally identifying information (Brown & Rios, 2014).

Brown and Rios (2014) provided reliability and validity information on the TABE 9 and 10, which were the instruments used. The researchers specified in their findings this study encompassed one environment and a sample of men from that environment, which defined study results in a context that could not be generalized. Further, the researchers indicated the lack of qualitative data to assess the attitudes and motivations of inmates; they could not adequately address factors that led to the very low and very high GLE scores (Brown & Rios, 2014).

The WRC environment used for the study was not addressed in Brown and Rios's (2014) literature review. The researchers indicated that the literature included studies that were conducted in prison environments, which is quite different from the WRC environment. Brown and Rios (2014) noted that the studied environment likely affected the results as compared to studies conducted in prison settings.

Brown and Rios (2014) carefully evaluated the study limitations and threats to internal validity. The logistics of the study environment and process were factors that could not be

controlled. The small sample sizes had been impacted by IRB mandates, the teachers did not consistently perform posttests in all subject areas, and 10 eligible inmates declined to participate. Threats to internal validity were present due to the researchers' inability to determine whether the treatment was the only factor that led to the learning gains. The researchers were also unable to control the teachers' interactions and behaviors with the students in this environment (Brown & Rios, 2014). Brown and Rios (2014) indicated their study left a vast subject area to further investigate on behalf of correctional education and the FLRTW program itself.

McKinney and Cotronea (2011) conducted a study that used two components of SDT that relate to positive feelings toward educational classes for the development of a course on nutrition. The researchers used materials from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) website on the food pyramid, the nutritional values of different foods, reading labels, and temperatures for cooking and storing food. Additional information was obtained on methods to reduce a food budget (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). The researchers put together a two-hour program, which included worksheets and supplemental materials to aid in the notetaking process. Further, two interactive activities were created for the course (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). The research design used a pretest and posttest process, which evaluated the inmate's knowledge of the subject matter. The pretest was comprised of 10 items that assessed the student's understanding of details that were a part of the course the student would attend (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

The sample included inmates at FCI-McKean. A total of 15 men volunteered for participation in the study. Of these 15 men, 13 consented to have their responses recorded. The demographics of the participants were limited. There were seven Caucasian men, five African-American men, and one Hispanic male in the group. Of the individuals that disclosed their

educational level, five men held GED's, one held a high school diploma, and one inmate had completed one year of college. McKinney and Cotronea (2011) were not able to inquire about the ages of the participants; however, the average age of the inmates housed at FCI-McKean was 36.1 years of age.

The researchers conducted their class three times. Each course was modified based on the feedback and test results from previous sessions. The first class was given 10 minutes to complete the pretest, which was not immediately scored. The students were instructed that they must achieve a score of 75% or higher to receive a certificate before the class began (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). Once the course was complete, the students had 10 minutes to review the materials and notes before the posttest. After the posttests were complete, the researchers explained the purpose of the course and administered a course evaluation (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

The evaluation instruments did not ask about the three constructs of SDT. Students were not asked if they had a choice about their educational opportunities, or if the students' opinions changed by how the nutrition course was taught (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). Students were not asked whether the nutrition course was a mandatory part of their programming for transition into the community. Since the researchers did not ask direct questions, only inferences could be made about the elements of SDT that might have contributed to the high ratings on the course evaluation measures (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

The small sample size limited the external validity of the McKinney and Cotronea (2011) study in each of the courses. The study results were based on the development of only one course. Posttest results indicated the students achieved a higher level of mastery over the course material, even if the student's pretest score was a passing grade. The course evaluation measure

showed that the students liked the course (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). The researcher's work encouraged future research. Further, the researchers urged future studies to ask more specific questions about the aspects of SDT and their relationship to a student's motivation to perform well in classes offered in correctional environments (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

Van den Broeck et al. (2016) conducted a meta-analysis that reviewed workplace conditions that were linked to workplace need satisfaction. The meta-analysis covered studies in SDT. The researchers conducted an extensive literature search, which produced 99 relevant papers with 119 independent samples (Van den Broeck et al., 2016). The researchers required each included study to evaluate participants in an organizational setting. The included studies consisted of empirical works that contained at least one measure that collected correlations for each need separately. In the event a paper appeared to be missing information that would help determine whether a study met the criteria, the authors of the paper were contacted to obtain the information (Van den Broeck et al., 2016). The study included three more specific goals: the test requirement that each psychological need should predict psychological growth, internalization, and well-being, to evaluate whether a measure of overall need satisfaction was appropriate, and to test whether the scale that assessed psychological needs impacted the results (Van den Broeck et al., 2016).

Van den Broeck et al. (2016) divided themselves up to complete the data entry, review, resolution, and coding of the included works. The first, second, and fourth authors entered study data into a spreadsheet. The third author reviewed the data. In the event a discrepancy was noted, the authors discussed the discrepancy to resolve it. Although data were entered in the spreadsheet, correlations between needs and a particular variable sample were excluded. The

data were coded the articles for the needs measure used as well as by publication status (Van den Broeck et al., 2016).

Van den Broeck et al. (2016) used correlation coefficients collected as effect sizes. In cases where correlations between a need satisfaction measure and multiple measures of the same outcome construct, the effect sizes were averaged and reported for the overall construct. This approach was adopted to avoid the inflation of the sample size; however, the approach does not consider the level of dependence across effect sizes. Van den Broeck et al. (2016) used the adjusted-weighted procedure to calculate the adjusted sample size when multiple effect sizes from the same sample were averaged to account for relatedness among the effect sizes. Researchers then used the sample weight for the average effect size (Van den Broeck et al., 2016).

Van den Broeck et al. (2016) used the strategy of Arthur, Bennett, and Huffcutt (2001) to conduct the meta-analyses. The Hunter-Schmidt model is also known as the psychometric meta-analysis, which notes the importance of correcting for research artifacts like range restriction or measurement unreliability. The attention to these artifacts is important when estimating population values; however, if the artifacts are overlooked, they could lead to downward biases of population estimates (Roth, 2008).

Van den Broeck et al. (2016) found the results of their meta-analysis supportive for SDT. Further, the researchers left suggestions for future research focused on examining psychological needs theories. Another identified area for future research is to try to review cultural boundary conditions. A limitation in this meta-analysis was identified by a few studies that looked at need satisfaction in other cultures. Van den Broeck et al. (2016) discouraged cross-sectional self-

report studies dealing with basic psychological needs, and they encourage researchers to use time-separated or longitudinal cross-tagged designs.

Like Van den Broeck et al. (2016), Davis et al. (2013) used rigorous methods to coordinate efforts and carefully execute an extensive literature review and evaluation of articles before including each for their study. Davis et al. (2013) conducted a meta-analysis with the desire to understand further whether the relevant research supports the notion that educational programs can prepare offenders for reintegration once released. In preparation for the meta-analysis, the researchers conducted an extensive literature search for both published and unpublished studies from 1980 to 2011, which examined the relationship between correctional education participation and offender outcomes. The included studies focused on correctional education programs in America that included academic and or vocational programming with a structured instructional component (Davis et al., 2013). The data were abstracted, and the quality of the research designs were rated using the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale (Maryland SMS) and the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) rating scheme. For inclusion into this meta-analysis, the studies had to meet the criteria by its intervention type, research design, and outcomes that rated a two or higher on the Maryland SMS (Davis et al., 2013).

The goal of this meta-analysis was to gain an understanding of the body of relevant research and find whether the research supports the theory that correctional education programs can successfully help offenders with community reintegration. Further, Davis et al. (2013) sought to advance the body of work in the field. This meta-analysis views multiple outcomes: recidivism, employment, and achievement test scores. Additionally, the researchers evaluated whether participation in correctional education programs was associated with an increase in

workforce participation; and whether participation in a computer-assisted program is associated with gains in achievement test scores (Davis et al., 2013).

The process of eliminating studies from the meta-analysis included a trained team of doctoral students from Purdue RAND Graduate School (PRGS) who reviewed the documents to find the studies that were not focused on correctional education or not a primary empirical study. The bibliographic references were uploaded into Distiller SR to standardize the assessment process to create systematic literature reviews (Davis et al., 2013). Two doctoral students independently assessed each reference within Distiller SR. Disagreements about whether the studies related to correctional education were flagged for a project team member to reconcile the discrepancy (Davis et al., 2013). If the study lacked the information to make a firm assessment, the team flagged the document for eligibility in the next stage of review. The lists of references showing primary studies of correctional education or those items without enough data to determine if they were primary were given to RAND's research library staff to obtain hard copies of the work. Once the copies were uploaded into Distiller SR and reviewed, the determination about the study was made (Davis et al., 2013).

A total of 1,112 studies were reviewed, 845 were not primary, 267 were primary studies of correctional education, of the 267 studies, 16 documents were not located, and an additional 22 documents were identified as duplicates. The 229 documents reviewed by the students were compared against three criteria to find whether the study would be included. The criteria included: the study needed to test an eligible intervention, it needed to measure the success of the program with a suitable outcome measure, and it was required to use an eligible research design (Davis et al., 2013). The eligible interventions were educational programs given in a jail or prison in the United States within the specified study dates. The eligible outcome measures

included: recidivism, employment, and achievement test scores. The eligible research design had to include a treatment group made up of offenders who participated in or completed a correctional education program under consideration, and a comparison group made up of inmates who did not participate (Davis et al., 2013). A total of 58 studies were eligible for the meta-analysis based on the stated criteria. Of the 58 studies, 50 of them used recidivism as an outcome measure, 18 used employment, and four used achievement test scores and the four studies all used computer-assisted instruction (Davis et al., 2013).

The Davis et al. (2013) meta-analysis used 1980 as its starting point to be sure a large enough sample of studies were collected to move forward with the meta-analysis with enough statistical power. If the researchers went too far back in time, there was a risk of data on outdated or irrelevant programs skewing the meta-analysis. The outcome data from the included studies were abstracted and scaled to facilitate the synthesis across the studies, and the meta-analysis was conducted using random-effects pooling (Davis et al., 2013).

Each study was reviewed, and the effects of the programming were evaluated to find the strength of the causal inferences warranted by each study and used the evidence ratings to test the sensitivity of the results to the rigor of the design of the studies (Davis et al., 2013). The evidence from each study was rated by its ability to establish causal inference, using two different, but substantively similar evidence rating scales: the Maryland SMS and the WWC. The Maryland SMS is well-known to the criminal justice community, and the U.S. Department of Education's WWC rating scheme is well-known to the education community (Davis et al., 2013).

The researchers employed a scientific review protocol, which was created paying close attention to the WWC and the Maryland SMS. The protocol included the use of worksheets to standardize the reviews. Two team members reviewed each eligible study and used two

worksheets during the review (Davis et al., 2013). Once the review worksheets were completed, they were merged into a single document to reconcile any substantively different responses. Another project team member reconciled the outcomes and baseline characteristics worksheets. As a final precautionary measure, the data taken from the worksheets were compared with the original text to ensure accuracy (Davis et al., 2013).

One limitation of the systematic reviews was publication bias. Publication bias is a result of a study's failure to produce statistically significant results, which can present a challenge when the articles are submitted for publication. The publication bias can skew findings in favor of successful programs (Davis et al., 2013). The researchers tried to limit the threat by searching numerous sources to obtain studies that were not published in a journal. More extensive studies are likely to have more power and statistically significant results if the population effect size is the same in those studies. Without publication bias, the average effect size estimate of smaller studies in the current meta-analysis should have the same average effect size estimate of the more extensive studies in the meta-analysis (Davis et al., 2013).

Another diagnostic used is the "leave-one-out" analysis. A risk exists when a large study with an extreme result could bias results of an analysis. The leave-one-out analysis data is reanalyzed to leave out studies one at a time until all the studies have been excluded individually. Overall, some publication bias existed in the studies on recidivism. However, the bias was small and not likely to substantively change the findings (Davis et al., 2013).

Davis et al. (2013) found that most of the included studies that were reviewed focused on the outcome measures of recidivism and employment, while a small amount reviewed the relationship between correctional education and academic performance (Davis et al., 2013). The search of the grey literature was extensive; however, it was not exhaustive, and the project team

was unable to contact all departments of corrections to obtain the unpublished evaluation reports. Limitations existed due to the exploratory nature of the analyses, which left areas of effective programs unexplored (Davis et al., 2013).

Davis et al. (2013) recommended several areas to address, which included: the dosage associated with effective programs and how the programs vary for different types of students; the individuals who benefit most from the different types of educational programs; the types of programs with the highest post-release returns; factors that moderate or mediate the effect of correctional education; the effectiveness of peer tutors versus credentialed instructors; the proper balance between in-person and self-guided study or computer-based learning; and learning that would be applicable to correctional education. The small amount of recorded program dosage during data collection procedures is critical for further examination of correctional education programs. These areas noted for further exploration are meant to improve the existing body of evidence in this subject area (Davis et al., 2013).

The seminal work of Martinson (1974), sought several answers about offender rehabilitation. Martinson (1974) differs from Davis et al. (2013), in that, the literature search completed used criteria for inclusion that limited the potential findings by using terms that were not clearly defined. The methods used in the literature search quite possibly left reviewers with concerns about bias. Martinson (1974) conducted a comprehensive review of the literature to answer the question of what works in offender rehabilitation. The researcher conducted a six-month search for reports written in English on attempts at offender rehabilitation. The search included literature that was published between 1945 and 1967. The researcher only included studies with interpretable findings, and the design and execution met the conventional standards of social science research (Martinson, 1974). The criteria used to sort articles were: the study had

to be an evaluation of a treatment method; it had to employ an independent measure of the improvement gained or lost by that method, and it had to use a type of control group. Studies were excluded for only methodological reasons. Some examples noted were a lack of data, the study only provided a summary of findings, the study had unreliable measures, sample size, and composition, or the study used the incorrect statistical tests (Martinson, 1974).

By these standards, 231 studies were accepted for inclusion. Different measures of offender improvement were included: recidivism rates, adjustment to incarceration, vocational success, educational achievement, personality and attitude changes, and community reintegration. Martinson (1974) chose to focus on rehabilitative treatments on recidivism, which showed how the treatment programs performed in a clearer way. If even one measure had methodological complications to make a clear report of the findings, the reporting could be difficult. Disparate groups make it hard to tell whether what works for one inmate also works for other inmates (Martinson, 1974).

Martinson (1974) noted only one positive report found in this area, which was authored by Mandell and Sullivan (1967). This was a study about a program that combined academic education with skills training about the use of International Business Machines (IBM) technology. The findings indicated that the recidivism rates after one year were only 48% for the experimental group versus 66% for the control group. Further, when the data were examined, the difference only applied to the control group and those who had completed the training. Conversely, when the researcher compared the control group with those who were enrolled in the program, the difference no longer existed (Mandell & Sullivan, 1967; Martinson, 1974).

In Mandell and Sullivan (1967), the random assignment procedure between the experimental and control groups appeared to break down. Near the end of the study, greater risks

had a better chance of being assigned to the special program (Mandell & Sullivan, 1967; Martinson, 1974). Martinson (1974) indicated that many studies about young males were difficult to interpret. Further, Martinson (1974) inferred that no clear evidence was produced, indicating education or skill development programs were successful.

Martinson (1974) found two studies that did report a positive difference; however, the researcher stated it was debatable whether the experimental and control groups were truly comparable. The studies were authored by Schnur (1948) and Saden (1962). The positive studies that dealt with offenders imprisoned before World War II. It is possible that the rise in educational standards decreased the differences that correctional education could make (Martinson, 1974).

Gearhart, Keith and Clemmons (1967) reported vocational education had no significant impact on recidivism rates; however, the researchers noted when a trainee obtained a job related to his training, he had a somewhat higher chance of success on parole (Martinson, 1974). At the time of Martinson (1974), the researcher indicated there had been little attempt to reproduce the studies, meaning, the reliability of the various findings were questionable. Further, the measures of failure and success differed among the studies. Martinson (1974) determined, despite the few isolated exceptions, the efforts to rehabilitate reported had no significant effect on recidivism.

Martinson (1974) attempted to exclude studies that were poorly executed; however, a pattern emerged, demonstrating studies that found effects did not use a rigorous process to exclude competing hypotheses. Further, studies that were excluded included extraneous factors that impacted the measurements of recidivism, which were not all defined in the same way. The researcher was not able to clearly articulate his findings. The Martinson (1974) study included studies that were subject to little exclusionary criteria. As noted in the researcher's findings, the

quality of studies, or lack of studies as a whole, led to the weaknesses in the study. Martinson (1974) did not add suggestions for future research, and the limitations of the study were not clearly defined (Martinson, 1974).

Despite the comprehensive study results, most studies noted a need for future research in the areas of correctional education, employment outcomes, successful reintegration, and SDT as it relates to correctional education. Research demonstrating the perceptions, motivations and program evaluations from the perspective of the offenders could provide detailed insight into correctional education programming and prompt further review of programs available, the efficacy of existing programs or potentially the creation of new programs. Educators, policymakers, professionals in the criminal justice system, and other interested parties might conclude from the data to guide their actions from the standpoint of everyone's role in society.

Synthesis of Research Findings

The research findings of the included studies are divided into three areas: academic outcomes, offender motivations and perceptions, and SDT. Academic outcomes were reviewed differently in each study. Reed (2015) focused on identifying new information on the benefits of correctional education and the potential these programs possess to help the incarcerated meet societal standards for educational success. Brown and Rios (2014) evaluated the FLRTW program to learn about the program's impact on reading, language, and math GLE scores as measured by the TABE test. Davis et al. (2013) used a meta-analysis to understand the relevant research and determine whether the research supported the claim that correctional education can assist offenders in achieving successful community reintegration. Martinson (1974) was an early study that aimed to find out what works in inmate rehabilitation with a review of published studies on the subject area.

The motivations and perceptions of inmates in correctional education were also viewed from various perspectives. Behan (2014) used interviews with offenders to examine the motivations the Irish prisoners had to attend courses. Scott (2010) reviewed offender perceptions relating to the value of employment and crime, as they relate to employment outcomes. Hall and Killacky (2008) used offender perceptions about correctional education programs focused on the GED, adult literacy, ABE, and CTE programs and how an offender's experiences before prison and the programs impacted the future goals of the students. Tewksbury and Stengel (2006) expanded the Moeller et al. (2004) study to understand further the importance of the tools and resources used in correctional education programs from the student's perspective. SDT was viewed by McKinney and Cotronea (2011), who used the three parts of SDT that have demonstrated a relationship to positive feelings about educational courses to develop a new correctional education course on nutrition.

Academic outcomes. Reed (2015) examined the central outcomes of academic improvement and course completion. The researcher sought to bring new insight into the positive effects of correctional education and the potential to support offenders during their progression toward academic achievement. The researcher's sample included mostly males; women accounted for approximately one-quarter of the sample. The groups were made up of 12 to 57% Caucasians, 36 to 85% African-Americans, and a relatively small percentage of Hispanics across four studies. One study included Native Americans, and three studies included Asians and Pacific Islanders (Reed, 2015).

The eligibility for participation was determined in part by test scores or educational achievement. Four studies specifically mentioned criminal history or behaviors in the prison environment as part of the inclusionary criteria. In three studies, the offenders were housed in

prisons. One study included offenders in county correctional facilities. Half of the studies included a description of the class environments, which included a chaplain facility, a computer learning laboratory, or a combination of residential pods and central classrooms (Reed, 2015).

The course material and the intervention type delivery varied from study to study. Meyer and Randel (2013) evaluated post-secondary education (PSE) programs used specific college instructors for the treatment group and the local college instructors for the comparison group. For the study on CTE, a typical instructor, who was an experienced plumber, was included (Reed, 2015). Shippen (2008) studied basic literacy skill development used trained peer tutors, and Shaw and Berg (2009) studied trained researchers. Brown and Rios (2014) evaluated basic literacy and math, and Messemer and Valentine (2004) studied the use of computer-assisted instruction compared to a typical instructor. None of the studies indicated the experience levels of the instructors, and the instructor's preparation was only described in two studies, one addressing the plumber with a masters-level of education in vocational education and the other depicted the process of preparation used with peer tutors (Reed, 2015).

The findings of the Reed (2015) study demonstrated, on average, participants in all six studies the participants' skills improved according to standardized tests. In Meyer and Randel (2013), small adverse effects were noted, which was interpreted by the treatment-comparison design. With the PSE program participants, the participants did not grow academically; in that, the participants' progression was not as much as other offenders in other types of PSE programs. Overall, in all the PSE programs, each did demonstrate some gains (Reed, 2015).

In the four ABE groups and the one CTE group, the effects were medium to strong. CTE showed the highest effect in the facilitator-developed written test of plumbing knowledge. Despite the absence of equivalence to standardized tests for industry certification, the women in

the study achieved the goal of the CTE course on plumbing (Reed, 2015). Reed (2015) noted the inability to make any sort of conclusion about the academic outcomes as related to the quality of the instructor. Peer tutors were able to be trained to aid in the development of early reading abilities, and through this progress, improved their reading abilities. There was a positive effect noted on peer tutoring in a synthesis conducted with adolescent participants (Reed, 2015). Reed (2015) stated in the prior 12 years, few peer-reviewed experimental studies on correctional education programs showing adequate academic outcome data to calculate effect sizes existed. Further, for every individual study on academic outcomes, 3.75 studies were published on recidivism or employment (Reed, 2015). To further examine part of the Reed (2015) synthesis, Brown and Rios (2014) are explored in more detail.

Brown and Rios (2014) aimed to determine the effect of the FLRTW on reading, language, and math GLE scores for a group of imprisoned men using the TABE as a standard measure of development. The study had a sample of 53 men, which was about 25% of the facility's total population. The study required a pretest; however, the posttest was not completed in all subject areas (Brown & Rios, 2014).

The sample sizes differed in each subject area. In all, 86% of the men qualified for analysis of the language test, 66% qualified for the analysis of the math test, and 38% qualified for the analysis of the reading test. Demographically, 30 participants were Caucasian, 19 were African-American, and four were Hispanic. Offenders with prior incarceration totaled 17, 36 had never been incarcerated. The 53 subjects were housed in a private, non-profit therapeutic WRC in Southeast Florida (Brown & Rios, 2014). The Florida Department of Corrections contracted the WRC.

Participants were obtained through an invitation to volunteer for participation. Further, the volunteers were required to begin the education program after September 1, 2010; the participants had to have received a TABE score below 9.0 in any of the three subject areas. The participants had to have completed the FLRTW program, and they had to have taken the TABE posttest in any of the three subject areas before March 1, 2012. Further, the participants were required to voluntarily sign the IRB-approved informed consent (Brown & Rios, 2014).

The findings of Brown and Rios (2014) showed a significant difference between the pre and posttest scores on the language subject material. Further, the FLRTW program had a highly significant effect on the language GLE scores, with significant learning gains. In the reading subject area, testing revealed a GLE increase of 3.3-grade levels. The learning gains were highly significant. Finally, in the math subject area, pre and posttest scores indicated a highly significant increase in the GLE results at 3.1-grade levels (Brown & Rios, 2014).

The researchers' final analysis explored the distribution of grade-level improvements. In the language subject area: 25% of the offenders gained between 0.1 and 2.5-grade levels, 27.5% gained between 2.6 and 4.5-grade levels, 17.5% gained between 4.6 and 6.5-grade levels, and 20% gained 6.6 or more grade levels (Brown & Rios, 2014). No gain or negative gain was found in three percent of the participants. For the reading test: 36.8% gained between 0.1 and 2.5-grade levels, 36.8% gained between 2.6 and 4.5-grade levels, 26.3% gained between 4.6 and 6.5-grade levels, and none of the participants showed no gain or a negative gain (Brown & Rios, 2014). In the math subject area: 39.4% gained between 0.1 and 2.5-grade levels, 33.3% gained between 2.6 and 4.5-grade levels, 18% gained between 4.6 and 6.5-grade levels, and 6.1% gained 6.6 or more grade levels, and 6.1% gained 6.6 or more grade levels. Three percent showed no gain or

negative gain in grade levels (Brown & Rios, 2014). The researchers indicated these are atypical numbers when compared to learning gains in similar studies (Brown & Rios, 2014).

Men could not participate in GED preparation courses without TABE scores above 9.0. Once the men completed the FLRTW program and completed another TABE test, 55% of men in the language category, 57.6% of the men in the math category and 68.4% of the men in the reading category scored above 9.0 on their subject area tests. More than half of the men raised their GLE scores to a level to enter the next phase of education, which was the GED preparation program (Brown & Rios, 2014). An overall review indicated that the FLRTW program is effective for moving over half of the offenders through ABE and into the GED preparation programs in less than 100 hours of instruction. Brown and Rios (2014) reiterated that these findings are atypical and extraordinary. The study sample of men showed that the FLRTW program made a significant impact on GLE scores according to TABE measures. The researchers were unable to determine the specific factors that led to an increase in GLE scores (Brown & Rios, 2014).

The literature on correctional education noted teacher effectiveness and the attitudes of leaders affected the offenders' attitudes toward learning, as well as, their success in educational programs. While the full-time teacher dedicated to the program helped identify weaknesses that might have an impact on offender learning, the full-time instructor also provided encouragement and assistance to the students daily (Brown & Rios, 2014). Brown and Rios (2014) call participant motivation into question due to the voluntary nature of the study. This consideration may have impacted the excitement and motivation of the participants. Considering such an observation, Brown and Rios (2014) indicated that negative, and zero gains did demonstrate a lack of motivation.

Davis et al. (2013) provide another perspective on correctional education and its impact on offenders. Davis et al. (2013) conducted a meta-analysis to understand whether the body of relevant work supported the idea that correctional education programs could lead to successful community reintegration after release. The meta-analysis included 58 studies. Three separate relationships were analyzed in the meta-analysis: the correlation between correctional education and recidivism, the correlation between correctional education and employment and the correlation between computer-assisted instruction and academic performance.

According to Davis et al. (2013), many definitions of recidivism were used. Recidivism was defined as re-offense, re-arrest, reconviction, re-incarceration, technical parole violation, and the successful completion of parole. For the meta-analysis, most of the included literature defined recidivism by the outcome measure of re-incarceration. The included studies had varied periods that the offenders were followed post-release, which was referred to as “at risk for recidivism” (Davis et al., 2013, p. 27). Periods among studies ranged from six months to over 10 years post-release. Most frequently, the included studies used one year and three years. The third measure of recidivism was a statistical metric. A total of 42 studies recorded the percentage in treatment and comparison groups, and seven studies recorded regression coefficients along with standard errors to demonstrate the magnitude of the difference in recidivism between the treatment and comparison groups. One study added effect sizes that were reported in different ways: one based on a percentage comparison between treatment and comparison groups and the other was based on regression coefficient (Davis et al., 2013). When the researchers encountered multiple outcomes and reporting methods, preference was given to the most frequently used definition of recidivism, which was one year after release or as soon as possible and the regression coefficients as an attempt to reduce possible sources of bias (Davis et al., 2013).

After examination of 71 effect size estimates from 50 studies on correctional education throughout 32 years, the bulk of the studies showed lower recidivism rates among inmates who attended educational programs than offenders who did not attend courses. Also, findings showed that the odds of recidivating were 43% lower for treatment group members than the odds for those in the comparison group. The researchers further indicated, despite the percentages, the effectiveness of programs differed (Davis et al., 2013).

The Davis et al. (2013) meta-analysis measured employment in several ways. Three areas were explored within this topic. The researchers measured these areas by the definition of employment, the period between release and the time an individual became employed, and the statistical metric used to report differences in employment between the treatment and comparison groups. The researchers used several definitions for employment: having worked full or part-time post-release, maintained employment for a specific number of weeks since release and employment status (Davis et al., 2013).

In the studies about employment measures, the common operationalization of employment was whether the former offender had ever worked on a full or part-time basis post-release. The period varied between studies. The periods for following participants post-release ranged from three months to 20 years. The most frequent period used was one year (Davis et al., 2013). Fifteen studies used the percentage or weighted mean of the treatment and comparison groups with employed participants. Three of the studies used regression coefficients with standard errors to demonstrate the magnitude of the difference between the treatment and comparison group's employment (Davis et al., 2013).

When the researchers encountered multiple outcomes and reporting methods, preference was given within one year of release, or as close to one year as possible. The meta-analysis

calculated odds ratios for obtaining employment for both the treatment and comparison groups. Most studies indicated greater odds of obtaining employment in the treatment groups. A small number of articles found higher odds amongst the comparison groups. Overall, the odds of becoming employed after release for offenders who attended correctional education courses was 13% higher compared to nonparticipants. Although the researchers were unable to test whether a positive relationship existed between correctional education participation and employment outcomes, an advantage was found for program participants over their counterparts; however, selection bias could have an impact on the effect (Davis et al., 2013).

Davis et al. (2013) had four included studies in their meta-analysis that addressed the outcome variables of standardized test scores in math or reading, and the treatment variable of correctional education delivered using computer-assisted instruction, as opposed to traditional face-to-face classroom instruction. Each study evaluated computer-assisted instruction as a replacement for traditional instruction with a teacher with the same amount of learning time. Two of the studies included traditional classroom instruction beyond the time the treatment and comparison groups were exposed to the intervention (Davis et al., 2013).

The other two studies tested the same intervention, which was the PLATO instructional software for math, reading, and language. The software was made up of drill-and-practice learning that included the three subject areas. The two studies used PLATO as opposed to traditional learning led by a teacher with a similar subject matter. Traditional classrooms offered lectures, notetaking, rote memory, and group work. PLATO is mastery-based, supplemented with printed materials, and held in a setting that has a teacher to assist with the studies. One study exposed the participants for about two and a half hours a day, five days a week, for three months (Davis et al., 2013).

The other study exposed participants for a total of eight weeks; however, the intensity and frequency were not indicated. Another study from this group used a tutorial, drill, and practice method through the Advanced Instructional Management System (AIMS) software, which allowed the students to choose an area of focus and was self-paced. The software provided feedback on the student's progress. AIMS instruction replaced instructor-led classrooms. Students were exposed for one hour per day for five days over four weeks. The AIMS classroom had no teacher present, only a facility staff member and peers to assist with technical issues (Davis et al., 2013). Finally, a study that assessed the AUTOSKILL Component Reading Subskills Program, which was designed to teach subskills of reading, syllable and word recognition. Speed drills and practice replaced an unspecified part of the instructor-led literacy courses the students would have received. AUTOSKILL and traditional classrooms had literacy instructors present (Davis et al., 2013).

Standardized tests were used to measure students' academic performance. The measures employed both pre and posttests to demonstrate changes over time. All standardized test scores were converted to GLEs to facilitate the synthesis of the findings. In the four studies, a total of nine effects were included (Davis et al., 2013). Three studies had one math and one reading effect. One study provided no math effect; however, it did provide separate reading effects in three subgroups. The subgroups included students who began at a third-grade level or below, students who began between a third and sixth-grade level and those who began above a sixth-grade level of learning. The researchers chose to provide separate analytical findings for reading and math (Davis et al., 2013).

Davis et al. (2013) estimated a substantively more significant effect of computer-assisted learning on math achievement scores. An alternate perspective presented in the meta-analysis

showed no evidence that computer-aided learning hurt student performance. No statistically significant findings were produced when computer-assisted learning was compared to face-to-face instruction (Davis et al., 2013). The researchers indicated their ability to generalize information about any intervention due to the limited number of studies. Despite the lack of substantive findings in the area of computer-assisted learning, the researchers were able to determine the use of correctional education did show a lower percentage of recidivism in participants as opposed to those who did not participate (Davis et al., 2013). In the seminal work conducted by Martinson (1974), a view of what was previously concluded by researchers was explored.

Martinson (1974) conducted a systematic review to try to answer the question of what works in offender rehabilitation. Each included study had to have evaluated a treatment method, used an independent measure of the improvement made by the method, and had to have a comparison or control group of untreated subjects. The researcher made a general summary of the findings, which stated the rehabilitative efforts that were reported had no appreciable effect on recidivism, with a few small exceptions. Education and skill-building programs are standard in correctional facilities, but the examination of young males indicated that this group was more open to this instruction (Martinson, 1974).

Martinson (1974) stated the degree of success in correctional education programs, measured by grade achievement levels, had no significant impact on recidivism rates. One exception showed relative improvement when the entire sample was compared, only individuals with higher intelligent quotients, with favorable educational backgrounds and had made academic progress in the facility. Martinson's (1974) reviews of studies on vocational and social skill development programs led by someone characterized as a role model, and rigorous

vocational training programs all depict negative results or no direct impact on recidivism rates. The researcher did note the impossibility of determining whether a failure was from an aspect of the program, or if it was the conditions under which the programs were administered. Another uncertainty existed due to the facility environments and whether the environments affected the program's ability to be successful or a failure. Overall, a review of young men was difficult to evaluate due to flawed research designs (Martinson, 1974).

Findings indicated the results of studies on adult men, as opposed to young males, were more discouraging. Martinson (1974) further indicated that questions existed about the experimental and control groups and whether they were comparable. The researcher had concerns about whether the programs were flawed, or if the programs were unable to overcome the prison environment. Throughout the review, Martinson (1974) repeatedly questioned the efficacy of programming and whether there is any correlation with an individual's propensity for criminal behavior.

Offender motivations and perceptions. The qualitative studies that examined offender perceptions and motivations about education came from correctional facilities in the United States and abroad. Data collection varied from study to study; however, conventional instruments were semi-structured interviews, surveys or questionnaires, and researcher observations. One of the focuses was the perceptions of offenders on various parts of educational programming. Additionally, the transformative value of education is examined. Finally, the way education prompted an offender's critical reflection on his past experiences built an unusual perspective on education and its effect on students in a correctional facility.

Behan (2014) explored offender motivations surrounding participation in education while incarcerated. The study was comprised of interviews with offenders in an Irish prison. The

modern rehabilitation practice has shifted from seeing the objective as an offender's successful reintegration after release to working to keep risk and social control in the interest of the community (Crewe, 2012).

Behan (2014) conducted semi-structured interviews that allowed the participants to articulate the motivations that drove them to education, or conversely, what the inmates' reasons were for not attending courses. The Irish prison educational programs are based on two major foundations, the Council of Europe policy and the principles of adult and community education. The interviews indicated the reasons the inmates participated in courses were like those of adults who participated in courses outside the prison (Behan, 2014).

The researcher found that for some of the inmates, their participation was no longer a way to pass the time, the motivation had shifted to a focus on preparation for their release and personal transformation. The largest group of participants were taking courses to make up for the education they had missed out on in the past. The inmates sought new skills and an opportunity for productive lives in the community (Behan, 2014). Many of the respondents were aware of the lack of skills and unemployment they experienced before prison would not change without the effort to improve their lives. These inmates' participation was voluntary, so it did demonstrate the inmates' motivations clearly (Behan, 2014).

For those inmates who participated in courses to pass the time, the researcher found this as a coping mechanism to keep the inmates' minds off of their environment (Behan, 2014). Other inmates with similar motivations noted there was little else to do during their incarceration. Another perspective found among the participants was that these participants saw the courses as a way of breaking up the prison routine. Despite the motivations of passing the time and breaking up the prison routine, respondents noted that they were treated with dignity and respect

(Behan, 2014). Prison educators are not part of the prison staff; these teachers are local; therefore, the classroom atmosphere changed. Students noted the classroom was more informal than the prison environment, and they were addressed by their first names, which was unlike the interactions with prison staff (Behan, 2014).

Further, the teachers created an environment that offenders found to be less penal and non-threatening and a trusting climate (Behan, 2014). Some of the interviewees added, these courses were a way of making amends to society. Eventually, some of the participants' minds changed. The inmates were seeing that the choice to take courses was turning into a process of transformation. The researcher noted that the transformation process started with critical reflection. Further, the learning process encouraged behavioral changes that led the offenders to view their criminal activity in a different light (Behan, 2014).

Behan (2014) stated that an attempt to measure the outcomes of prison education is difficult. The researcher warned that the use of recidivism as a measure was a crude and unsuitable measurement of outcomes and change. Further, the results from evaluations of rehabilitation and education should be cautiously interpreted because of the voluntary nature of the course participation (Behan, 2014).

Similarly, Scott (2010) examined offender perceptions about crime and the value of employment. The study included offenders in Canadian institutions. The offenders were questioned about three to six weeks post-release and again approximately six months after their release. Many factors have been barriers to an offender's successful reintegration into the community. Some of these challenges are legal barriers, the stigmatization inflicted by employers and the community, securing housing, and obtaining employment. The researcher notes the challenges impact the offenders' attitudes (Scott, 2010). Gillis (2002) stated that an

offender's intention is an essential and consistent predictor of employment outcomes, which is also associated with employment history and self-efficacy. Providing offenders with the necessary resources can help increase their confidence and instill the notion that each is worthy and capable of a better life (Gillis, 2002).

The demographic characteristics of the study sample showed that most of the respondents were male, approximately 95.5%. The group was comprised of 62.3% Caucasians, 33% Aboriginal, Black, Asian, East Indian, Hispanic, and Other. The offenders were released to four different regions in Canada, which included the Atlantic, Ontario, Prairie, and Pacific Regions, of which 52.9% released to the Prairies (Scott, 2010).

According to pre and post-questionnaire responses, institutional programs to break the cycle of crime, quitting drinking, and creating lifestyle changes were advantages to crime. Despite the positive comments that offenders believed programs in the prison helped make lifestyle changes, the programs may not be effective in maintaining change in the community if the offenders believed committing a crime provided more access to programming. Individuals who reoffend to gain access to additional programming and free room and board are not taking accountability for their criminal activity. In the pre and post-questionnaires about the disadvantages to crime, the respondents focused on lost time, uncertain futures, loss of control, and having no choices (Scott, 2010).

One constant finding was that employment was an integral part of successful community reintegration. In the study sample, 70.2% of the offenders held unskilled or semiskilled work in the year before their incarceration. Offenders needed to learn that increasing their employability came from understanding the value associated with a legitimate job opportunity (Scott, 2010).

Scott (2010) was an expansion of the previous body of knowledge on offender perceptions. An example of this previous work is evidenced by Hall and Killacky (2008).

Hall and Killacky (2008) conducted a qualitative inquiry to obtain offenders' perceptions about attending courses, the offenders' interactions with SSP staff in the classes, and how each offender felt they benefited from the courses. Hall and Killacky (2008) focused on the perspectives of the offenders, which are not often studied. The courses of interest in the study were the GED, adult literacy, and CTE programs at SSP. The Hall and Killacky (2008) demonstrated what programs were available, what programs were cut due to the enactment of the Omnibus Crime Bill of 1994, and the depth of institutional influence. The researchers looked at alternatives for correctional education to best serve the offenders in the aftermath of the Crime Bill cuts (Hall & Killacky, 2008). The study encompassed a broad view of the state of correctional education at the time, which reviewed teachers' experiences in the classrooms, the opinions of the teachers about the necessary accomplishments for students to achieve, the programs the offenders felt were effective in providing the necessary skills to obtain and retain employment, and courses each would like to see offered (Hall & Killacky, 2008).

Hall and Killacky's (2008) findings indicated that the students' perceptions of success had an impact on motivation and their future educational and vocational plans. A second theme found in the data was regret, and how the life choices and experiences of the students affected the correctional education experience. Finally, the third theme revealed the students' perceptions about the current and previous GED programs at SSP (Hall & Killacky, 2008).

There were several definitions of success discovered in the study. Many participants saw the ability to take care of themselves and their loved ones as a marker for success. Another expression of success was being able to make it and take care of their responsibilities. Other

students felt success was part of individualism and being comfortable with themselves (Hall & Killacky, 2008).

The theme of regret for prior choices came from reflections and observations each student made about their lives. Part of the regrets stemmed from poor educational experiences and teachers, previous behaviors, and lack of effort demonstrated until each ultimately dropped out. Each of the students was able to identify at least two teachers that positively affected their lives for even a short time. Participants shared information about past experiences in school and external influences on their lives. The researchers found that the students' perceptions of success were made up of sets of occupations and different sets of behaviors (Hall & Killacky, 2008).

The participants were found to be both internally and externally motivated to change. Internal motivations spanned from impressing loved ones to setting an example for their children to embrace education. Externally motivated participants were a small few in the sample. Hall and Killacky (2008) concurred with the findings of Pelissier (2004), which indicated that external motivation is not likely to sustain someone to complete a GED, for example.

The literature reviewed by Hall and Killacky (2008), in preparation for the study, did not mention study time. In the Hall and Killacky (2008) findings, studying was an indication of a will to make a change. Most students studied when there was a chance, not as part of a daily routine. The study pattern was influenced by the unavailability of instructional material for cell study, schedules, and noise and distractions in the environment. Despite these challenges, students used alternate methods of study, such as reading newspapers, books from the library, or spiritual and religious materials (Hall & Killacky, 2008). Further, the researchers noted the reviewed literature failed to mention the plans and goals of the inmates; conversely, there was a focus on using correctional education to obtain employment and stay out of prison. Hall and

Killacky's (2008) study contributes to the hopes of the inmates about future endeavors and how to prepare to achieve those goals.

Similarly, in earlier work, Tewksbury and Stengel (2006) conducted a study that used offender perceptions about the importance of programming, tools, and the resources in correctional education to learn more about how the resources impacted the offenders. The sample included 281 students that were incarcerated at Kentucky State Reformatory and were studied during one month in 2004. The researchers focused on four aspects of offender experiences in correctional education programs: motivation for attending school, beliefs about what leads to the successful completion of a program, perceptions of skills and content they believe is important, and their perceptions about the learning resources and how the resources aided their learning. The researchers expanded upon the exploratory work of Moeller et al. (2004; Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006).

The program reported student motivation. For academic program students, 49.1% indicated their attendance was to feel better about themselves, 29.1% stated attendance was to help get a job upon release, 12% state that they wanted to improve their skills, other reasons were 9.8% of the responses. For vocational program students, participation to feel better about themselves was 20%, to obtain a better job upon release was 53%, 10% wanted to improve their skills, and 13.1% had other reasons (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006). The top skills all students reported as very important were math at 88.3%, reading was 86.7%, and writing was 73.2%. Of the tools used in correctional education, students stated the teachers and textbooks were the most helpful. The tutoring resource available to the students was used by 48% of students; however, the academic students were more likely than the vocational students, 71% and 11.1% respectively (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006).

Tewksbury and Stengel (2006) stated the findings in most prior correctional education research paralleled their findings regarding the incarcerated who reported low levels of education before prison. Correctional education proves to be a valuable tool for inmate management for many reasons. Participants, and hopefully graduates of the programs, have higher senses of self-worth, which may carry over to other inmates who are not in educational programs, and this effect could help the nonparticipant's transition back into the community (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006).

Self-determination theory. McKinney and Cotronea (2011) conducted a study that used two elements of SDT to develop a nutrition course in federal prison. At the time of the study, the reentry system mandated inmates, by the court or through the facility, to finish certain programs to obtain privileges or to gain eligibility for work release, and it was a possible condition for being granted parole. Research by Whitecare (2007) showed that required programming as a part of a sanction could potentially create tensions between the staff and offenders. Sanctioned programs could also create an ambivalence toward the programs (Whitecare, 2007).

McKinney and Cotronea (2011) were concerned that no matter the design of a program, the program would be unsuccessful without the offender investment into the program material. Further, informing the offenders about the content and how the content is a benefit to each offender would create active participation and achievement of successful community reentry. Research by Legault, Green-Demers, and Pelletier (2006) showed for students that failed to understand the course value, motivation to perform well in the course significantly diminished. Additionally, in correctional education, teachers experienced tension when the students did not understand why the course was mandated (Whitecare, 2007).

Course evaluations are commonly administered to students at the end of college courses. The evaluations demonstrate the opinions of students about the course content and the quality of the instructor. Colleges and universities use the evaluation feedback to improve courses (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). The researchers incorporated the three elements of SDT that have shown positive opinions about educational courses that led to the creation of a new correctional education course on nutrition. Course evaluations were used to assess the students' views about the content, instructor performance, and the way the content was delivered. The evaluation served two purposes, to improve the course and to foster a sense of autonomy about educational opportunities in prison (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

McKinney and Cotronea (2011) used a pre and posttest system to use the competence piece of SDT to instill a feeling of competence and the capability to learn. Filak and Sheldon's (2008) research on SDT demonstrated that when students felt a level of competence, autonomy, and relatedness, the course evaluations were better. McKinney and Cotronea (2011) found that when students were able to help develop a course, the assignments relating to specific skills required for successful reintegration helped them to form a sense of competence.

Research providing various outcomes in academics, offender motivations and perceptions, and SDT, build a body of research findings that creates a solid foundation for future studies. Correctional education, as a broad subject area, could prompt future research from many perspectives, which could prove to be valuable for stakeholders. SDT and its application to correctional education could also be expanded upon and reviewed from various perspectives and on specific categories within the broad scope of correctional education.

Critique of Previous Research

The areas covered in this literature review are correctional education, offender perceptions, and SDT. The research found in these subject areas not only provide background information but current findings and theories to inform the current study. Seminal research and studies published within the past 15 years were included to accomplish these goals.

Correctional education. Correctional education has been studied in many ways. Both seminal research and studies from the previous 15 years have introduced theories, concepts, and outcome measures. The benefits of correctional education and its potential benefits for offenders was discussed in Reed (2015). Abrams and Lea III (2016) focused on the themes that were extracted from data from the critical reflections and personal changes of offenders. Brown and Rios (2014) reviewed a specific program to evaluate the program's impact on an offender's reading, math, and language GLE scores. The effects of correctional education as it relates to recidivism, post-release employment outcomes, and the correlation between academic outcomes and computer-assisted learning are carefully examined by Davis et al. (2013). Seminal research on rehabilitative efforts and the impact those efforts have on offenders are included to contrast the early and more recent findings in the subject area of correctional education (Martinson, 1974).

Abrams and Lea III (2016) conducted an ethnographic study finding four significant themes. The themes focused on evaluating truths and beliefs, changing thought patterns, choice and free will, and connection with a higher power. The research questions posed by the researchers were: "How do life skills instructors frame opportunities and barriers to employment for incarcerated adult men? What messages do the instructors provide concerning the respective roles of individual motivation/skills and structural barriers to employment?" (p. 671).

The Abrams and Lea III's (2016) chosen method included conducting their studies in two major jails in large urban areas. The researchers spent seven months observing life skills courses that were a part of the educational system. The instructors for the programs included paid instructors from outside community organizations, the county sheriff's staff, or inmates who were graduates that progressed to higher levels inside the education system (Abrams & Lea III, 2016).

The researchers took on the role of observer-participants. During the classes, each placed themselves toward the outside of the classroom seating to minimize interactions with participants. The data collection was in the form of field notes and an analysis of all handouts and literature provided by the instructors. The researchers were of two different backgrounds to obtain different points of view (Abrams & Lea III, 2016). The field notes were typed up within two days of the observation and included each researcher's impressions and experiences within the facility. Abrams and Lea III (2016) immediately shared the field notes referencing the differences and similarities from each other's point of view. The first researcher was a White female and the second an African-American male. The researchers discussed their perceived differences; however, the reported findings do not focus on the differences (Abrams & Lea III, 2016).

The primary modes of analysis used were coding and memoing. Abrams and Lea III (2016) used inductive coding of all field notes, focusing on the interactions of the participants. Further analysis and coding did identify larger categories. In the results, the researchers noted some differences between instructor types. In the inmate-led courses, Abrams and Lea III (2016) indicated discourse was more open and contained much more dialogue; however, sometimes the facilitators strayed from the boundaries of the course content. Instructor-led courses indicated

some resistance when talking about personal responsibility and changing mindsets. The individual statements from the participants did show the impact of the course material (Abrams & Lea III, 2016).

Abrams and Lea III (2016) identified the limitations of the study. The researchers had limited access to the environment and were limited only to observe. Abrams and Lea III (2016) noted the lack of interviews or other methods of confirming their results left unanswered questions. The study was conducted in one type of facility, which limited the comparability with other settings. The researchers noted that two observers and two analysts enhanced the rigor of the study's findings; however, the potential for researcher bias did exist (Abrams & Lea III, 2016). The researchers' findings made minor generalizations. Abrams and Lea III (2016) did note that the life skills course was valuable to the literature on correctional education. The study raised many more questions to prompt further investigation into this area. Within the confines of the study environment conditions, the ethnography appeared well-planned and executed.

Reed (2015) created a synthesis with the desire to find new information about the benefits of correctional education and the program's potential to facilitate the offender's ability to meet societal standards for academic success. Participants were housed in prisons, county correctional facilities, and a residential WRC. All participants in the studies had shown educational progress determined by academic and vocational test scores and class credits. The courses included in the synthesis included PSE, CTE, basic literacy, basic literacy through computer-delivered instruction, and GED preparation courses. Most of the participants were male (Reed, 2015).

The classroom environments were only described in some of the included studies, which included a chaplain facility, computer lab, and a combination of residential pods and central classrooms. The instructor's quality and experience were not reported, except for the CTE

instructor, who was an experienced plumber and held a masters-level education in vocational education (Reed, 2015). Further, peer tutors were described regarding the preparation and training each received to deliver the reading course's material and assignments (Reed, 2015).

Reed (2015) conducted a comprehensive literature search using several databases. The literature was limited to peer-reviewed studies because each was considered to have had more scrutiny over the study's merit. Included studies spanned between January 2003 and June 2014. The participants were in adult residential facilities with no age limitation, so youthful offenders under the age of 19 were also included (Reed, 2015). The researcher defined the participants as representative of the total U.S. prison population. The less effective studies did not demonstrate enough information on the racial and ethnic makeup of the U.S. prisons due to low percentages of Hispanic participants if this demographic was included at all. Reed (2015) required the included studies to have been experimental, quasi-experimental, single group pre and posttest, or single case designs. Interventions within the studies focused on academic and vocational skills, excluding subjects that addressed art, attention, social skills, behavioral health, mood, motivation, parenting, health, recidivism, self-determination, substance use, and therapeutic rehabilitation (Reed, 2015). A total of six studies were included in the synthesis. Due to the small number of studies, the researcher conducted an ancestral search of the Davis et al. (2013) meta-analysis. Davis et al. (2013) was the most recent, comprehensive analysis of correctional education.

Reed (2015) stated that fidelity monitoring was minimal if it was included at all, which was a noted threat to internal validity. In the Shippen, Houchins, Crites, Derzis, and Patterson (2010), no level of fidelity or inter-rater agreement was given for consideration in the synthesis. In the largest-scale treatment-comparison study, the researchers reportedly observed facilities

twice a year but did not include coding of the program elements. Data from surveys the students used to rate the quality of the resource material, instructor support, education staff, and peers who were alternative instructors were all used to define fidelity (Reed, 2015).

Standardized tests ultimately revealed the participants in the six studies demonstrated skill improvement. The minor negative effects associated with one PSE program was recommended to be interpreted in the context of the treatment-comparison design, where the adverse effects did not demonstrate that the participants did not improve academically; however, they did not make as much progress as other incarcerated students in other types of PSE programs (Reed, 2015). The ABE and one vocational program had medium to strong effects, with the highest effect size in the vocational study with an instructor-developed assessment on plumbing. Although the instructor-developed exam did not equate to a standardized test for industry certification, women did accomplish the goals of the program (Reed, 2015).

Over the past 12 years, a relatively small amount of peer-reviewed publications with experimental designs on correctional education programs with enough academic outcome information exist, which limits the ability to calculate effect sizes (Reed, 2015). Reed (2015) further indicated it was possible that for each study published about academic outcomes, 3.75 have been written about recidivism or employment, to advance the field of study, Reed (2015) states that a shift in focus is needed to view proximal outcomes rather than the distal outcomes to understand better how the incarcerated can make academic progress. The Reed (2015) synthesis included a small sample of studies; however, augmenting the information with the Davis et al. (2013) meta-analysis created a more credible study. The researcher carefully evaluated inclusion criteria and fidelity measures to demonstrate areas of potential weakness (Reed, 2015).

Brown and Rios (2014) conducted the first scholarly study on FLRTW or any type of workplace credentialing in a correctional facility. The inmates arrived at the WRC, and within one week, were given the TABE. Based upon the TABE score, the inmates were then enrolled in an educational program and placed in courses congruent with their educational needs and interests. All inmates at the WRC participated in FLRTW regardless of their educational attainment. The topics within the FLRTW program focused on applied mathematics, reading for information, and the location of information (Brown & Rios, 2014).

The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of the program on reading, language, and math GLE scores for a group of the incarcerated men as measured by the TABE. A total of 53 men were included in the sample, which was approximately 25% of the population. The sample that qualified for the analysis varied in size from 40 to 53. The facility and educational director of the WRC determined the eligibility for the study, based on the TABE pretest scores that were recorded (Brown & Rios, 2014). The researchers spoke with the eligible inmates one-on-one in a private office to invite each of the men to participate in the study. The researchers visited the WRC six times in nine months to record data. The inmate's agreement to participate provided access to pretest scores and their department of corrections identification number, race, age, prior incarcerations, and sentence length, which came from the public Florida Department of Corrections website. To conceal the identity, once their identification number and demographic information were entered into a spreadsheet, the identification numbers were replaced with case numbers for privacy (Brown & Rios, 2014).

In the language analysis, there was a total of 40, in the math analysis, there was a total of 33, and in the reading analysis, 19 qualified for the analysis. The environment was open and in a constant state of flux, with the participants starting and completing the program at various times

(Brown & Rios, 2014). Since each man takes the TABE within the first week of their arrival, this was the pretest measure recorded for the study. Posttesting was not required. Therefore, the researchers were unable to determine what happened to all of the 53 offenders (Brown & Rios, 2014).

According to the education administrators, not all of the inmates were post tested in all subject areas for a few reasons: the inmate already had a GED, the inmate was transferred to another facility, or the inmate was not ready to retest in a subject area (Brown & Rios, 2014). Brown and Rios (2014) did not include similar facilities managed by this operator or any other, as well as those housed in a traditional prison. The study did not include women. Further, men with a pretest TABE score of 9.0 or above were not included (Brown & Rios, 2014).

The spreadsheet information was exported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software to conduct the analyses. The analysis process first consisted of match-paired *t*-tests on the pre and posttest scores in all subject areas to find the effect of the program on the mean GLE scores. In order to answer the second research question, the analysis included three processes. First, dependent samples *t*-tests for paired groups were used to find out the significance of the gains according to group membership (Brown & Rios, 2014). The next process divided participants into dichotomous groups by race, age, sentence length, and prior incarceration and independent sample *t*-tests were conducted on the gains to determine whether there were significant differences between the subgroups. The researchers then conducted a multiple regression analysis on the largest subject area group, which was 40 participants in the language category. The analysis was to determine whether a model that included the variables of race, age, sentence length, and prior incarcerations predicted gains. Finally, an analysis of the distribution of learning gains was also conducted (Brown & Rios, 2014).

Brown and Rios (2014) reviewed the reliability of the TABE 9 and 10, which were both found consistent and held a high degree of reliability. A university-affiliated non-profit independent test-review center and its researchers found the TABE was developed with strong psychometric characteristics and was reliable and valid (Brown & Rios, 2014). Results of the analysis included dependent-paired samples *t*-tests to see the effect on the GLE scores, and dependent and independent *t*-tests on race, age, sentence length, and the distribution of learning gains. The researchers concluded their analysis with the number of the study's subjects whose scores demonstrated an improvement that qualified them for GED preparation courses (Brown & Rios, 2014).

The impact of the FLRTW on GLE scores covering language, math, and reading dependent-sample *t*-tests of paired groups in each subject area sample, with an alpha of 0.05, showed highly significant results in all three areas. Despite the positive findings, Brown and Rios (2014) considered the findings atypical and extraordinary. The findings left room to consider inmate motivations and the impact of the stressors of incarceration in a new facility to have a potential effect on the TABE pretest scores. The researchers considered the common depression and stress new inmates exhibit to have a strong impact on TABE scores, typically showing lower than usual scores. Further, inmates not entirely motivated in educational endeavors could have taken the TABE and not performed to the best of their abilities (Brown & Rios, 2014). Another consideration that was not identified in the study was the lack of consistent posttest results, which showed a percentage of inmates that did not test in any or some of the posttests, the calculations might not be as precise as necessary for accurate findings. Brown and Rios (2014) summarized their study with the statement that the FLRTW program is sufficient; however, with the atypical results, the researchers cannot generalize the findings beyond the study sample.

Davis et al. (2013) conducted a large meta-analysis that explored the evidence that related to correctional education's effect on recidivism, post-incarceration employment outcomes, and the correlation between academic performance and computer-assisted instruction. Participants in the included studies were incarcerated adults in U.S. state prisons (Davis et al., 2013). The findings provided information for use by policymakers, educators and, correctional education administrators who are interested in learning about the connection between correctional education and the reduction of recidivism and improvements in employment and other outcomes (Davis et al., 2013).

The meta-analysis gave more support for the notion that when offenders received correctional education while incarcerated, it reduced the risk of recidivism post-release over three years (Davis et al., 2013). When the researchers examined higher-quality studies, the researchers found that correctional education participants had a 43% lower risk of recidivating than nonparticipants. The results of the examination of lower-quality studies demonstrated a 13% risk of recidivating for program participants compared to nonparticipants. With the high percentage of state inmates lacking a high school education or GED, participation in high school or GED programming was the most commonly used resource to educate inmates in the studies examined. The participants in these studies showed a 30% lower risk of recidivating than the inmates who did not participate (Davis et al., 2013).

Findings in the evaluation of correctional education as it related to employment outcomes after release showed a 13% greater chance of obtaining employment post-release as compared to nonparticipants; however, only one study was deemed a higher-quality study (Davis et al., 2013). Davis et al. (2013) indicated that the quality of the studies limited their ability to find a statistically significant difference between participants and nonparticipants. The researchers did

indicate that the results noted a positive relationship between participation in correctional education and post-incarceration employment outcomes (Davis et al., 2013).

When the researchers evaluated the relationship between employment outcomes and vocational training, Davis et al. (2013) found the odds of a participant obtaining employment post-release was 28% greater than individuals who did not participate. Academic programs participants' odds of obtaining post-release employment was eight percent higher than nonparticipants. The results had a greater impact on employment outcomes; however, the results were not statistically significant (Davis et al., 2013).

When Davis et al. (2013) evaluated the relationship between academic performance and computer-assisted learning, four studies were included. The studies compared computer-assisted learning and in-person instruction. For two of the four studies, both the treatment and comparison groups had additional traditional class instruction. The evaluation limited academic performance into two elements that were common in more than two studies, which was math and reading. The results indicated that students learned slightly more in the reading subject area and significantly more in mathematics for the same amount of exposure. Davis et al. (2013) indicated the differences were not statistically significant and may only be by chance.

After a thorough review of the literature and a comprehensive meta-analysis, Davis et al. (2013) stated that correctional education reduced the risk of recidivism by 13% over three years. The researchers were meticulous in the search, review, and analysis of articles that were considered for inclusion. Using Maryland SMS and WWC to rate the quality of each study, the inclusion of a study had been carefully reviewed to meet high standards to create a quality study (Davis et al., 2013).

Martinson (1974) conducted a systematic review stemming from a six-month literature review. The researcher chose studies with interpretable findings that included design and execution that adhered to the standards of social science research. Martinson (1974) defined his criteria as “rigorously esoteric” and had an evaluation of a treatment method that used independent measures of improvement compared to untreated individuals (p. 24). The search produced 231 acceptable studies, which the researcher wrote a detailed summary of each to facilitate reader comparison with the reader’s independent conclusions (Martinson, 1974).

The Martinson (1974) study focused on the topic of recidivism; however, the definitions of recidivism, failure, and success were not well-defined. The measure demonstrated many complications, which created difficulty in reporting findings. The researcher noted that the groups were not comparable. Therefore, the task of determining what worked in offender rehabilitation may be true for one offender, but not another (Martinson, 1974).

Martinson (1974) continued to note difficulties in many aspects of his research. The summary of findings reported that other than the few and isolated exceptions, the rehabilitative efforts reported in the studies reviewed had no discernable effect on recidivism (Martinson, 1974). Although the Martinson (1974) study reviewed works from as early as 1945, the chosen criteria did not appear to support the goals of the study. The fact that several disparities could not be reconciled, which created a challenge when attempting to draw accurate conclusions to answer Martinson’s (1974) research questions.

The need for continued research on the many facets of correctional education can expand upon established findings, as well as have the potential to create new perspectives. Adding new lenses to view this vast subject area can only come from research based on new theories, or other

applications of existing theories. For example, Davis et al. (2013) provide an extensive list of areas to consider for further investigation.

Offender perceptions. Offender perceptions have been evaluated in many ways. All of the researchers sought different types of outcomes surrounding correctional education and the perceptions of offenders attending those courses. Data collection methods included interviews, questionnaires, and field notes. The intent of each study was viewed from different perspectives. The studies evaluated correctional education programs both inside and abroad. Some of the studies included limitations associated with the studies, as well as suggestions for future research.

Behan (2014) examined the area of prison reform and rehabilitation to determine whether there was potential for personal reform and transformation in the modern prison. One aspect of this study is based on Rotman's (1986) concept of the anthropocentric model of rehabilitation. The second aspect explores the findings taken from interviews with offenders about their motivation and experiences with correctional education (Behan, 2014). In general, the results demonstrate a positive argument for education in prison, aside from the disciplinary goals of the prison environment (Behan, 2014).

Behan (2014) interviewed 50 inmates in a Dublin, Ireland prison. All the interviewees were adult males 18 years of age or above. Semi-structured interviews were used. The questions elicited background information on the inmate's education and continued with questions about the inmate's motivation for taking part in the education courses in the prison. Behan (2014) could not randomly select participants because he was not permitted to access prison records, so potential participants were asked to participate during their regular time in the school, workshops, shop queues, and recreation areas (Behan, 2014).

The researcher did not offer anything in return for participation. A briefing took place with the volunteers. At that time, the informed consent was discussed to be sure all of the volunteers fully understood the study and what they were consenting to. The researcher used pseudonyms to protect the participants' confidentiality. Behan (2014) was a prison educator on sabbatical; although the researcher was empathetic, Behan (2014) indicated that his past work should not impact study outcomes. Further, the researcher stated that even if an inmate had prior contact with him; two years had passed since Behan (2014) would have had any contact. The researcher demonstrated that the responses from the participants did not reflect what the participant perceived as an answer Behan (2014) desired.

Behan (2014) found various motivations for participation in education; with time, the participants began to develop perspectives about education. The researcher stated the changes could be related to the notion that the participant saw little option but to change his lifestyle. A second group used education as a coping mechanism to deal with the prison environment (Behan, 2014). In conjunction with the motivation of passing the time, many participants indicated attendance in courses helped them escape the prison routine (Behan, 2014).

Behan (2014) stated the study shows that students had retained some agency, as exhibited by deciding to take classes and by participating in an environment that was different than in the prison. Some participants began a process of transformation that led to a decline in the desire to continue criminal activity. The summary included in this study states that even in the modern prison, there was potential for transformation and change. The study noted any potential shortfalls and limitations. The study included 50 of 150 inmates at the facility (Behan, 2014). The sample size was enough to depict the motivations and perceptions of the participants adequately.

Scott (2010) conducted a study that examined offender perceptions about the value of employment and crime. The study was an extension of the Gillis and Andrews (2005) study that reported on 302 male and female offenders in six Canadian institutions. Scott (2010) studied the qualitative data that were collected in the original research. Findings showed that employment was identified as a priority that was critical to a successful reintegration (Scott, 2010).

Scott (2010) indicated there is a need to improve inmate employability through skills training during incarceration. Scott (2010) did not review the employment specific programs that offenders were exposed to before incarceration. The researcher produced multiple outcomes based on offender responses; however, no solid findings were included in the study. It is also unknown if all the data needed for an accurate calculation was obtained.

Hall and Killacky (2008) examined prisoners' perceptions of adult education. The focus of the study surrounded offender views on various elements of correctional education. The researchers used an open-ended questionnaire to collect the offenders' views. An interview was used to obtain more detailed information. Field notes were used to document the observations of the courses while in session (Hall & Killacky, 2008).

The researchers found the students' perceptions of success impacted each offender's study habits, the motivation to attend class and goals for future employment. Once the researchers analyzed the data, the researchers considered the offenders' responses and discussed the type and quality of educator they would like in the classroom. Hall and Killacky (2008) suggested that a teacher in a prison should be taught about teaching in the prison setting. The need to better train inmate-tutors was also a point of concern for offenders (Hall & Killacky, 2008). The researchers indicated that the study did reveal the information desired. Hall and Killacky (2008) were able to collect enough data to share suggestions for the correctional

education community. The study provided thorough information to answer the initial research questions.

Tewksbury and Stengel (2006) conducted a study to determine the importance of programs and resources in correctional education programs from the perspective of the students. Data were collected from 281 students at the Kentucky State Reformatory for a month in 2004. The primary focus of the study looked at the 14 academic and vocational education programs, the offenders' reasons for participation, and the feelings of self-worth the programs fostered (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006).

Tewksbury and Stengel (2006) expanded on the work of Moeller et al. (2004), by reviewing a larger sample, which included all the facility's students, and evaluated a more comprehensive range of views and experiences. The offenders were surveyed about the four areas of their experiences in correctional education programs. Tewksbury and Stengel (2006) provided more generalizable results for use by administrators, educators, and policymakers in creating a more effective and efficient correctional education program (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006).

Findings indicated that offenders had low educational achievement before incarceration. Students were asked how each felt they were performing in their programs and whether they felt successful completion of the program was possible. Tewksbury and Stengel's (2006) results mirrored the findings of Moeller et al. (2004). Students' views varied by the focus of each program. Vocational programs were rated higher than in academic courses. Researchers determined that correctional education is valuable for the management of offenders (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006).

Tewksbury and Stengel (2006) gave a comprehensive view of study limitations; however, room for further research was suggested. Further, the researchers indicated that the limitations of their study made the data less generalizable, which brought attention to the need for further research. The researchers suggested that increasing the sample size, a better understanding of the perceptions and experiences would be obtained. Tewksbury and Stengel (2006) suggested that the findings of their study provided support for the assertion that maintaining and expanding educational programs in prison is beneficial for offenders.

Each study shed light on parts of correctional education from a unique perspective. Two of the included studies were extensions of earlier research. In all cases, information about this subject area was expanded. Scott (2010) left room to extend beyond its work with the uncertainty about the amount of data used in the calculations and whether it encompassed all the data collected by Gillis and Andrews (2005). Hall and Killacky (2008) did obtain their desired results; however, the researchers noted a question about the amount of data collected and whether it provided suggestions to the correctional education community. Tewksbury and Stengel (2006) expanded upon Moeller et al. (2004) by using a larger sample. The researchers collected a broader range of views from the offenders, which created more generalizable results. Tewksbury and Stengel (2006) added an extensive account of study limitations; however, the findings left room for further exploration in the subject area.

Self-determination theory. McKinney and Cotronea (2011) conducted a study that used the three components of SDT that have shown to be related to positive feelings toward educational classes in the creation and development of a correctional education class on nutrition. This course used a pre and posttest method for offender evaluations. Further, a course evaluation was administered to the offenders to obtain input to help improve the course. The

researchers created the course with information obtained from the USDA website, and the supplemental materials for the course were obtained from other parts of the website (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

The pretest and posttest questionnaires were researcher-created (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011); however, no expert review of the questionnaires was noted in the study. The researchers indicated the pretest collected information from the class on their basic knowledge in the content area. The posttest used the same 10 items from the pretest and 15 additional questions created from the course content to test what the offenders learned (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

The entire class received the pretest and the two-hour course. Additionally, all the offenders took the posttest and completed a course evaluation. Before the beginning of this process, the offenders received a private document that requested the offender's consent to have their information recorded for the study. The research team were aware of the participants; however, the members of the class were not. A total of 13 students agreed to participate in the study (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

The researchers indicated that the use of SDT showed when the students felt a level of competence, autonomy, and relatedness, course evaluations about the content and instructor were higher (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). During the literature review, the researchers found evidence that offenders were exhibiting tension toward the instructors when the value of the course's content was unclear. When the researchers used the tenets of SDT, and the men were given a chance to help develop the course, the offender's sense of choice increased, the assignments were understood by the offenders, and it gave the offenders the skills needed to succeed once they were released (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). The awareness of the necessity

of the skills learned in the course hopefully increased the offenders' sense of competence (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

The researchers stated that the external validity of the study's findings was limited because of the small sample size and the development of only one course. Results of the posttest did indicate the offenders achieved a level of mastery over the material, and the course evaluation measure showed the offenders enjoyed the course. The course was not the best, but the course was a much better course after the offenders' input (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). The researchers identified a limitation associated with this study, which was the fact that the three elements of SDT were not directly incorporated into the pre and posttests or the course evaluations. Further, the researchers did not inquire whether the course was mandated for the offenders. Given these limitations, an inference could only be made that aspects of SDT were congruent; however, the theory helped add to the high ratings on the course evaluation measure. The researchers also specified further research with more focus on the elements of SDT and its relationship to motivation to perform well in class in prison environments was needed (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

McKinney and Cotronea (2011) explored a small portion of correctional education programming and the use of SDT in the course. Although the researchers were able to make some inferences, further study in the subject area was needed. McKinney and Cotronea (2011) noted that the sample studied was small; the study only evaluated the elements of SDT but was not incorporated in the pre and posttests. The researchers did suggest research focusing more on the facets of SDT and SDT's relationship to motivation and classroom performance (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

Summary

The literature review was compiled after a search for relevant studies from the past 15 years. Seminal studies on offender rehabilitation and education were taken from the Martinson (1974) study about what works in offender rehabilitation. The review continued with research on the aspects of academic and vocational training outcomes, the perceptions of correctional education, the motivations of offenders as related to education, and SDT. This study was derived from the perceived notion that the investigation of the perceptions of male prison inmates in academic and vocational programming could add to the body of work focusing on correctional education, the efficacy of programming and how the views of the offenders contributed to the expansion of knowledge.

This study was created with policymakers', educational professionals', taxpayers', and criminal justice system professionals' interests in mind. Within the literature review, many theories and research findings were presented to provide background information on correctional education, its evolution, and capabilities. Program information, as well as, policy information from the prison were included to provide a frame of reference to the literature and the study constraints in the prison's environment—elements of the literature review outline specific programs that parallel the prison's programs. Further, the positive aspects of the prison's programs were articulated to clarify the literature's relationship to this study.

Based on this review of literatures, which develops a unique conceptual framework using academic or vocational education completion outcomes, offender motivations and perceptions, and the application of SDT to correctional education, and the understanding about how these factors affect successful reintegration, there was sufficient reason for thinking that an investigation examining the impact of correctional education on an offender's post-release

vocational aspirations would yield significant findings. I can, therefore, claim that the literature review has provided strong support for this research, and to answer the following research questions: How do the incarcerated men describe their experiences with the correctional education options available to them, and how do the incarcerated men at the prison perceive the impact of the educational programs on their vocational aspirations?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

Correctional education for inmates at the prison includes basic literacy courses, adult basic education with high school equivalency test (HiSET) preparation, special education, and vocational training. All of the inmates were currently enrolled in courses at the prison were participating in HiSET preparation and vocational education (Montana Department of Corrections, 2018). This qualitative narrative inquiry focused on the perceptions of the participants in the correctional education programs at the prison, and the impact of the programs on the participants' vocational aspirations post-release.

Further, this study focused on the experiences the participants had with the academic and vocational programming available at the prison. The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry was to explore the perceptions of the participants about how correctional education impacts their vocational aspirations. It was unknown what perceptions the participants had about the academic and vocational programs, and their views about the impact of the programs on their vocational aspirations once released.

The conceptual framework of this study demonstrated a few key points, which enhanced the premise of the study. Trained offenders with certifications or licenses create a sense of commitment to potential employers and take some of the stigmas of the offenders' criminal records away. The licenses and certifications help with successful reintegration (Mohammed & Mohamed, 2015). Technical abilities demonstrate improved organizational and communication skills. Further, these abilities feature the concepts of self-determination theory (SDT) of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). Davis, Bozick, Steele, Saunders, and Miles (2013) found offenders with vocational credentials have greater odds of

obtaining employment than those who only possess a diploma; however, the academic achievement still had a much better impact on the formerly incarcerated with successful reintegration. Offender motivations play a significant role in reintegration success. Further, the offenders who invested themselves in the correctional education programs did much better during community reintegration, in comparison to those offenders who did not (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). By evaluating offender motivations and perceptions, an impact has been evidenced in the literature about outcomes related to inmate participation in correctional education by McKinney and Cotronea (2011), which created a foundation for the need for further investigation of these findings.

The study aimed to extend beyond these questions and explored the perceptions and experiences the participants had in their courses. The study explored how the programming impacted the participants' vocational aspirations upon release. The data collected provided insight into the preconceived notions and experiences the participants had with the workforce in the past. In Hall and Killacky (2008), the researchers focused on the determination of how prisoners perceived their correctional education experiences with an emphasis on the effects of this education on post-release reintegration successes. This study aimed to reach past the initial perceptions of success that were discovered (Hall & Killacky, 2008).

In this chapter, the research population and the research design are discussed. The instrumentation is identified, and the data collection methods are carefully outlined. The attributes of this study are identified and discussed. The data analysis procedures are clarified and explained. The limitations of the qualitative narrative inquiry research design are explained. The credibility and dependability of the information sought are discussed. The expected findings are included, and the ethical concerns are identified and explained.

Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry was to elicit perceptions of the participants about the impact of academic and vocational programming on their vocational aspirations, once released. The data came from participants in the lower-risk classification unit. This study explored the experiences the participants had with the correctional education programs available at the facility. Little was known about the perceptions the participants had about the impact of the prison's correctional education programs on their vocational aspirations after release. Additionally, little was known about the experiences the participants had with the available academic and vocational programs at the prison.

In this study, SDT guided the research questions posed by examining the information about the participants' motivations and how the environment impacted those motivations. The research questions were designed to elicit how the participants described their experiences with the educational options available and how they perceived the impact of the programs on their vocational aspirations. Davis et al. (2013) found the need for improvement in the body of research evidence about the benefits of correctional education, the types of programs with the highest post-release returns, and indicators of program efficacy.

In this qualitative narrative inquiry, the research questions were designed to obtain such data. The research questions are:

1. How do the incarcerated men in a low-risk classification unit of a Midwestern state prison describe their experiences with the correctional education options available to them?
2. How do the incarcerated men at the prison perceive the impact of educational programs on their vocational aspirations?

Abrams and Lea III (2016) questioned the methods and skills taught while the offenders were incarcerated. Abrams and Lea III were concerned that the formerly incarcerated were not appropriately prepared for the challenges they were going to face while they attempted to find work. Challenges included factors like race, criminal history, lack of steady employment history, and limited vocational and literacy skills. Abrams and Lea III placed their focus on the quality and content of the education and its impact on the inmate's ability to face the challenges and succeed. Abrams and Lea III (2016) guided this study toward the perceptions of the participants and how each felt their correctional education would affect their vocational aspirations.

This qualitative narrative inquiry used a researcher-developed open-ended question survey (see Appendix A). The survey gathered a comprehensive view of the participants' perceptions and experiences. The survey contained 14 questions.

Purpose and Design of the Study

This study was best executed with a qualitative methodology. The qualitative methodology was chosen over quantitative methodology based on the research questions and the overall aim of the study (Morse & Richards, 2002). The quantitative methodology uses numerical data to produce findings to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses of the study (Morse & Richards, 2002). For a qualitative research study, the researcher data collection and analysis are not separate. The qualitative research methodology is based on discovery, and there is a lack of rigidity in the data collection and analyses (Morse & Richards, 2002). This qualitative narrative inquiry collected data in a natural setting, which produced non-numerical data. The quantitative research methodology was not congruent with this type of study because the research did not produce numerical data for analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

For this study, two research designs were considered. The methodology chosen was qualitative research. The qualitative research methodology accommodated the nature of the data, accomplished the goals, and effectively answered the research questions. Both qualitative phenomenology and qualitative narrative inquiry research designs were evaluated.

According to Creswell and Poth (2017), phenomenology describes the common meaning for several people about their experiences with a concept or phenomenon to best understand a shared experience. An excellent phenomenological research study provides detailed views of a lived experience and offers reflections on the meanings of those shared experiences (Van Manen, 2015). Phenomenology should include the researchers' experiences as a beginning point, and then, the researcher continues to describe parts of the shared experience. By focusing on single instances and experiences, researchers can be more productive by using specific details focused on the phenomena for the reader (Van Manen, 2015). This study did not include researcher participation, and there were no shared experiences. Phenomenology was not chosen based on these factors.

In qualitative narrative inquiry, individuals and their roles, relationships, identities, experiences, perceptions, goals, and motivations are critical to the entire project (Stephens, Loveless & Goodson, 2012). Qualitative narrative inquiry includes the collection of stories from individuals through documents and told experiences, which come through collaborative work between the researcher and participants (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Qualitative narrative inquiry collects data about experiences that lead to the future. "So, in relation to their social characteristics, stories always locate people in relation to others and social location is the core of narrative identity" (Grant, Biley, Leigh-Phippard & Walker, 2012, p. 846).

According to Andrews et al. (2011), qualitative narrative inquiry is one of the best ways to capture the human experience and its meaning. Andrews et al. further noted that qualitative narrative inquiry might be the best perspective to decipher the human condition. Qualitative narrative inquiry provides a voice to ordinary people that might have been left out of history due to the perceived subordinate nature of their lives (Andrews et al., 2011).

Qualitative narrative inquiry was best suited for this study. The study aimed to elicit personal accounts from the participants, which were documented and analyzed in this manner. Qualitative narrative inquiry is an account and representation of the lives of the participants.

The qualitative narrative inquiry research design was chosen over the phenomenological design because, in phenomenology, the ordinary encounter perceived by the researcher begins with his or her experiences, and then includes those around them (Van Manen, 2015). In this qualitative narrative inquiry, the perceptions of the participants were the core of the project, so there were no shared experiences. A researcher-developed open-ended question survey with 14 questions was used to collect the data to accomplish the goals of the study. The survey questions were designed to collect a wide range of information about the experiences and views of the participants.

Research Population and Sampling Method

The men's facility houses approximately 1,500 inmates (Montana Department of Corrections, 2018). To acquire the data relevant to this research, the target population were men who were incarcerated at the prison and enrolled in either academic or vocational education programs. The sample for the research was limited to the men in the lower-risk classification housing unit at this facility. Participants for this research study were obtained voluntarily within this limited group of inmates. Potential volunteers for the study were presented with a

recruitment letter by the education program staff (see Appendix B). The prison performs a myriad of tests and information gathering during the intake process. This intake includes the determination of academic achievement. Those inmates who have proof of a high school diploma, general educational development (GED) or HiSET are excluded from the option to enroll in ABE courses. Inmates who have not achieved a high school diploma or equivalent take the test of adult basic education (TABE) and have the opportunity to enroll in academic courses that correspond with their test scores (Montana Department of Corrections, 2018).

The sample size was 14 participants. According to Tuckett (2004), qualitative sampling relies on the use of smaller samples to obtain detailed, rich information from each participant. Further, Tuckett stated that the data often drive the sample size. There is no longer a need for more members when saturation is evident.

Prospective volunteers for this study received an introductory recruitment letter which described the nature of the research, its purpose and the expectations for participation in the study. A form letter was prepared for presentation to the students in the lower-risk classification unit academic and vocational education programs. The education department staff did the introduction of the letter of recruitment. The desired impact of the recruitment letter was to provide adequate information for the inmate-student to reduce the likelihood of a high attrition rate.

The volunteer sampling method was employed in this study. The volunteer sampling method is a self-selection method, where individuals can choose to participate based on the information provided (Rozalia, 2007). Individuals who chose to volunteer were included in the sample. Volunteers completed the Volunteer Participation Form (see Appendix C). Further, Rozalia (2007) stated that volunteer sampling could provide an opportunity to gather a large

quantity of data. Since the sample in this study was not intended to be comprised of a sample representative of all the inmates at the prison, the sampling method was less likely to produce inaccurate results.

To shield the identities of the participants, the research design did not require the disclosure of a given name, Department of Corrections (DOC) identification number or “AO” number, demographics, or the sentencing information of any volunteer. Each participant was asked to create a pseudonym and note the chosen pseudonym on the Volunteer Participation Form, which the offender used throughout the research project to keep data specific to each participant. The chosen pseudonym could not relate to any personally identifying information. The volunteers for this research were known to prison staff for security and transport purposes. The true identities of participants only appeared on the informed consent each inmate was required to sign before the commencement of the research (see Appendix D). The written surveys only included the participants’ pseudonyms.

Instrumentation

Data collection for this research study was achieved through a researcher-developed open-ended-question written survey. The survey was intended to obtain a comprehensive view of the participants’ views about correctional education (Drever, 1995). With the instrument, the data included responses about the participants’ thoughts and feelings about their academic or vocational program, how the program impacts their goals, and the program’s impact on their vocational aspirations.

The survey was designed to accommodate the comprehension levels of the participants. The questions did not use complex terms, jargon, or language considered to exceed the eighth-grade level. An expert panel was asked to consider the appropriateness of the language in their

review, to be sure the participants could fully comprehend each question. In order to find acceptable expert reviewers, recent literature on criminal justice, correctional education, and reentry efforts were considered, and two experts were approached by email.

The expert panel was consulted before the finalization and use of the questions to ensure the quality and thoroughness of the survey questions. The draft of the survey questions was distributed to the experts. The Survey/Interview Validation Rubric for Expert Panel (VREP) by White and Simon (2014) was included with the instrument. The VREP includes areas to rate the questions such as clarity, wordiness, negative wording, overlapping responses, balance, use of jargon, appropriateness of responses listed, use of technical language and relationship to the problem (White & Simon, 2014). The rubric provided the expert panel an additional tool to give feedback on the instruments if they desired. The two experts did not respond or return any feedback on the survey.

Survey Questions

1. Which academic or vocational program are you participating in?
2. What do you like about the program?
3. What do you dislike about the program?
4. What do you hope to gain from this program?
5. How do you feel your program is going to help you?
6. How important is completing this program to you, and why?
7. What, if anything, do you feel your family and friends think about your participation and completion of the program?
8. What do you plan to do with the knowledge the program has given you?
9. Can you explain your experiences in your program?

10. How do you feel about the academic and vocational programs available at this prison?
11. Can you please explain how your program has impacted your decisions about the type of work you will pursue once you are released?
12. Do you feel there are parts of your program that could be improved, if so, please explain?
13. How did you feel about your program when you first began the program?
14. Do you have any other comments about the academic or vocational programs you have, or are, participating in?

Data Collection

The recruitment process consisted of an introductory letter delivered to the various academic courses and vocational programs. The participants were given the Volunteer Participation Form to document the offender's willingness to participate. The introductory recruitment letter (see Appendix B) outlined the research in detail. The introductory recruitment letter was distributed to the students by the education staff. Before the participants received the Volunteer Participation Form (see Appendix C), a question and answer session took place to address any questions about the research. Once the interested students decided to volunteer, each signed the Volunteer Participation Form, which included a space for the volunteer to note his chosen pseudonym. An informed consent (see Appendix D) was then provided to the volunteers, which gave a concise purpose and process paragraph to review. The informed consent was open for discussion and clarification with the participants before each's decision to commit to participation in the research. The informed consent clearly explained the time commitment

required for participation. In the risks and benefits sections, participants were informed there was no foreseen risk in participating, aside from providing their perceptions and experiences.

Further, the document stated that all possible measures were taken to protect their identities in the dissertation. The participants were required to provide their name and a chosen pseudonym to identify them for the study. Only prison transport officials and I knew the identities of the participants. Prison officials required the participants' names for security and logistical purposes. A separate document with the identities and pseudonyms of the participants were stored in a separate secured file kept away from data collection instruments to prevent the comingling of data (Kaiser, 2009). The chosen pseudonyms were not needed by prison personnel.

To prepare the participants for the study, the informed consent was provided before the commencement of the research. The informed consent was a disclosure of all the elements of a research study. Purcaru, Preda, Popa, Moga, and Rogozea (2014) indicated there are five critical parts in an ethically valid informed consent. The five areas in an ethically valid informed consent are volunteering, capability, disclosure, understanding, and decision. Further, it is the responsibility of the researcher to explain all complicated and confusing elements in a way that is understandable to all participants (Purcaru et al., 2014). For this study, the participants received a consent form, approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), that disclosed the purpose and process of the research, potential risks, and benefits, confidentiality concerns, the participant's right to withdraw and provided the appropriate contact information for both the IRB and myself.

Participants received clear information that indicated the research would not impact their standing in the prison, nor would it affect their sentencing in any way. Participants did not receive privileges or penalties for their participation in this study. Participants in the study were

aware that the prison did not have access to their written survey answers. The benefits defined in the consent were designed to highlight the purpose and desired outcomes of the study. The benefits section was designed with the intent of both informing the participant and encouraging them to express themselves with as little reservation as possible.

The prison's public information officer (PIO) reviewed the written research proposal that requested access to the incarcerated men in the academic and vocational programs. The PIO and I discussed the document over the phone. The PIO agreed to the research project with some limitations. The PIO requested the sample come from the lower-risk classification unit to accommodate prison staff availability to assist with security logistics and participant movement.

The surveys, Volunteer Participation Forms, Informed Consents, and Right to Withdraw from Research Project Forms were scanned into electronic form after the data collection was completed (see Appendix E). The scanned forms were stored in an encrypted folder on a biometrically locked laptop. Paper files and storage media will be destroyed three years following the conclusion of the research. Paper documents will be shredded, and any files on memory cards will be securely deleted and reformatted. Computer files will be deleted through a secure deletion process to ensure no trace of the information remains on the computer.

Identification of Attributes

Within this research study, the broad term of correctional education was defined with specific categories relating to the programming at the prison. Basic literacy courses address the needs of inmates who have been tested and have scored at the lowest levels in literacy and math skills. Basic literacy courses enable the participant to work toward achieving skills that would allow them to function in society with the use of basic printed and written materials (Reed, 2015). Individuals who are assessed at this level would possess basic knowledge that would

range from word recognition to higher level skills that would allow for abilities such as extracting inferences from continuous text (White & McCloskey, 2009).

ABE and HiSET preparation include those inmates who have been tested with functional academic skills but never received a high school diploma. ABE prepares students for the four areas of focus on the HiSET. The HiSET assesses students on their ability to reason through language arts, mathematical reasoning, science, and social studies (Reed, 2015).

Vocational education, also known as career and technical education (CTE), prepares participants with skills for employment in specific jobs or industries (Reed, 2015). Vocational education is part of the DOC educational programming; however, the education department offers different vocational programs at the men's and women's prisons (Montana Correctional Enterprises, 2017b). These programs were included in the definition of correctional education at this prison due to the limited access to educational opportunities within the facility.

Special education services are available for qualifying inmates at the prison. The inmate must have had, at some point in the past, or qualify for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and be under the age of 22. The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) requirements dictate special education services. Special education provides individuals, with disabilities that impact their ability to complete coursework, reasonable accommodation (Montana Department of Corrections, 2018). The IEP is a working document designed to outline the strategies and initiatives that will be used to help the inmate-student raise their achievement level (Goepel, 2009).

Data Analysis Procedures

In this study, the data analysis for both research questions took place in the same manner. The instrument used in the data collection process was an open-ended question written survey.

Once the group completed the survey, I began organizing the raw data. The survey information was sorted by program first; then, it was coded. Within the programs, the topics the participants were interested in were separated into sections. A second sort included the appeal of the programs to each participant and the importance to him, his family, friends, and why.

Further sorting took place, and each section was analyzed by what the participant had gained, the participant's plan for the use of their new skills, followed by their goals, and vocational plans. Each time the surveys were sorted, pieces of data were coded and included in the corresponding themes. The initial coding process of the data took place using NVivo 12 Plus. As the coding process continued, the formation of themes and descriptions prompted reviews of the coding. A codebook was created to help maintain the consistency of the coding (see Appendix F). The continual process of review and the interrelation of themes and descriptions led to the process of interpretation of the themes and descriptions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Limitations and Delimitations of the Research Design

The study had various limitations. The methodology for the study was qualitative. The data collected answered the research questions with non-numerical data. Therefore, the data could not be analyzed in a way that would produce results consistent with the quantitative methodology. The method used was a qualitative narrative inquiry, which provided a small view of the experiences and perceptions of a small sample of inmates (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The information was not used for generalization. The study is exploratory, so specific numerical measures were not appropriate. Despite the use of pseudonyms, the student may have felt somewhat uncomfortable with the staff present during the survey administration. Participants were known to prison staff transporting them to and from the education facility and the educational staff who were present in the education facility. The pseudonyms were not provided

to these officials; however, the perception of a lack of confidentiality with prison officials might have existed with participants.

The sample for the study included 14 volunteers. Qualitative research sampling usually focuses on small samples in order to study the participants in detail (Tuckett, 2004). The participants came from only one prison; however, only one classification unit was accessible. Further, this prison is a men's prison; therefore, the analysis may only be transferable to this prison's student body.

The sample size was meant to keep the data somewhat manageable. The classification unit where the sample was taken from was one of the two at the prison. Due to security and logistical concerns, the prison officials permitted the inclusion of inmates in the lower-risk classification unit. This limitation reduced the potential population for sampling to only a portion of the total population at the prison who were enrolled in some type of correctional education. Further, these constraints limited the time commitment to complete data collection and reduced the staffing commitments and accommodations for the study.

The instrumentation for the study was not an established instrument. An expert panel was consulted to reduce any harmful consequences that might have arisen. Two experts were sent the survey; however, no feedback was returned on its content. The open-ended question survey was used to collect the data, which likely produced less thick and rich descriptions from the students than answers that might have been obtained in one-on-one semi-structured interviews.

Qualitative narrative inquiry was chosen for the study because it fit the scope of the work. The research aimed to explore phenomena; it did not seek to answer a question with a specific answer (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The sample size of 14 participants appeared to adequately meet the data collection needs of the study (Tuckett, 2004). The limitations set by the PIO for the

participants related to their housing unit classification. The lower-risk classification housing unit was capable of accommodating the inmate movements for participation in the study. The higher-risk classification housing unit was in an area that would have created an undue burden on the staff who would have been moving those inmates for participation. The participants came from the HiSET preparation, Automotive Technology, and the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. There were no volunteers from any of the other programs in the education department.

Although the facility required negotiated limitations and concessions, the validity and reliability of the data collected were not in jeopardy. Their housing location only limited the parameters for participants and the potential pool of participants. The ability for future research in this area under similar conditions remains intact.

Validation

To establish credibility and dependability, two actions were discussed for each section. Morse and Richards (2002) indicated that the credibility of an inquiry is the work's trust value. The work's applicability lends to transferability and consistency of the dependability of the results. The use of multiple approaches was employed to enhance the accuracy of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Credibility. The data collection that was performed with the volunteer participants may be transferable to all inmates in correctional education programs at the prison. The participants' narratives produced data that expressed each's experiences in a way that other students in the prison's educational programs could identify (Cope, 2014). All researcher biases were carefully noted in detailed memos. Potential volunteers who were known to me would have been excluded to ensure the data collected was less likely to be skewed; however, none of the volunteers were known.

Transferability. Individuals in basic literacy, special education, ABE, or vocational education were eligible to participate in the study. The eligible population came from the lower-risk classification housing unit. There were no disqualifying factors aside from the requirement of being a participant in either the academic or vocational programming.

Researcher bias. According to Creswell and Poth (2017), it is critical that the reader understands the stance of the researcher and any biases or assumptions that might impact the study. I worked with former inmates of the prison in a community corrections facility from 2010 to 2014, in a case manager capacity. Throughout my employment, one-on-one case management sessions with each offender took place every week for approximately six months per resident. The experiences derived from this work environment could contribute to a preconceived notion about the types of answers volunteers in the research study might have. The experiences the offenders who were case management clients could have impacted the way the data was collected, coded, and analyzed.

Bracketing techniques were employed to minimize the researcher bias that might have arisen during the data collection and analysis. The preferred methods of bracketing used included a reflexive journal and memos to discover any preconceptions instead of trying to set aside the preconceived notions for the sake of objectivity (Tufford & Newman, 2010). No method could eliminate assumptions, preconceptions, or personal experience's effect on the study (Tufford & Newman, 2010). None of the volunteers were known. In the event a potential participant was known, he would have been excluded from the volunteer sample. The researcher had no known family or acquaintances incarcerated at the prison.

Dependability. The dependability of the study was demonstrated using two actions that aided in the overall quality of data and the data's trustworthiness (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

In the creation of the data collection instrument, an expert panel review of the survey questions was solicited to help create the most efficient and appropriate final draft of the open-ended question survey. Coding reliability was addressed through a continual and thorough process of review and memoing of the codes, categories, and labels (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Expert panel review. An expert panel was asked to review the draft to ensure the likelihood of a content-valid, well-constructed instrument to formulate the most useful survey questions (White & Simon, 2014). The Survey/Interview Validation Rubric for Expert Panel (VREP) by White and Simon (2014), was included with the draft for optional use in the review process. According to Davis (1992), an expert panel should be comprised of two or three more reviewers who have measurable expertise in the content area. To orient the review panel, an executive summary of the research accompanied the survey so that the panel could determine the congruence of the survey questions with the goals of the study (Davis, 1992). Two individuals with a demonstrated expertise in the field, who were identified in recently published literature in the areas of criminal justice, correctional education, and reentry, were approached by email requesting an expert review of the survey questions.

Coding reliability. According to Morse and Richards (2002), consistency in coding is essential. In this study, the data collection instrument asked each participant the same questions. To maintain consistency in coding, I employed the use of memos to maintain the organization of coding choices, the development of categories, and recoding and relabeling as needed (Morse & Richards, 2002). I also used NVivo 12 Plus throughout the study to manage the data and the coding process.

Expected Findings

How do the incarcerated men at the prison describe their experiences with the correctional education options available to them? It was anticipated that at least a portion of the inmates would have an intrinsic drive to complete the programs, such as ABE, and the HiSET exam. Often, as evidenced by Hall and Killacky (2008), a high school diploma or equivalent was required to attend another program, for example, vocational training. At the prison, the options were somewhat limited; however, if an inmate desired, he could obtain his HiSET and then complete a vocational program, if allowed by prison guidelines.

How do the incarcerated men at the prison perceive the impact of educational programs on their vocational aspirations? There was the potential for multiple motivating factors to influence the drive to excel in educational programming while incarcerated. Some inmates have equated success to the completion of programming and obtaining gainful employment upon release. The more financially stable the former inmate, the greater the perception of success they will experience (Hall & Killacky, 2008).

It was anticipated that a significant proportion of the men would have positive responses regarding post-release employment goals. Davis et al. (2013) found that incarcerated individuals who participated in correctional education were 43% less likely to recidivate than those who did not participate. Further, it was anticipated that vocational education participants would respond more positively about their post-release employment because they had learned marketable skills.

Ethical Issues of the Study

In this research study, the population sampled consisted of adult male inmates at the prison in the lower-risk classification housing unit. This population was considered a vulnerable population, which required additional considerations and measures for the protection of their

rights and well-being. The IRB reviewed the research as part of the requirement for studies where research with human subjects was involved. Researchers are obligated to try to protect participants from harm and ensure the well-being of the participants. The IRB ensured all steps had been taken to provide the participants with maximum benefits and minimum harm. The IRB also scrutinized the research to be sure participants were being included for legitimate reasons and were not being exploited because of any vulnerabilities (Jaax, 2010).

To prepare the participants, an introductory recruitment letter, detailing the purpose, process, desired types of information, the data collection process, time commitment, and a researcher introduction were provided. Once the inmate decided to participate, he completed the Volunteer Participation Form. Each participant received the IRB-approved informed consent form, which was discussed to clarify any information for the participants. Each participant received copies of his signed documents for reference.

Confidentiality was critical. With the use of pseudonyms, participants were informed that no demographics, sentencing information, classification information, or inmate identification or “AO” numbers would be recorded. External confidentiality was a primary concern. I was vigilant to ensure the information that was reported in the study did not reveal identifying information to the outside world (Kaiser, 2009). The written documents were kept in a locked file box in my constant control.

The inmate’s right to withdraw was carefully defined. The reassurance was included that no penalty or action would result from withdrawal from the study. A separate form was designed for participants’ use should they have decided to withdraw from the study. The form stated, “I no longer wish to participate in this research study. I acknowledge that any information that I may have provided will not be used and will be destroyed securely” (see Appendix E). The form

would have been signed by the participant and countersigned. A copy would have been provided to the participant. The original copy would have been kept in the locked file box.

Further, the consent included a statement that permitted participants to inquire about the process and research before the beginning of data collection. The document was signed and dated by the participant and countersigned. The consent forms were stored in the locked file box.

Each participant had the opportunity to review the documents and ask any questions to clarify any information that might have been unclear. Once the documents were signed, copies were provided to each participant. The informed consent explicitly covered confidentiality measures and the use of pseudonyms as part of the security process. No inmate data regarding sentencing, charges, demographics, or the individual's identification number were recorded. The actual identity of the participant was only known by the prison officials who were present for the duration of the data collection process and me. The purpose of the participant's name disclosure was for security functions and transport purposes to the data collection site.

Once all documents were signed, they were stored in a locked file box that was in my constant control. Throughout the data collection process, documents were stored in the locked file box. After the data collection phase, all files were scanned and transferred to an encrypted file folder on a biometrically secured laptop for ease of management. The laptop did not enter the prison. All paper files were placed in a fire-resistant safe in my home once the information was uploaded to the laptop.

The data collected, copies of the volunteer forms, consent forms, and surveys will be retained for three years following the completion of the dissertation. At that time, documents will be shredded and bagged for disposal. The laptop files will be deleted with Eraser, a secure data removal software tool, to prevent any data from being retained unknowingly. Eraser offers 13

protocols for cleaning and sanitization of data files. One protocol most commonly referenced is the Department of Defense 5220.22-M. This sanitization process is a series of seven passes plus a verification data overwrite technique, which was the chosen data removal protocol for this study (Cardwell, 2007).

Summary

Through this qualitative narrative inquiry, I intended to explore the perceptions of inmate-students in the lower-risk classification housing unit about the impact correctional education programs had on their vocational aspirations post-release. For this study, a request for volunteers went to all academic and vocational classes in the lower-risk classification housing unit. The sample size was 14 participants. All participants' identities were protected. Each participant chose a pseudonym for use in the study. The participants completed the survey in a group setting. NVivo 12 Plus was used throughout the data analysis process. Continual reviews of codes, categories, and themes took place to ensure there was consistency in the definitions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The research portrayed the perceptions and experiences of a small number of inmates from the lower-risk classification housing unit at the prison who were enrolled in correctional education programming. The physical layout of the prison made access to other housing units difficult logistically, and therefore, a burden on the prison staff who assisted in the movement of inmates for the data collection process. The transferability of the research to a broader sample remains intact despite the limitations that were placed on the study.

To establish the credibility of the research, transferability and researcher bias were addressed to demonstrate the trustworthiness of the data (Morse & Richards, 2002). To demonstrate dependability within the study's data, I chose to use an expert review panel to

evaluate the instrumentation, and a continual review of coding, categories, and themes took place to ensure the coding process was reliable (Morse & Richards, 2002). When the coding process was underway, the NVivo 12 Plus software aided in the coding process, which was an additional measure to keep the coding consistent.

Confidentiality was of great concern in this study. A thorough recruitment letter of introduction and explanation was provided to the potential participants. Once the volunteers were obtained, each participant chose a pseudonym for use throughout the study. A detailed informed consent was provided for each participant. I was available to clarify any information for the participants before each signed the document.

During the data collection process, the written surveys were kept in a locked file box under my constant control. Once the data were collected, the files were scanned and uploaded into an encrypted folder on a biometrically locked laptop. The hard copies of all the surveys were stored in a fire-resistant safe in my home. The destruction of all the collected data will take place three years after the completion of the dissertation. The electronic files on the laptop will be destroyed with the use of a secure data removal software, Eraser. The chosen protocol for sanitization is the Department of Defense 5220.22-M (Cardwell, 2007). The paper forms will be shredded and bagged for disposal.

The anticipated findings in the study were expected to show a portion of the participants with some sort of intrinsic drive to complete their academic or vocational programming. Another part of the participant group was expected to potentially have a different experience or perspective, such as the inmates attending basic literacy and special education programs. The participants in basic literacy and special education might not continue to the level of HiSET achievement. Each student in the vocational and academic programs came to the courses with

different competencies, deficiencies, perspectives, and experiences with education. As stated by Hall and Killacky (2008), the more financially stable the former inmate, the greater the perception of success they will experience. Davis et al. (2013) found that the higher the level of academic or vocational achievement, the more positive the post-release outcome.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry was to explore the perceptions of male inmates in a state prison about how correctional education impacts the offenders' vocational aspirations. After conducting an extensive search of the literature, I was unable to determine the perceptions of men incarcerated at a state prison about the impact of academic and vocational education programs on their vocational aspirations. After exploring the views of the participants in both academic and vocational education programs, the survey responses answered the research questions:

1. How do the incarcerated men in a low-risk classification unit of a Midwestern state prison describe their experiences with the correctional education options available to them?
2. How do the incarcerated men at the prison perceive the impact of educational programs on their vocational aspirations?

The data analysis for this qualitative narrative inquiry used the process of content analysis. The analysis produced several themes for each research question, which were different for each of the programs the study participants attended. Data analysis of the Automotive Technology program produced five themes. The data analysis for the HiSET preparation revealed seven themes and one subtheme. The Microsoft Office 2016 program data analysis produced seven themes. Each program did have some themes similar to those in other programs; however, most of the themes were specific to the program.

As the researcher, I had no interaction with the participants during the data collection process. The permission to conduct research at the prison did not allow interaction with the participants for data collection. The data was obtained through a researcher-developed open-

ended question survey, which I administered at the prison. I performed an analysis of the data. Because of my prior history working with the formerly incarcerated, I used bracketing techniques to minimize the potential for researcher bias (Tufford & Newman, 2010). The methods of bracketing used included memos and a reflexive journal to review my analysis process. This insight into my process allowed me to take another look at my work and evaluate the new codes and themes for signs of researcher bias (Tufford & Newman, 2010).

This chapter describes the participant sample who contributed their accounts to answer the research questions. A discussion of the research methodology and analysis encompasses the way the content analysis relates to qualitative narrative inquiry. A summary of findings is included to discuss the new patterns and themes derived from the coding and organization process—a detailed presentation of the data and results discusses the interconnected themes in the data for each program.

Description of the Sample

The general population for this qualitative narrative inquiry came from a men's state prison with approximately 1,500 inmates (Montana Department of Corrections, 2018). Within this facility, the inmates are divided into two classification units, the higher-risk and lower-risk. The target population for this research study was the lower-risk classification unit inmates who were enrolled in either an academic or vocational education program.

The sample included volunteer students who were participating in the HiSET preparation, Automotive Technology, and Microsoft Office 2016 certification programs. For this qualitative narrative inquiry, no demographic information was obtained from the participants. Demographic information was not needed to satisfy any of the goals of this research. The participants were identified in the survey documents with a pseudonym, which was chosen by the participant. A

total of 19 students attended the orientation session and signed the informed consent and volunteer participation forms.

At the time the survey was administered, 14 of the 19 volunteers showed up to complete the survey. Table 1 shows the participants in relation to the program in which each was enrolled. Sample sizes in qualitative research typically rely on small numbers with the intent of studying in depth and detail (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990; Tuckett, 2004). The individuals who chose not to appear to complete the survey did not report to designate their decision to withdraw from the study; consequently, no right to withdraw forms were completed. Further, these individuals did not provide any information about their decision not to participate.

Table 1

Participants by Programs

HiSET Preparation	Microsoft Office 2016 Certification	Automotive Technology
Brooks	Big Dude	Blanco Mandango
Chuckles	Hehaka	Dave
Diva	John Smith	
Kober	Singing Arrow	
Indian Wellz	Zeth	
Sarah		
Terrell		

Research Methodology and Analysis

The decision to use content analysis for this qualitative narrative inquiry evolved from reviews of literature relating to qualitative research and content analysis. Elo and Kyngäs (2007)

suggested content analysis as a method to make “replicable and valid inferences from the data” (p. 108) with the goal of providing knowledge and insights to condense broad descriptions of the students’ experiences and perceptions into themes. Content analysis provides an understanding of the experiences and perceptions expressed in the study’s data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) further indicated that content analysis is a research method for subjective interpretation of the text derived from the surveys through a systematic process of coding and identifying themes.

The research questions for this research study explored the human experiences of the participants about their educational experiences at the prison, as well as the impact of those experiences on their vocational aspirations. After reviewing the recommendation of Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017), it was determined that content analysis was an appropriate method for analysis of the type of data collected from the volunteers. NVivo 12 Plus was used throughout the process of data analysis.

After the data collection at the prison, the original hand-written surveys were scanned and stored in an encrypted folder. The surveys were then transcribed verbatim into typed documents for use in NVivo. The transcribed documents were saved in a subfolder in the encrypted folder. Both the written and typed versions of the surveys were saved under the pseudonym the participant had chosen at the commencement of the study. The surveys were sorted and placed in three case classifications within NVivo. Case classifications were created for each of the three programs: Automotive Technology, HiSET preparation, and Microsoft Office 2016 certification. All the typed surveys were imported into NVivo. The imported files were classified by the participant’s program. Once the files were sorted and classified, the initial coding process began.

In the first round of coding, topical codes were created. An initial codebook was created to organize the topics. From the topics, new descriptive codes were formed, and the files were reviewed, and each files' codes were sorted into the new descriptive codes. After each round of coding, a new memo was created with the thoughts and observations that emerged. Periodically, new codebooks were created to use as a reference in the analysis process. In the final stages of coding, the descriptive codes were sorted into thematic codes, and a final codebook was created (see Appendix F).

Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) recommended the creation of a series of documents to aid in the condensation of data into meaning units, codes, and themes. The documents were created with the data from NVivo to continue the analysis process. As a reference, each of the thematic codes was exported for use with the data condensation documents. Participant information from each code was placed into the first document, which was used to condense the information into meaning units. I organized the meaning units in the same order as the survey questions to maintain the context of the participants' answers.

The second document in the process used the meaning units that were formed in the first document. The meaning units were assigned codes. These codes were compared to those thematic codes from NVivo to maintain consistency. The final document was in spreadsheet form, which sorted the condensed meaning units and codes with added columns to categorize the information. The categories were created after reviewing the thematic codebook and the codes from the second document. Once the categories were entered in the spreadsheet, a new memo was created documenting the categories.

The new memo outlined the collection of categories and the category's relation to each survey question and research question. After the memo was reviewed, a rough list of themes was

created for each case classification. During the final review of the themes, a list of themes was created to organize the data and report the findings. A final memo was created for each case classification with the final themes, which were linked to the files and codes that had been stored in NVivo. At that time, the information was thoroughly sorted and used to create the narrative report of the findings.

Narrative design. Narrative inquiry collects personal accounts of experiences on a topic among a group of participants, to rebuild the phenomena from the perspective of the participants (Baughan, 2017). When individuals give their account of an experience, it is done purposefully. The accounts are reflections of their experience, which in turn asks the reader to take note of that experience (Çalışkan, 2018).

In this research study, the purpose was to gain insight into the experiences and perceptions of incarcerated men about the impact of correctional education on their vocational aspirations. In the orientation session with the potential volunteers, the intent of the study was discussed in depth. I stressed that the research aimed to provide these men an opportunity to have their voices heard on the topic. The men were asked to express themselves openly and to speak candidly about their reality.

The results of the analysis provided an organized account of the various perceptions and experiences of the participants, as well as the themes created during the analysis. The results have been divided into three case classifications, one for each program in which the participants were enrolled. The themes had some overlap in some instances; however, many of the themes were course-specific. The narrative accounts of each participant contributed heavily to each theme. Some of the information provided by the participants was commentary related more to

their surroundings, and how the environment contributed to their experiences and perceptions and was not directly related to the research questions.

Summary of the Findings

This qualitative narrative inquiry asked two research questions to accomplish the goal of the research. The research questions directed the creation of the researcher-developed open-ended question survey. During the analysis, the survey questions were divided and grouped by the question's relation to each research question.

Research question 1 asked: How do the incarcerated men in a low-risk classification unit of a Midwestern state prison describe their experiences with the correctional education options available to them? Regarding Automotive Technology, four themes emerged: the education department, program experiences, course resources and materials, and personal experiences and feelings. Regarding HiSET preparation, five themes and one subtheme emerged: education department and educators, trust issues, the program, classroom experiences, personal experiences and feelings, and the subtheme, family's feelings and perceived family's feelings. Finally, regarding the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program, five themes emerged: education department and educators, internet and online resources, program certification, program and learning, and personal experiences and feelings.

Research question 2 asked: How do the incarcerated men at the prison perceive the impact of educational programs on their vocational aspirations? Regarding Automotive Technology, one theme emerged: impact of the program on the participant. Regarding HiSET preparation, two themes emerged: post-release goals and personal feelings. Regarding Microsoft Office 2016, two themes emerged: post-release goals and program benefits.

The themes and subtheme in research question 1 demonstrated a broad range of perceptions and personal experiences of participants in each of the three programs. Program themes associated with research question 2 contained the post-release aspirations' and feelings of the participants. In both research questions, a multitude of themes that both, directly and indirectly, addressed each survey question and the question's relation to each research question.

Presentation of the Data and Results

The results of the research questions were divided into three programs. Research question 1 contained Automotive Technology, which contained four themes. The HiSET preparation had five themes and one subtheme. Finally, Microsoft Office 2016 certification revealed five themes. Research question 2 contained Automotive Technology, which had one theme. The HiSET preparation had two themes. Finally, Microsoft Office 2016 certification had two themes.

Research question 1. How do the incarcerated men in a low-risk classification unit of a Midwestern state prison describe their experiences with the correctional education options available to them?

Automotive technology. The Automotive Technology program is a 2-year vocational program. Students in this program are prepared for work in mechanics. Participants in the Automotive Technology program are sometimes assigned to the Motor Vehicle Maintenance department, which employs inmates to help staff work on the facility's vehicles.

Theme 1 the education department. The education department theme described the participants' views on the administration of the academic and vocational programs, the perceived deficiencies of the program, the availability of educators for the program, the program enrollment process, and the leadership demonstrated by the educational department personnel.

Two participants were students in Automotive Technology: Blanco Mandango and Dave. Dave had a more holistic view of the education department, which related directly to a change in the director of the education department and the leadership issues that followed. Dave commented on his views, “Seems to be a lack of ownership and leadership to both education programs and production programs. I see things changing for the worst before the better.”

Blanco Mandango expressed his desire for more teachers for the program. Further, Blanco Mandango stated, “We have one teacher for the whole program.” As an overarching issue to the lack of teachers, participants commented on the need for more funding. Additionally, the number of students allowed to enroll in Automotive Technology is relatively small. Blanco Mandango noted, “I was grateful [*sic*] to be able to be one of 10 people to get into the program.”

Theme 1, the education department, related to research question 1, in that, the theme addressed a portion of the participants’ experiences with the correctional education options available. The participants’ observations about the effect the lack of funding had on the availability of teachers for the program, as well as the limited number of spaces for students in the course, highlighted each participant’s views about the department and how those concerns contributed to the participants’ educational experiences.

Theme 2 program experiences. The program experiences theme discussed the elements of the Automotive Technology course that surrounded the learning experiences as described by the students. The theme also discussed participant perceptions about the Automotive Technology program. The participants’ thoughts about the program environment also contributed to the discussion of the theme.

Participants generally had positive comments about their program experiences. The two participants expressed that they enjoyed the hands-on learning and smaller class size, which

allowed for more individualized attention. Blanco Mandango commented on a positive experience, “I also like that the teacher treats us like student [*sic*] instead of inmates.”

The participants’ comments indicated they were learning about mechanics. Dave explained his learning experience, “The automotive program helps with how and when to use certain tools. Helps with diagnostics with machines by understanding the logic to individual parts that make up the system.” Other remarks by participants expressed happiness about learning a trade in an area of personal interest. Overall, the participants reported “great” classroom experiences and teachers, coupled with peer support.

Theme 2, program experiences, was similarly related to research question 1 to theme 1, the education department. Program experiences encompassed a portion of the participants’ views about their correctional education experience. Theme 2 built on theme 1 and provided another segment of the answer to research question 1.

Theme 3 course resources and materials. Course materials referred to the needed instructional materials, educational support, and equipment for the effective operation of the Automotive Technology program. Resources were identified as areas needing improvement or expansion. The combination of resources and materials impacted the learning environment, as well as the participants’ learning experiences.

The participants identified areas where resources could be added or improved in the program. One suggested improvement was an update of the program’s textbook, which the participants reported was six years old. Dave commented, “Better, equipment, tools, computer programs, access to more options with tools, like what could be accessed at a real shop.” Participants also expressed a desire for program improvement, as well as the addition of components that would help the students with reentry into the community.

The participants' comments related to theme 3 helped to expand the base of information that answered research question 1. The participants' thoughts relayed information about course materials and resources. The need for resources and materials were part of the classroom experience. In the case of theme 3, course resources and materials, the experiences demonstrated perceived deficiencies that if improved, would, in turn, improve the overall class experience.

Theme 4 personal experiences and feelings. Theme 4, personal experiences and feelings expressed participants' experiences that related to each participant as an individual. The individuals' perspectives broadened the understanding of each participant's classroom experience. Both participants expressed positive feelings about the Automotive Technology program.

The experiences and feelings discussed by the participants were similar. The comments about taking part in the Automotive Technology program included positive sentiments, as well as responses that identified areas of intrinsic value. Dave stated, "I experiences [*sic*] pride in myself by attaining more knowledge from when I started." Blanco Mandango expressed both positive feelings and an example of the intrinsic value of the program, "Just having the experiences to work on cars and be treaded [*sic*] like a person is a good thing.

Theme 4 was the last element that compiled a description of the educational experiences of participants in Automotive Technology. The personal experiences and feelings shared perspectives that did not relate to the education department, program experiences, or course resources and materials. Theme 4 reflected the human experiences of the two participants enrolled in the program. The combination of all four themes brought different points of view together to answer research question 1 as it related to the Automotive Technology program.

HiSET preparation. The HiSET preparation program was designed to prepare students to take the HiSET and obtain a diploma. The students in this program have tested at various levels of education; however, they all attend courses together. The testing is done at the facility, and it correlates with the state's adult basic education requirements for HiSET achievement.

Theme 1 education department and educators. Theme 1 discussed the prison's education department and educators for academic programs. Participants expressed various opinions about departmental operations and the strengths and weaknesses of the educators. The theme provided a representation of participant experiences with the education department and the teachers in the HiSET preparation program. Seven participants enrolled in HiSET preparation completed the survey.

The participants identified areas of weakness in the department and with the teachers. Chuckles commented on teacher performance, "How some time teachers don't show up or not on time." Another student mentioned there was not enough help from the teachers. The student expanded on his comment by including his desire for more one-on-one help in the classroom. Indian Wellz commented on the programs available at the facility, "I feel the academics and vocational programs here at [location redacted] can be a lot better."

Some participants remarked about the positive or beneficial points regarding the education department and the teachers. One participant expressed that the program worked well. Other students mentioned their gratitude for the department's efforts to assist them. Diva commented on his experiences, "I like that it is an opportunity for me to learn for a better future. I also like that some of the teachers really care about us/me better ourselves." Kober not only expressed gratitude toward the education department for the department's help, but he also identified two teachers that had a positive impact on his learning experience.

The participants' experiences with the education department and the educators began to address the aspects of their program that answered research question 1. For the HiSET preparation program participants to provide an adequate representation of their experiences with the correctional education at the facility, the participants had to describe the experiences related to the department overseeing programming, as well as the educators who contributed to their classroom experiences. The two components, the education department, and the educators demonstrated a foundation that began to explain the participant's perceptions and experiences.

Theme 2 trust issues. Theme 2, trust issues, was formed from one participant's comments. The participant described the lack of interpersonal relationships with the teachers, and subsequently, the inability to trust the staff. The participant's statements indicated his desire to converse with staff on a personal level, which he felt would create trusting relationships. Further, the participant commented on the need for trust with staff in the event a student had a concern that needed to be addressed.

The participant expressed several concerns about trust between students and staff. The participant commented on the inability of the staff to have personal conversations with the students. Diva states, "Also, trust is a huge issue for a lot of us." Additional remarks revealed the participant's perception that without students and teachers having a "friendship," the students would not be able to trust the staff. Diva expressed his concerns related to trusting relationships, "Also, what if something happened to one of us and we have no one to turn to, do [*sic*] to not having that trust, that friendship with our teachers." Diva commented about the inability to have friendships as a disappointment and a deficiency associated with the staff.

Trust issues within the classroom related to research question 1, in that the lack of interpersonal relationships created an environment without trust. The participant's need to have

trust in his classroom added another dynamic to the correctional education experience. The student mentioned the inability to turn to staff if something happened because of a lack of a sense of trust among the students, demonstrated a perceived weakness in the class environment and overall experience.

Theme 3 the program. Theme 3, the program, explained the participants' perceptions about the HiSET preparation program and the participants' experiences in the program. In this theme, the participants commented on what each hoped to gain from the program, the program format, the testing process, and the intrinsic value of the program. A few participants commented on improvements they felt could be made to the program.

Participants in HiSET preparation had different opinions about the program. Some participants commented on the importance of the program and the participants' ability to gain more knowledge. Chuckles expressed his feelings about the program, and the program's effect on his life, "It's really important [*sic*] because I am court order[n] [*sic*] it look good to get a job." Some participants expressed pride in themselves for their accomplishments. Kober spoke about his feelings and his future, "It give me pride that I can be successful and walk out of prison better than I came in."

Participants expressed some areas in the program that were disappointing. Other participants' comments recommended improvements, which would enhance the learning experience. Kober made remarks about the program format, "I dislike that its [*sic*] only 3 hours I wish it were more." A few participants mentioned the addition of some night study classes or a study hall as an improvement to the program. Indian Wellz expressed his concerns about the testing process, "The way [location redacted] education tests it takes too long to test. The way they go about testing, its [*sic*] like one test a month some of us don't have that kind of time they

should give all five tests at once.” Brooks mentioned adding internet access as an improvement to the students’ learning experiences.

Theme 3 related to research question 1 differently than with other themes. The program encompassed participants’ experiences related to HiSET preparation. The participants expressed positive sentiments about the program experience. The benefits the participants highlighted also resonated with the participant comments about the program’s intrinsic value. The participants that expressed their disappointments, or included suggestions for improvements, also added to the educational experiences collectively. Theme 3 was another part of the responses to research question 1 that demonstrated the participants’ experiences with correctional education available at the facility.

Theme 4 classroom experiences. Theme 4 discussed the participants’ classroom experiences. The experiences described in this theme included the classroom environment, the participants’ achievements, and the impact of the class on the participants. The participants’ views demonstrated differing views, which were primarily positive. Infrequently, participants mentioned parts of the classroom experience that each found disappointing.

The participants were asked about the importance of completing the program, which produced a few different answers. Kober expressed the program’s importance to him, “Its verry [*sic*] important I don’t want to fail no more. Education and success are all I think about any more.” Other participants commented about completing the program to allow them to continue their education in the future. Terrell wants to attend college.

Participants expressed that completing the program was intrinsically valuable to them. Diva reflected on his life circumstances, as well as correctional education and stated, “I feel is very important because at 17, I dropped out of school to care for Grandma, and gave up my

chance for a career. So in doing this program and completing it, it would be a great accomplishment, and again, a confidence boost, to know that if I stick to something and have great support I can!! do it to the best of my ability.”

Theme 4, classroom experiences, described a portion of the participants’ experiences with the correctional education available to them. Participants expressed the importance of the program, as well as the goals which might have stemmed from their participation. Theme 4 compiled views that added to the answer to research question 1 in a manner that explained the reality each participant experienced in the HiSET preparation program.

Theme 5 personal experiences and feelings. Theme 5 focused on the participants’ feelings about various aspects of the program and their perspectives. Some participants shared their sentiments. Everyone viewed the environment, staff, and course in different ways. Some participants expressed their feelings in terms of their achievements. Other participants discussed life lessons they each learned while taking part in the program.

Some participants commented that the program was an escape from the harmful environment of the housing unit. Participants were asked to explain their experiences in the program. Brooks stated, “I work at my own pace [*sic*].” Other participants expressed they want to be able to make better choices in life. Diva expressed gratitude and displayed an awareness of his identity, “Just a huge thank you for helping me with a pair of new eyes to see that Im [*sic*] more than what the courts see me as and I am somebody.” Terrell explained that initially, he felt he was never going to get through the program.

One participant explained the environment and the types of individuals he is incarcerated with; Diva stated, “Also, I learned that not all people are bad. Being in prison education I’m surrounded by rapist [*sic*], cho-mo’s, killers etc. but to learn in life you have to trust your

surroundings.” Diva further commented on his initial impression of the program, “intimidated, do [sic] to the lack of education in 17 yrs [sic]. Being that I got here when I was 34.” Some participants expressed the sentiment that they thought having a HiSET would look “good” when they were released. Overall, the participants had positive feelings about HiSET preparation. None of the participants’ survey responses noted any disappointments or program deficiencies.

In theme 5, the participants commented on their personal experiences and feelings. The information the participants provided created another viewpoint that contributed to research question 1. By including these views, the participants expressed feelings that did not directly relate to the classroom, the program format, educators, or the education department. The comments were a representation of the participants’ personal views or gains from HiSET preparation. The personal focus of the comments demonstrated an opinion about the program experience, and in some cases, the intrinsic value of the experience.

Subtheme 1 family’s feelings and perceived family’s feelings. In this subtheme, the participants expressed their family’s feelings and their perceptions of their family’s feelings. The information provided about their families was another essential view of the HiSET preparation program for the participants. The participants were affected by the family’s input, whether positive or negative.

The family feelings expressed by the participants were most often positive. Kober commented, “The [sic] love it I will be the 3 [sic] one in my family to achieve a diploma.” Additional comments included families’ expressions of pride in the participants. Chuckles commented on his family’s opinion about his program participation, “They think it’s not worth the hassle [sic] I put up with I can get it on the outs.”

The participants who commented on their perceptions about their families' feelings about their program participation were positive. Terrell felt his family would be proud. Diva referred back to a previous comment when he expressed his family's feelings, "I feel my Grandma would have been proud of me, though she always has been. But also I feel as though they would be happy for me and the younger generation cud [*sic*] look up to me."

The expressions of family feelings and perceived family feelings contributed to research question 1 in that; the comments created a different aspect of the participants' HiSET preparation program experience. Family input, whether direct or perceived, had an impact on the comments of the participants. The comments contributed to the participants' experiences with correctional education at the prison indirectly. Although the amount of information provided in this subtheme was relatively small, the feelings of the families affected the participants, thereby impacting the experiences of the participants.

Microsoft Office 2016. The Microsoft Office 2016 program is a newer program at the facility. The program is considered a vocational training program. The program is designed to prepare the participants to take the Microsoft Office 2016 certification test. The Microsoft Office 2016 is one of a limited number of programs offered by the state prison system. A total of five participants attended the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program.

Theme 1 education department and educators. Theme 1 included the participants' views about the education department at the prison, as well as the program's educators. The participants expressed concerns about both the education department and the teachers. Additional comments discussed areas of the program that the participants perceived as deficient. The participants had suggestions to enhance the program and learning experience. Finally, the participants expressed frustrations about the program and the certification process.

The participants discussed the program's educators, which often included negative perceptions. Some participants were frustrated and indicated the program was held back when the teachers were called away to cover for the librarians. Also, the participants commented on their disappointment that library time conflicted with class time. Thus, the participants were often unable to use the library. Singing Arrow had a direct concern with the instructors, "I think the teachers should be provided with adequate training." Some participants commented on educator competencies, which demonstrated a concern that the instructors did not have the necessary tools and knowledge to provide participants with adequate instruction to complete the program and receive Microsoft Office 2016 certification. Zeth commented on his perceptions, "So far the staff has been of very little help. It is a fairly new program so they too are still learning. Unfortunately that means that we mostly have to teach ourselves from the book."

The participants' comments about departmental concerns were equally negative. Some participants expressed concerns about the certification process. Participants commented about the unclear details about their ability to take the Microsoft Office 2016 certification test. Zeth expressed his frustration about the program certification, "Also, they have not actually got everything set up to get certified even though the program is nearly a year old."

Participants further expressed their concerns and perceptions about the program certification process and the department administration. Big Dude stated, "Ensuring that the certification test is 100% available and the Administration support it so it is available on the classroom computer. There is to *[sic]* much red tape to get certifications." Some participants commented about the education department; the participants wanted the department to follow through and facilitate the certification process. Some participants desired more transparency from the education department about the certification process, and how it worked within the

prison's programming, reducing some of the confusion and frustration about program certification. A separate comment about the education department came from John Smith, who stated, "I feel like they have improved over the past few years overall."

Theme 1 related to research question 1 in that; the participants' remarks provided a perspective about the participants' experiences with the education available at the prison. Frustration and concern were a common expression among the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program participants. Further, the participants described their perspectives on the education department, the educators, and the certification process, which were all aspects of their program and learning experience.

Theme 2 internet and online resources. Theme 2 discussed the participants' views about the internet and access to online resources in the classroom. Students recognized the importance of technology and the need for technical skills. Students had a desire to explore online education and programs. The Microsoft Office 2016 certification program was taught from a book but also had online assignments and resources. The participants expressed their concerns and frustrations about the lack of internet access at the prison and the inability to use the online study materials and resources associated with the program.

The participants' comments about the internet, online education, and access to online resources were varied; however, all the comments surrounded the participants' concerns and frustrations with the program and facility. Program participants expressed that the lack of internet access impedes their efforts to pursue individual opportunities. Zeth expressed his opinion about the program resources, "The facility needs to allow us access to the online resources which are intended and expected to be used with this program."

John Smith commented about the quality of the program and the internet, “A lot has already improved over time. But there are still things that could get improved, like internet connection for all computers so that we can do all the assignments in the book.” Hehaka suggested the facility use a secure, monitored internet connection to facilitate access to programs only available online. Zeth commented on his frustration with the internet and online resource access, “There are plethoras [*sic*] of programs available through the internet which there is no legitimate [*sic*] penalogical [*sic*] reason to deny us access to.”

Theme 2 related to research question 1 in that; the participants’ comments and concerns expressed another perspective of their experiences with correctional education at the facility. The fact that Microsoft Office 2016 teaches computer skills, participants have expressed a need for online access. Theme 2 demonstrated the frustrations and limitations participants faced throughout the program. The insight participants provided, broadened the view of the correctional education programming at this prison.

Theme 3 program certification. Theme 3 discussed the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. Participants expressed various thoughts about obtaining certification, the value of the certification, and the potential opportunities associated with Microsoft Office 2016 certification. Some participants discussed the intrinsic value of the certification, which enhanced their views about the other aspects of Microsoft Office 2016 certification.

Participants expressed some doubt whether certification was available after successful program and test completion. Participants’ surveys contained comments about the perceived value of Microsoft Office 2016 certification. Big Dude commented on his participation in the certification program, “Microsoft Office certification is a godsend for me. I feel it creates hope in those prisoners who feel hopeless.” Hehaka expressed the importance of the Microsoft Office

2016 certification, “To prepare for outside computer industry and get Microsoft certified for better job placement.”

Theme 3 related to research question 1, which provided more views from participants about the crucial aspects of the correctional education experience. Participants provided perceptions about Microsoft Office 2016 certification program, as well as the challenges and benefits of certification. The perceptions developed insight into the program and learning experience.

Theme 4 program and learning. Theme 4 discussed the program and learning in the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. Participants discussed what each liked and disliked about the program. The participants’ views varied; however, a few participants reiterated concerns that were addressed in other themes. Separate statements from participants included ideas about ways to improve the program.

Some participants commented on the relevance of the program, which prompted many statements about the use of their new skills. Big Dude expressed his views about his progress, “I like that I am learning skills that are relevant to real world job needs.” Other participants commented on the applicability of the learned skills to the workplace once they are released. Singing Arrow expressed the intrinsic value of the program, “I’m learning, and it makes me feel worthy, because by normal standards, most [location redacted] staff make us feel unworthy.” John Smith discussed the increasing difficulty of the program, which he stated was a positive point, as well as a personal source of frustration.

Singing Arrow expressed concern and provided an idea that he felt could improve the learning experience, “I think the teachers should be provided with adequate training! Or bring in some new blood like college student volunteers, etc.!” Participants were asked to discuss areas of

the program each felt could be improved. One student expressed the desire for group activities that could foster sharing and peer support. John Smith commented on the program and items he would like to see added to the learning experience, “Well, we are the ginny [*sic*] pig class, so it’s learn as we go. Also, pretests being available would be HUGE so that we can take practice tests that aren’t graded. That way we are learning and preparing for the real test.”

Theme 4 contributed some views about one of the available programs at the prison. The participants’ comments provided new perspectives that described their experiences. Participants’ remarks about the program and their learning experiences added depth to the collection of thoughts and feelings each contributed in the survey responses.

Theme 5 personal experiences and feelings. Theme 5 helped complete the understanding of participants’ experiences with the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. The theme emerged from the participants’ experiences and feelings, which were not only positive but also reflected on an element of the intrinsic value of the program. By combining the survey responses related to this theme, the participants’ comments and sentiments created a picture of the experiences and feelings unique to these participants.

The primary element of theme 5 surrounded the participants’ thoughts that the program will help them in life. The way the program will help each participant varies slightly; however, each recognized a part of the program that was not only important but how it related to their future. Singing Arrow commented, “Very excited and happy because it’s the first time in a decade in prison that I actually got to do a class that I know for sure will help me!” Some participants expressed they were driven to complete the program, and to finish what they had started. Big Dude explained his thoughts about the importance of the program, “Completion is of

absolute importance to me. If I don't complete, I believe I won't be able to succeed on the outside."

A few participant comments differed from the primary sentiments about the importance of the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program, and each participants' motivations to complete the program. Zeth commented on the mental effect of the program, "a place to 'escape' the limitations of prison by doing something productive." Additional comments related to sharing and peer support; Hehaka stated, "Have shared with others in class knowledges of past experience also have been showed by others, things from other classes to pass on."

Theme 5 related to research question 1 by highlighting the participants' personal views. The addition of the personal experiences and feelings tied together with a perspective that demonstrated the multi-faceted participant experiences with correctional education, and the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. The answers that related to research question 1 were not only diverse but provided a wide range of the participants' thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

Participants in both the academic and vocational education programs at the prison had personal and shared views about their experiences. Participants had positive comments and identified deficiencies that each felt existed within the department and each program. Overall, the participants' responses to the survey questions demonstrated a wide range of views and experiences. The observations, perceptions, and comments related to the program experiences provided a wealth of knowledge about the programs available, and each participant's reality within that program. The study participants expressed motivating factors that either brought the participant to the program or kept the participant going in the program. The information obtained

provided an impression of the participants' views about their experiences with the programs and how those views related to research question 1.

Research question 2. How do the incarcerated men at the prison perceive the impact of educational programs on their vocational aspirations?

Automotive technology. Participants in the Automotive Technology program learned relevant skills in auto mechanics. The program works in conjunction with the Motor Vehicle Maintenance program, which employs inmates from this program to assist in the maintenance of facility vehicles. Automotive Technology provides participants an opportunity to learn a trade to assist them when returning to the community.

Theme 1 impact of the program on the participant. Theme 1 discussed the impact of Automotive Technology on the participants. The participants have expressed interest in obtaining additional education in the field, as well as a college education. Participants further indicated a desire to open shops in the future.

Participants had positive comments about Automotive Technology. The impact of the program has directed both participants toward additional education. Dave commented on his aspirations as they relate to the program, "I am looking to achieve [*sic*] knowledge of mechanic trade to be able to get out of prison to get a good paying job with the hopes of having a retirement. Also look into starting my own shop." Blanco Mandango discussed the impact of Automotive Technology on his goals, "What I hope to gain is a higher education in the field of Auto Tech. With this program I believe [*sic*] that I will get a trade that I will be able to leave prison with. I also hope to gain more tools to help me further my education at a even higher level when I get out of prison." One participant summarized his experience by indicating that the Automotive Technology program allowed him to learn a trade in an area of personal interest.

A secondary impact of participation in Automotive Technology was the participants' desire to pursue college. Blanco Mandango mentioned the motivation he received from participating in Automotive Technology, "I feel my program is going to help me by giving me a step in the right direction for college." Blanco Mandango mentioned he plans to get a degree, and once has achieved his degree, he will open his own shop.

Theme 1 related to research question 2 in that; the impact of Automotive Technology prompted comments on participants' goals for post-release employment. Blanco Mandango's desire to pursue a college education, obtain a degree, and subsequently own a shop reflected a long-term plan for his reintegration into the community. Dave stated that he wanted to learn about auto mechanics to pursue employment upon release. Both participants' comments demonstrated the effect of the Automotive Technology program on their vocational aspirations.

HiSET preparation. The students in the HiSET preparation program are preparing themselves for life after prison. Participants expressed their goals for the future and the opportunities the students saw for themselves once they were released. Many of the students expressed the desire to pursue a college education.

Theme 1 post-release goals. Theme 1 described the post-release goals of the HiSET preparation participants. The participants expressed their desires, many of whom wanted to attend college. Another part of the discussion included the impact of the program on the participants themselves as it related to their future once released.

Many participants expressed the desire to attend college. The focus of the college studies was different for each program participant. Diva explained his goals and the personal feelings associated with his experiences, "I hope to apply at [location redacted] college and go into creative writing, and publish a book of my own poem's [*sic*] for I love to write poetry. Also to

get a good job that I could work hard at and make myself happy.” Two participants had more specific goals for their future education and vocational goals. Kober stated, “I plan to go to college. Take sociolligy [sic] become a counsler [sic] for juvinille [sic] delinquints [sic] that our [sic] in trouble with the law.” Indian Wellz expressed his educational goals, “I want to be a student and study law along with psychology.”

Other participants commented on the HiSET preparation program and its significance as it related to their future. Terrell expressed his desires, “Better choices so that go back finish school.” Kober explained that he was striving for success and expressed his desire to attend college. Kober stated, “1 more test I get my hiset.” Other participants expressed similar sentiments to Kober’s. Common statements among participants were the desire to better themselves, and the hope to have a better future.

Theme 1 related to research question 2 as it presented the post-release goals of HiSET preparation participants. All of the participants had positive comments and at least one post-release goal that stemmed from their educational experience. The goals and sentiments expressed by the participants contributed to the answer to research question 2, as the research question focused on the impact of educational programs on the participants’ aspirations.

Theme 2 personal feelings. Theme 2 discussed the many personal feelings that the impact of HiSET preparation will have on their lives once each is released. Some of the participants’ responses coincided with comments each made about their experiences in the program, as well as the impact of HiSET preparation on the participants’ post-release goals. Theme 2 included statements from the participants that expressed the intrinsic value of the program and the statements related to their post-release goals.

The participants described the HiSET preparation program's impact on them in a personal manner. Chuckles stated the program did not help him much, as he had vocational goals that did not include academics. A few participants expressed that HiSET preparation gave them the ability to help and teach their children. Brooks stated the program would help him become "more educated." Kober commented on his aspirations and the fact that the HiSET preparation program will help him achieve his goals.

The participants' thoughts about HiSET preparation further explained the effect the program had on everyone. Terrell expressed his insight, "Stick to your goals and you can make it and it your choice." Diva referred back to other survey responses and indicated that HiSET preparation would improve his social skills and boost his confidence. Diva also stated, "This program has made a great impact on me. Now that im [sic] so close of completeing [sic] it. I now see a whole new world of opprotunity [sic]. Because my last job was when I was 17 now im [sic] 41." Sarah explained that completing the HiSET preparation program was important because he had this goal in mind for a while.

Theme 2 related to research question 2, because it demonstrated personal thoughts about the impact of the HiSET preparation program on the participants. Personal feelings contributed to the participants' reality and their future aspirations. Research question 2 addressed the impact of HiSET preparation on their vocational aspirations; however, personal feelings were a part of the participants' goals and, in some way, affected those vocational aspirations.

Microsoft Office 2016. Participants in the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program reflected on different aspects of the course. Students were asked to discuss their post-release goals, the impact the program had on them, and the benefits of the program, or their personal

feelings about the program. The students' comments ranged from a general perspective to some that were more defined.

Theme 1 post-release goals. Theme 1 related to research question 2 in that; the participants' post-release goals directly addressed everyone's aspirations. Theme 1 explored the views of the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program participants and how those views translated into vocational goals. Participants had several goals that stemmed from their participation in the course.

Singing Arrow expressed his plans to use the skills from the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program for both vocational and personal purposes. Singing Arrow also aspired to share the skills he obtained in the program with others. Big Dude had several goals related to the completion of the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program, "I hope to be able to go back to school and finish my B.A. degree and get other degrees that will allow me to help other prisoners who have been targeted and harmed by the prison system. I also want to become a lawyer and this program is necessary to write legal documents." Big Dude was also interested in using the skills from the program to do informative writing about his prison experiences.

Zeth commented on his desire to work for himself, primarily from home. Hehaka also commented about the possibility of owning his own shop. Hehaka further stated he would like to acquire, "As much knowledge about operating systems, program's [*sic*] computer trouble shooting [*sic*] for I.T. job placement. Get foot in door for major company employment." The participants had different goals and aspirations that came from participation in the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program and expressed a desire to have positive effects from their experiences in this course.

Theme 1 related to research question 2 because it explained the participants' intended uses of the skills acquired in the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. The participants expressed a variety of vocational and personal goals to pursue upon release. The aspirations and motivations derived from the participants' survey question responses broadened the views research question 2 was designed to elicit.

Theme 2 program benefits. Theme 2, program benefits, discussed the participants' views about the benefits of completing the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. Participant comments differed; however, the focus of the comments surrounded the participants' computer skills, confidence, vocational opportunities, and personal uses for the skills. Program participants explained the benefits of Microsoft Office 2016 certification, but the benefits did not always refer directly to employment, some comments explained the value of the skills learned or the emotional benefits associated with the program.

Some participants noted the need for workers who possess technical skills. John Smith stated, "If you get behind in those skills, you are at a disadvantage." Zeth acknowledged that technology is advancing quickly, and the job market relies on applicants who are staying current with technology. John Smith also indicated the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program had provided him with a new area of job opportunities when he is released.

Participants discussed the improvements the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program has made in their lives. Singing Arrow said the program helped improve his computer skills, which will help him once he is released. Additionally, Singing Arrow remarked he was extended the offer to go back to his old office job, and he was also considering doing work from home. Zeth discussed his experience with Microsoft Office and how the program has enriched his skillset, "It refreshes what I already knew about Microsoft Office and teaches me much deeper

and more varied uses for it. When I get out I will be able to do various jobs. I will be able to use this to assist in promoting myself and in accomplishing my jobs.” Big Dude commented on the confidence he is gaining in his computer skills, as well as the direction the program has given him to pursue a new vocation. Hehaka saw benefits from the program both inside prison and after release, “If certified, impact and chances of work in this field would be greater for all upon release or job placement while here, accounting ect. [*sic*].”

Theme 2 related to research question 2 because it explained the participants’ perceptions about the benefits of the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. The skills and knowledge gained by the participants contributed to the participants’ discussion about post-release goals and aspirations. Although not all participants directly related the program benefits to post-release employment, the participants’ responses did include program benefits as a catalyst that was moving them toward new vocational opportunities.

Other experiences and perceptions. Some of the participants’ responses included commentary that expressed their perceptions about the behavior of prison staff. The comments did not directly answer the survey questions but did discuss their experiences and perceptions. In three different responses, Big Dude made statements that were related to prison staff and the staffs’ actions. Big Dude referred to actions that he described as bullying, intimidation, a “mental beatdown,” and staff actions against prisoners that deterred the submission of grievances. Big Dude further indicated that his school hours were an escape from the staff that imposed these actions, which he perceived as a hindrance to prisoners’ attempts to rehabilitate themselves through education. In addition to Big Dude’s comments, Chuckles commented on the education staff, which he indicated created infractions to write up and “try to get me and others in trudel [*sic*].”

Big Dude and Chuckles commented on behaviors which were environmental, rather than course related. The men's comments described experiences related to incarceration, but each related these experiences to their educational programming. In some instances, the descriptions were derogatory and added a perspective about the prison's personnel and the impact the personnel had on these men and their journey in correctional education.

Participants expressed several benefits of their programs, as well as the impact of the programs on their post-release goals. Some participants set goals to pursue careers in a field but did not specify an occupation. Other participants expressed a desire to pursue specific occupations. A smaller number of participants expressed the desire to be self-employed. The participants' survey responses included different uses for the skills learned in their programs. Many participants expressed a desire to continue their education in a vocational program or a college or university program.

Participants discussed other benefits that were not directly related to post-release employment. The participants had different motivations that emerged from their programs. Some participants described the emotional effects of the programs, for example, increased confidence and pride. Many participants explained the different components of their programs that held an intrinsic value. The participants' responses that contributed to research question 2 covered many aspects of each program. Additionally, the responses provided detailed information about the programs and the many facets of the programs in which the participants were enrolled.

The small number of negative comments provided insight into the perceptions and experiences of the participants in the academic and vocational programs, which were isolated to two participants. The information from these negative views added commentary to the overall experiences in the prison's educational programming, which demonstrated the two participants'

frames of mind. The inclusion of the participants' experiences and perceptions indirectly related to the correctional education at the prison, demonstrate points of view that the participants documented as additional information relating to each of the participants' responses to the survey questions.

Summary

The findings of this qualitative narrative inquiry developed insight into the participants' academic and vocational education experiences. The three programs discussed provide both departmental and program-specific information from the perspective of participants enrolled in Automotive Technology, HiSET preparation, and the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. Regarding research question 1, participants discussed: aspects of the program and experiences, learning experiences, classroom environment and experiences, education department, educators, course materials and resources, certification, personal feelings and experiences, and trust issues.

Participants expressed both positive aspects and disappointments about the program, classroom, and learning experiences. The participants commonly discussed their future goals and aspirations. Many participants hoped to attend college. Other participants desired additional instruction in either the field of Automotive Technology or areas that involved additional computer skills and certifications. The participants discussed the classroom environment in terms of the number of individuals enrolled in the courses.

The HiSET preparation participants stated the classroom was overcrowded and expressed the need for more one-on-one instruction. The Automotive Technology and Microsoft Office 2016 certification program participants discussed the difficulty each faced obtaining a place in the program. Both Automotive Technology and Microsoft Office 2016 certification allowed for a

limited number of students. Participants often expressed they would have liked to see more opportunities for other inmates to enroll in these programs.

Participants discussed their disappointments with educators, the education department, and perceived deficiencies within the programs. The participants in HiSET preparation explained their concerns about educator performance, the education department's perceived shortcomings, and the outdated materials or lack of materials for their learning experience. One participant expressed concerns about trust in detail.

The Automotive Technology participants expressed frustration about the program in that; the program is a 2-year program, and there is no certification offered. Participants also discussed the desire for more tools and resources, as well as updated books. Microsoft Office 2016 certification program participants explained a few frustrations with their course. The participants stated that the certification process was not completely set up. Participants also questioned whether they would receive certification for successful completion of the course and testing. Further, Microsoft Office 2016 participants wanted internet access. The participants expressed concerns about the assignments in the course material that required the completion of online assignments and additional resources that were only available online.

Despite the many concerns expressed by the participants, positive comments were made about the benefits of the program and the value of the program. Some participants discussed the pride each felt about their accomplishments. Other participants explained the challenges they had to overcome to achieve their intended goals. Many participants expressed that the formerly incarcerated did have opportunities in the community with the skills they have learned in the various courses. Additionally, some participants discussed a change in their worldviews. A small

number of participants expressed their family's feelings about their program participation, and how those feelings affected their outlook on the program and their futures.

The survey question responses related to research question 1 did prompt a wide range of participant insight. The perceptions of each participant demonstrated both personal and shared feelings and experiences within each program. The collection of comments and observations provided a wealth of information that contributed to research question 1.

Regarding research question 2, participants discussed: program benefits, the impact of the program on the participant, post-release goals, and personal feelings. The survey question responses that were related to research question 2 were positive. The overarching theme from the participants' responses were about the values or benefits of the programs, motivations and future interests, and the participants' career aspirations.

Participants described the benefits of their programs in several ways. Many participants commented on the confidence that the program instilled. Many participants were eager to complete their program. After a discussion about the completion of the programs, the participants began to identify goals for life outside prison. A summary of the combined responses demonstrated several motivations among the participants. Some participants were motivated to use their new skills for professional purposes. Other participants discussed their motivation to use their new skills for both personal and professional goals

The impact of the programs on the participants produced several post-release goals and aspirations. Many participants had plans that extended beyond the skills learned in the programs. Some participants were specific about their vocational aspirations in a chosen industry. Other participants described using the skills in the workplace but did not specify any specific industry. Participants also commented on goals for the personal use of their newly acquired skills. One

participant expressed a desire to pursue creative writing and write about his experiences in prison. Another participant set a goal to write a book containing his poetry.

An informal discussion among the participants was the desire to be self-employed. A few participants expressed a desire to perform computer work from home or own a shop that did computer repairs. Both Automotive Technology participants discussed owning shops in the future. Many participants described goals of continuing their education to allow them to enter professions that would enable the participants to help incarcerated individuals and troubled youth.

The survey responses related to research question 2 were similar among the participants. The participants' goals and aspirations often correlated to the program in which they were enrolled. Participants' comments not only expressed the impact of the program on their vocational aspirations; the comments discussed additional post-release aspirations. Whether the goals were personal or professional, the responses contributed to a collective view of the participants' experiences and how those experiences related to the individual's release plans. The information obtained created a broad spectrum of answers to research question 2. Each participant formed at least one post-release goal that related to his correctional education. A discussion of the results derived from the written surveys will be included in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Numerous researchers have explored correctional education. The areas of focus and approaches used varied among the studies. According to Richmond (2014), a large amount of research on correctional education has been quantitative and evaluated the characteristics and outcomes of the participants to address individual risk factors. Few studies have been conducted that focused on the perspectives of the participants; the studies often overlooked this key information in the evaluation of correctional education programming and the impact on the participating offenders (Richmond, 2014).

The current study focused on correctional education from the inmate-student's perspective. The participants' perceptions and experiences referred to the program in which they were enrolled, and the impact the program had on their vocational aspirations. By guiding the research from this unique point of view, a new set of considerations were formed. The results of the present study provide researchers in the field additional avenues to pursue when evaluating program outcomes, efficacy, relevance, and the program's value to the participants (Houston, 2013). The exploration of the views of the participants in the present study is merely a small window that brings forth another way to explore, on a larger scale, to inform the existing body of knowledge.

Chapter 5 begins with a summary of the study results. A discussion of the results covers the interpretations derived from the findings. After the discussion of the results, a discussion of the results in relation to the literature compares the results with previously published studies. A detailed account of the present study's limitations follows the discussions. Chapter 5 continues with an account of the implications of the results for practice, policy, and theory. Chapter 5 is concluded with recommendations for future research, and lastly, a conclusion.

Summary of the Results

The present study was created with the desire to explore the perceptions of male inmates at a state prison, who were enrolled in either academic or vocational education programming; and the perceived impact of the participant's programming on his vocational aspirations. The recent literature does not demonstrate the presence of widespread findings on correctional education from the perspective of the inmate-student. The present study was intended to be exploratory; therefore, the results are a small view of the participants' realities.

The conceptual framework for this study was built off of my personal experiences with formerly incarcerated men in a prerelease center and an interest in the role of educational endeavors on an individual's successful reintegration into the community. In my experience, the men's attempts at finding employment were impacted by whether he had a high school diploma or equivalency, a certification or license in a trade, and his criminal history. Offenders with experience or certification in a trade sometimes had an easier transition into the workforce. All of the men faced various challenges with their criminal histories when obtaining employment; however, as discussed by Shoham, Zelig, Hesisi, Weisburd, and Haviv (2017), offenders who had obtained certificates in a trade or vocation had an advantage over the men lacking certificates when seeking and securing employment. Further, Mohammed and Mohamed (2015) indicated that trained individuals are more valuable to employers than those who are unskilled or untrained. Individuals with certificates or licenses in their chosen profession often demonstrated a commitment to the profession with potential employers, which aided in securing employment, because this perceived commitment overshadowed their criminal record (Mohammed & Mohamed, 2015). Two of the programs included in this study were vocational: Automotive

Technology and the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. The participants in these two programs provided valuable information about vocational programs at the prison.

The theoretical framework of this study included the elements of self-determination theory (SDT), which is based on the concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These elements of SDT are necessary components to achieve a sense of psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Further, the inclusion of an examination of the motivators guiding offenders, whether intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, also contribute to the individual's sense of psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008). As demonstrated by McKinney and Cotronea (2011), the application of SDT in correctional education correlates with an offender's drive to accomplish his goals in his chosen area of study.

The combination of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks facilitated the creation of the present study's research questions. The two research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do the incarcerated men in a low-risk classification unit of a Midwestern state prison describe their experiences with the correctional education options available to them?
2. How do the incarcerated men at the prison perceive the impact of educational programs on their vocational aspirations?

The present study was conducted as a qualitative narrative inquiry. This design gave a voice to inmates who might have been overlooked because of the perceived subordinate nature of their lives (Andrews et al., 2011). Further, the study was designed to elicit the participants' accounts of their experiences with the educational programs at the prison and their perceptions of the program's impact on their post-release goals.

The findings in this study were divided into sections for each research question; three subsections were created, one for each program. The programs included in the study were: Automotive Technology, HiSET preparation, and the Microsoft Office 2016 certification programs. For research question 1, the Automotive Technology program had four themes, HiSET preparation had five themes and one subtheme, and Microsoft Office 2016 certification had five themes. Research question 2 had one theme in Automotive Technology, two themes in HiSET preparation, and two themes in the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. In general, themes that emerged within the programs included: the education department, educators, program experiences, classroom experiences, resources and materials, trust issues, internet and online resources, certification, family's feelings, and personal experiences and feelings. Some of the themes were found in multiple programs, and some themes were unique to the program in which the theme was identified.

A researcher-developed open-ended question written survey was used to collect the data to answer the research questions. Before the administration of the survey, the instrument was submitted to two experts in the field for feedback on the content and applicability of the survey questions in relation to the research questions and the intent of the study. The study was based on the notion that the data collected from program participants, as opposed to educators, administrators, and prison personnel, provided a different perspective about the academic and vocational education programs at the prison. Richmond (2014) indicated that correctional education participants could have completely different experiences and perceptions about the programs as opposed to the staff. By exploring the perspectives of inmate-students, prison and state officials can use the findings to refine programming at the facility, revise or create educational program policies, evaluate program and facilitator efficacy, and evaluate the

education department's budget to make the best use of allocated funds for a maximum return on the investment into correctional education programs.

Seminal research conducted by Martinson (1974) studied prison reform. The primary purpose of this meta-analysis explored effective practices in prisoner rehabilitation. An issue identified when this study was conducted limited empirical knowledge existed about rehabilitative efforts and whether the efforts were successful (Martinson, 1974). Challenges identified in the results of this meta-analysis were in the determination of which, if any, programs were effective in offender rehabilitation. Many of the studies included in Martinson's (1974) research did not often correlate with one another.

In more recent literature, Travis, Western, and Redburn (2014) discussed that offender participation in educational programming could be beneficial during and after the offender's release from prison. Further, there was a possible effect on negative post-release events for the formerly incarcerated, such as re-offense and difficult living conditions for offenders and their families (Travis et al., 2014). Offenders who either participated or did not participate in educational programming ultimately begin reentry efforts facing some challenges. The participants in the present study's programs discussed the value of their programs and the impact of the program on their future aspirations. Many of the participants' statements demonstrated hope and included various goals for their futures.

Davis, Bozick, Steele, Saunders, and Miles (2013) found three disadvantages that the formerly incarcerated face: lower educational achievement, a lack of vocational skills, and scattered employment history, which was a significant obstacle for individuals attempting to reintegrate successfully. Participants in vocational education had approximately 28% greater chances of finding employment than those who did not participate. Conversely, academic

program participants had approximately 8% better odds of finding employment; however, the assertion that vocational education had a greater impact than academic programming was not statistically significant (Davis et al., 2013). Participants in both the academic program and the two vocational programs expressed the importance of their programming and how their coursework would assist them in the workforce. Many of the participants had confidence in their new skills and their ability to obtain employment upon release.

Offender intellectual and moral development are critical to behavior modification through educational programming, which presents knowledge and challenge that builds skills, and drives an offender's sense of purpose and focuses his ambitions (Bozick, Steele, Davis, & Turner, 2018). Many of the participants discussed the positive feelings that were related to their programs. Some of the participants exhibited hope, ambition, and a sense of pride, which was often followed by each's individual goals.

Behan (2014) studied the inmate's motivations for participating in educational programming. Findings indicated that incarcerated adults had various reasons for attending educational programs. Some offenders were motivated to learn a skill or trade; others wanted a second chance at completing their education. Alternatively, some offenders attended courses to pass the time or to focus on activities that directed their attention away from the effects of the prison environment (Behan, 2014). The participants in the current study decided to enroll in programming, which appeared to impact the way the program affected each of the participants. None of the participants' narratives indicated that their enrollment in programming was meant to pass the time.

In a newer study, Ahmed et al. (2019), a group of inmate-students, discussed the merits and shortcomings of prison education and reform. Ahmed et al. (2019) asserted that criminals

had been excluded as the “other” in society, who are incapable of change or rehabilitation. Incarcerated individuals come from various upbringings. Some offenders are incarcerated for situational crimes, some come from healthy home environments with respected morals and values, and some of the incarcerated are imprisoned for taking part in some sort of criminal enterprise. Most offenders desire to change but are unable to find the appropriate path for achieving change (Ahmed et al., 2019). Participants in the present study have identified opportunities for change in the programs. The participants appear to have embraced the perceived value of their programs and have set goals for their futures based on the impact of the programs.

Although Ahmed et al. (2019) agree that criminals should be held accountable for their actions, at some time during their incarceration, some type of opportunity leading the offender toward rehabilitative efforts should be available. Additionally, some transformative action must take place to reframe the public perception of inmates. Ahmed et al. (2019), as inmate-students, encountered several educators. The educators varied, in that; each appeared to have different motivations for teaching in prison. Ahmed et al. (2019) asserted that many educators seemed to be teaching in prison for a paycheck, whereas other educators demonstrated a genuine interest in their students. Some of the participants in the present study discussed the educators in their programs. The participants’ comments varied; however, one participant was happy that his teacher treated the class like students instead of inmates. Other participants expressed concerns about their teacher’s inadequate training or the lack of consistent attendance to teach classes. Carver and Harrison (2016) indicated that “prison educators stand at the crossroads of liberation and incarceration” (p. 11). Correctional educators hold an influential role, which can have an incredible impact on the lives of the inmate-students (Ahmed et al., 2019).

Indicators of whether an educator has taken a vested interest into their students stem from the educator's ability to take time to assist the students, by providing more individualized instruction, or through research conducted on the educator's own time (Ahmed et al., 2019). Such teachers have taken time from their lives to trust the students, and the time invested is not lost on those students who are not participating in courses for the right reasons. In the present study, the participants with instructors who were more invested in these men as students, instead of inmates, demonstrated a sense of well-being and a positive attitude toward the program.

Ahmed et al. (2019) stated that correctional education is not only a crucial tool for the incarcerated individual, but education is also a part of post-release reintegration success. Further, Ahmed et al. (2019) attest that key factors in the creation of the personal growth needed for success outside the prison walls are self-confidence, self-value, and most importantly, self-worth. The actualization of these attributes is determined by the individual's environment. In the present study, the participants' comments in all three programs demonstrated emergent feelings of confidence, self-assuredness, pride, and accomplishment. Many participants' narratives explained their post-release goals, some of which were detailed. From the participants' responses, it is clear that each has had an element of self-motivation to have evolved to this point.

Ahmed et al. (2019) state reform will come when policymakers see a prison's daily operations and realize how the abuse, corruption, insufficient medical care, and failed reentry system works, and change might finally occur. In order to have the greatest impact on offender reentry success, all aspects of prison operations need to be addressed. Some of the participants in the present study discussed their feelings of degradation and marginalization. The participants who discussed the prison environment had several derogatory comments about the way the

corrections officers treated them, which included an expression of the negative impact the corrections officers' actions had on the participants.

The only way for change to begin is with a transformation of the perceptions about inmates and rehabilitation (Ahmed et al., 2019). The findings of Ahmed et al. (2019) broaden the perspective of correctional education from the inmate-student's point of view. In the present study, the perceptions of the participants are used to communicate the benefits and deficiencies in the prison in which they are incarcerated.

Participants' survey responses demonstrated some factors that motivated each participant to take part in and complete his chosen program. Based on the information obtained from the responses, various elements of SDT emerged in the narratives. The participants expressed their thoughts, feelings, and observations in a way that shared the type of motivation guiding each participant on his journey through the program. The insight provided through the demonstration of the three elements of SDT, autonomy, competence, and relatedness, coupled with both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, contributed additional information that answered the research questions.

Discussion of the Results

Within the three programs, participants made both similar comments to their peers and unique comments related to the program in which they were enrolled. The survey responses provided perspectives about the prison's academic and vocational education programs that are seldom heard outside the inmate population. Participant responses provide relevant information to policymakers, prison officials, the education department administration, and educators. The participants' views can be used to review, reform, and possibly create programs that are both beneficial and effective for the program participants and other interested inmates. The broad

spectrum of information created a benchmark for comparison purposes, should changes or additions take place in the education department.

The results are organized into two sections, one for each research question. The emergent themes from the three programs are subsections within the corresponding research question. Themes common in multiple programs are discussed collectively. Unique themes are associated with the program in which the themes appeared.

Through the analysis and interpretation of the participants' responses, the basic tenets of SDT, which encompass human motivation, development, and wellness (Deci & Ryan, 2008) became more evident. The participants' responses reflect elements of SDT, as well as the participants' guiding intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. The participants' narratives are consistent with the tenets of SDT. The participants' responses also indicate that each participant was at a different point on his path to psychological well-being. Additionally, participants had various motivations for choosing to enroll and complete their programs.

Research question 1. How do the incarcerated men in a low-risk classification unit of a Midwestern state prison describe their experiences with the correctional education options available to them?

The participants' narratives provided the framework for interested parties to consider when approaching the topic of correctional education. The themes found in more than one program included: the education department and personal experiences and feelings. The Automotive Technology and Microsoft Office 2016 certification programs shared one theme: course materials and resources, which also discussed the internet and online resources. In the Automotive Technology and HiSET preparation programs, the shared theme was program experiences. The themes unique to the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program were

program certification and program and learning. The unique themes in the HiSET preparation course were trust issues, classroom experiences, and family's feelings and perceived family's feelings. Despite the discovery of unique themes in all of the programs, the responses appear to relate to the experiences of the entire group of participants, based upon some of the additional comments which were outside the scope of the survey questions.

Education department. The participants discussed various aspects of the educational department, with both positive and negative sentiments. Some participants directed their comments toward specific aspects of the program, such as the educators and funding issues. The perceptions and experiences described by the participants shined the light on the education department and the department's impact on their learning experiences.

The participants' narratives identify systemic failures in the prison's educational department. The participants expressed some of the needs that have not adequately been met. Participants were able to view many of their departmental concerns objectively; however, due to the intrinsic value of their programming, the participants' feelings impacted the way some comments were expressed. All inmates enrolled in academic and vocational programs requested enrollment, which accounted for the emotionally charged discussions that emerged from the survey responses.

Many participants discussed deficiencies related to both the department and the educators. The participants have defined some of their expectations, which called for more teachers, appropriately trained teachers, more individualized instruction, available and dedicated teachers, and educators who acknowledge these men as students, instead of inmates. The desire to be seen as more than a prisoner, and the need to have a sense of mutual respect, was essential to many of the participants.

The impact of these perspectives and experiences are highly valuable to not only the education department, teachers, the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), but also policymakers and taxpayers. The narratives taken from the surveys should direct governing bodies and interested parties' attention toward the holes in the current correctional education programs. Policymakers, administrators, teachers, and taxpayers need to view the inmate-students more positively. If the inmate-students are regarded as just "inmates" or "criminals," they are marginalized, which leaves these students in a "lesser" or subordinate category. Unfortunately, the perceptions that place little importance on the inmate population decreases the likelihood of an investment into correctional education program improvements. It appears there is a lack of ownership within the department and thus, little drive to make changes. One Automotive Technology participant noted the lack of leadership and ownership throughout the department, which affected his experiences in his program.

State policymakers dictate funding for prison education (Montana Legislative Fiscal Division, 2019). The role of the department is to demonstrate funding needs to facilitate improvements or maintain existing programs within the prison. Participants indicated there are deficiencies related to the lack of funding. The materials used in some of the programs are out-of-date, additional tools and software programs are needed, there are a limited amount of spaces for interested individuals, and the educators lack the resources to effectively teach their programs, which is a clear indication that funds need to be allocated to address these deficiencies.

The Microsoft Office 2016 certification program participants indicated the staff was of little help, which meant the participants were left teaching themselves from the book. Although, there were participants who did acknowledge the Microsoft Office program was relatively new,

and the participants indicated that the facilitators were also learning the material. Other concerns expressed by the participants, discussed the Microsoft Office course certification process.

Participants were frustrated with the inconsistent information about whether certification would take place. The participants demonstrated frustration, and a lack of faith in the administration to help them achieve certification, which, in some cases, meant better job opportunities and successful reintegration into society upon release (Bozick et al., 2018). Improvements in the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program could benefit more than just the participants; it could also benefit communities and potential employers.

A few participants did have positive comments about their experiences. A HiSET preparation program participant stated he felt the program worked well. Another participant indicated that his program was a chance to learn for a better future. Positively impacted participants exhibited hope and a sense of pride. The participants also expressed how the programs have impacted their lives and their goals for the future.

The elements of SDT that were lacking in the participants' responses related to the education department, which demonstrated that the participants' needs for autonomy and relatedness were not adequately being met. Participants had some sense of autonomy in their decision to enroll in a program; however, the many deficiencies identified in the participants' narratives indicated a loss of their sense of ownership and control (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). The participants do not often have a voice in the facility to adequately express their needs in these different programs. Participants that do not have a voice lose some of their sense of relatedness, meaning the participants do not experience a sense of connection to the educators or the administration (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

All three programs were represented in the education department theme; however, the Automotive Technology program participants' motivations were not evident in the theme. The motivations for participants in the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program and the HiSET preparation program were the same. The participants are autonomously motivated, which can be either intrinsic or extrinsic. In autonomous motivation, the participants realize the value in their activities and goals, which led them toward success (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The participants in both programs demonstrated a form of autonomous, extrinsic motivation, which is regulation through identification. This type of motivation is one of the more autonomous or self-determined types of extrinsic motivation. The participants recognized the importance of the program and have accepted its regulation as their own (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Program experiences. The participants' experiences in their programs were predominantly positive. The men commented on various elements of the programming that was either enjoyable or beneficial to them. The survey responses did include some disappointments in the programs, as well as some suggested improvements. The Automotive Technology and HiSET preparation program participants contributed to the development of this theme.

The Automotive Technology participants' responses acknowledged several positive points about the program. The participants mentioned the benefits of their hands-on learning and individualized instruction. The participants appeared satisfied with the Automotive Technology program. The program provided the participants with a sense of pride in their accomplishments and a sense of identity. One participant noted that the instructor treated the participants like students instead of inmates. The way the teacher treated the students helped improve their sense of self. The participant's comment is an indication that the teacher's behavior has had a positive impact on their experiences.

The participants enrolled in the Automotive Technology program spend two years learning about auto mechanics. Once these individuals are released, they have marketable skills, which translates into improved chances of obtaining employment. The formerly incarcerated individual with viable job skills can positively impact his community (Bozick et al., 2018). The individual can work, pay taxes, have the means to support himself and his family, pay his fines, and restitution to his victims (Hall & Killackey, 2008). The formerly incarcerated who earn livable wages are not often driven to crime, their needs are being met legally. The communities with employed releasees also have less strain on public assistance (Shoham et al., 2017).

The HiSET preparation program participants commented on the “great” overall class experience. Participants in this program also expressed a sense of pride in their accomplishments. Further, the program appears to have created a more hopeful and positive outlook for each participant’s future once he is outside the prison walls. Some participants acknowledged the value of achieving a diploma, which strengthens their commitment to complete the program, and in some cases, a motivation to continue to improve themselves with other opportunities later.

Despite the HiSET program participants’ positive comments, a few experienced some disappointments. Participants were in school for a limited amount of time each day. Narratives indicated a strong motivation to commit more time to their studies. One participant expressed the desire for a night class or study hall. Participants also identified the addition of internet access as a beneficial tool. Another participant discussed the HiSET testing process. The participant wanted to have all of the HiSET tests administered at one time, which would benefit participants who did not have enough time to take one test per month to complete the program. This

participant's point of view illustrates a sense of urgency and the value of achieving a HiSET before being released from prison.

Offenders who have earned their HiSET or GED are more easily employed. The HiSET and GED demonstrate that the individual possesses the basic skills to effectively perform tasks in the workplace (Davis et al., 2013). The motivation to complete a high school equivalency diploma can also drive the individual to pursue further education. Personal improvement has a ripple effect on the formerly incarcerated, their families, the community, and employers. Motivation and hope can refocus an offender's efforts toward positive outcomes, which will benefit many.

It is evident in the participants' responses that the effectiveness of the programming directly impacts the individual. The prison and educators could serve the inmate-students better if an investment were made into their success. Educators that enrich the learning experience keep the students engaged in the material (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011), which could also bring new inmates into the education programs. With more individuals pursuing personal development, the benefits to the individual and the general population increase (Davis et al., 2013).

In the participants' program experiences, two elements of SDT are evident. Some participants demonstrated their need for relatedness is being met. Participants expressed a sense of inclusion, feeling as though the instructor was treating the class like students instead of inmates. In most cases, the participants exhibit characteristics of competence. The participants discussed the pride in themselves and a sense of accomplishment (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

The program experiences theme included responses from participants enrolled in Automotive Technology and the HiSET preparation program. Within this theme, participants exhibited two autonomous, extrinsic motivations (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The Automotive

Technology participants discussed their enjoyment of the hands-on learning and the benefits of this method of learning. The participants demonstrated the extrinsic motivation of regulation through identification. The participants showed indications of another autonomous, extrinsic motivation, which was integrated regulation. Integrated regulation manifests when identified regulations are fully integrated into the participant through self-examination and the regulation's alignment with their values and needs (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Integrated regulation was evident when the participants discussed the pride in their accomplishments and through the formation of a sense of self, which was created when the participants acknowledged having been treated like students instead of inmates (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Similarly, the HiSET preparation program participants exhibited both regulation through identification and integrated regulation. The participants' regulation through identification stemmed from their drive to complete their diplomas, which was based on the participants' acknowledgment of the value of this achievement (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Another example of regulation through identification was demonstrated by the participant who desired to take all of the HiSET examinations at one time. The participant's sense of urgency to complete his diploma before his release was the primary indicator of regulation through identification (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

The integrated regulation in the HiSET program participants stemmed from their sense of hope and their positive outlook for the future. Further, the participants' desire to commit more time to their studies was another demonstration of integrated regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Participants in both Automotive Technology and the HiSET preparation programs showed strong indicators of autonomous, extrinsic motivations. The participants saw the value in their

participation in the programs and their more personal motivations for participation and completion of their chosen program.

Program and learning. The program and learning theme emerged in the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. Throughout the findings, participants noted both positive aspects and some disappointments. The nature of the responses included the personal impact of the program, the learning experience, the instructor, and the class format.

The participants found relevance in the course. Many participants made comments that demonstrated an awareness of the importance of technical skills and how these skills would benefit them upon release. Further, the participants expressed hope, satisfaction, accomplishment, and a sense of self-worth. The course appeared to have positively reinforced each of these men. One participant commented about the way the program made him feel worthy because in general, the prison staff made him feel unworthy.

By providing relevant, technical training programs, the education department is serving not only the offenders, but the department is also serving the community. The formerly incarcerated with technical certifications can perform the skills that are necessary to thrive in today's workplace. Administrators and policymakers should evaluate the effectiveness of this program by reviewing the progress of the participants who successfully completed the program after the individual has been released and obtained employment. Supervising parole officers could monitor the progress of individuals who completed technical programs and produce feedback for these officials.

The participants' responses also noted pieces they felt were lacking in the program. Some of the participants had suggestions for improvement. Participants expressed there was a lack of knowledge and ability in the instructor, which left room for the participants to question whether

they were learning all the material. The participants provided insight into program weaknesses. The weaknesses represent the shortcomings that directly impact these men. One participant felt there was a need for new instructors, for example, bringing in college student volunteers to teach the course. Another need expressed in the narratives was the desire to work as a group. Participants' responses demonstrated a need for connection and inclusion to improve their learning experience.

The education department is not serving the offenders or the community if effective programming is not in place. The identified weaknesses should be evaluated, and improvements should be considered. A possible long-term impact of improving educational programs for the incarcerated would come from the general public's acknowledgment of the successful reintegration of individuals, the decrease in the burden on public assistance programs, and the possible decrease in crime in their communities (Davis et al., 2013).

Within the program and learning theme, participants began to exhibit elements of SDT. A widespread indication of the satisfaction of the need for competence is indicated in the participants' comments about the positive effects of the program (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). Participants felt accomplished and expressed that their skills would be beneficial in the workplace. The need for relatedness is also apparent. Participants expressed the desire for more group activities. The peer support and sense of inclusion received from group work could begin to address their need for relatedness (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

The program and learning theme emerged in the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. Participants exhibited autonomous, extrinsic motivation, in particular, regulation through identification. Participants demonstrated this motivation through their acknowledgment of the importance of the skills taught in the program (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The participants'

suggestions for program improvement further demonstrated this motivation. The participants were concerned about the quality of instruction, access to resources, and the availability of the program certification, which demonstrated the participants' awareness of the value of the program, as well as their suggestions to maximize the value of the program (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Course resources and materials. The Automotive Technology theme of course resources and materials merged with the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program theme of internet and online resources. The results related to these themes demonstrate perceived weaknesses in the two programs. Participants articulated the program weaknesses objectively and in a way that identifies the issues for the education department.

Participants in Automotive Technology expressed concerns about the impact of the quality of the course materials and available resources. The participants indicated the lack of current books and the availability of different types of tools hindered their learning. The survey narratives identified weaknesses in the Automotive Technology program. The participants' comments on the materials and resources demonstrated an awareness of auto mechanics and some of the current industry standards and tools required to perform various tasks. The participants expressed concern about being fully prepared for reentry into the community. One participant explained his desire for program components that were related to reentry.

The out-of-date materials and lack of resources for the Automotive Technology program could impact the participants when they are in the community searching for employment. In the event the program failed to provide some aspect of auto mechanics common to business practices, it could impact whether the participants would be able to secure employment in the Automotive Technology field. The education department should examine the perceived

weaknesses and needs noted by the participants and compare these concerns with standard business practices to evaluate the efficacy of the Automotive Technology program at the prison. The administration might consider using the participants' comments in conjunction with the independent evaluation of the Automotive Technology program by an experienced technician working in the industry. With an experienced technician reviewing the program, the prison has an opportunity to integrate standard industry practices into the curriculum, as well as develop reentry tools to prepare participants for job searching and successful reintegration.

In the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program, participants experienced similar frustrations to the Automotive Technology participants. The participants recognized the value of improving their technical skills but noted there was a lack of adequate access to all the resources associated with the curriculum for the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. The inability to access the assignments and resources online has a negative impact on the learning abilities of the participants. Without access to some of these online tools, there are aspects of the software's functions and capabilities the participants will not be able to learn.

The lack of an internet connection at the prison for students presents more than a challenge to the Microsoft Office 2016 program participants. The participants' survey responses indicated there was interest in exploring programming that is only offered through an online platform. One participant appeared to recognize the purpose of the prison's policy prohibiting internet access and suggested an alternative, which would use a secure, monitored connection. If inmates were presented with some internet access, there is a possibility of increased offender interest in participating in educational programs.

The absence of materials and resources, as well as outdated resources, present a problem for program participants. The participants will have some difficulty learning the course

objectives due to these limitations. The education department may experience less interest in programs if there becomes a perception that the programs will not be helpful upon release. The program participants are having trouble with learning all the material to be confident in their abilities with the subject matter. The restriction on internet access further inhibits the participants' growth. In turn, these limitations could carry over to community workplaces. Reentering offenders will possess skills to work in the community; however, some individuals may be lacking critical abilities that relate to a specific job. The limitations not only hurt the offender trying to succeed on the outside, but employers willing to hire the individual might have to spend time training on an aspect of the program that was not offered due to the lack of program resources.

Participants in Automotive Technology and Microsoft Office 2016 certification lack two of the elements of SDT that would help them achieve psychological well-being. The participants' concerns with the out-of-date resources, or lack of resources, challenges their sense of competence. Also, there was no indication of a sense of connectedness among the students, meaning there was a lack of a sense of relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The lack of resources and materials in these programs had a negative impact on the participants' sense of competence, which could affect their motivation and sense of self. The sense of autonomy persists despite challenges in the programming, due to the voluntary nature of the programs (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

The course resources and materials theme, which also included the internet and online resources theme, emerged in the Automotive Technology and Microsoft Office 2016 certification programs. One autonomous, extrinsic motivation appeared within this theme, which was regulation through identification. This theme displayed the value the participants placed in the

program in a slightly different manner than other themes. The participants recognized the value of the knowledge they were gaining but expanded their comments to include identified weaknesses that impacted their learning experience. These weaknesses demonstrated the participants' desire to improve the programs, to learn course objectives effectively, and put the objectives into practice (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Classroom experiences. The HiSET preparation program participant responses formed the classroom experiences theme. Within this theme, participants discussed positive aspects of their time in the classroom. Participants' comments demonstrated pride, hope, accomplishment, motivation, and self-worth.

The participants' narratives provided examples of positive effects related to the HiSET preparation program. One participant expressed hope and motivation when he commented about completing the program. The participant no longer wanted to fail. Another participant's motivation came from gaining an education and what he perceived as success. The participants expressed interest in pursuing education once they receive their diplomas. The intrinsic value of the achievement of a diploma was evident in each participant's responses. Finally, a participant found success and a sense of accomplishment and mentioned by sticking with the program, and with the support he received, he could achieve his goals.

The positive impact of the classroom experience demonstrates program participants are taking an interest in their futures. The participants are achieving goals that they previously had been unable to accomplish. Successful participants with positive outlooks can bring a new perspective about education to fellow inmates. This perspective may prompt course enrollments. Further, by achieving a diploma, the participants can reenter the community with basic skills to start a new life. Society stands to benefit from these motivated participants because the

participants will be reentering with the drive to continue a path of personal development, which is contrary to returning to a life of crime.

The HiSET preparation program participants exhibit two elements of SDT within this theme. The participants' motivation to achieve represents an aspect of autonomy. The participants are taking charge of their destinies (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). The other element of SDT evidenced in this theme is competence. The sense of pride and accomplishment related to the participant's sense of competence (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). In both cases, there are strong indicators of both autonomy and competence in the survey responses.

The classroom experiences theme emerged in the HiSET preparation program. One autonomous, extrinsic motivation appeared in the participants' narratives: integrated regulation. Integrated regulation existed in this theme in the participants' demonstrated acceptance of the value of completing their diplomas, which was primarily driven by the participants' desire to be successful (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The positive effects of this motivation extended beyond the participants' achievements to the formation of a sense of self, which is an essential component on the path toward psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Program certification. The Microsoft Office 2016 certification program concerned several of the participants. The survey responses revealed frustrations about whether the participants would receive certification upon completion of the program. The participants expressed doubt in the administration, which prompted disheartened statements.

Conversely, participants had many positive sentiments about the impact of the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. One participant stated that the class created hope for those who feel hopeless. Another individual considered the program a godsend. Many participants expressed hope in their responses. Participants acknowledged the value of the program and its

applicability in the business world. The participants were excited about the prospect of new job opportunities once they are released (Mohammed & Mohamed, 2015).

The uncertainty that surrounds the certification process has created doubt in participants; however, the education department is responsible for clarifying the program content and the availability of certification upon successful completion. The best way to maintain momentum in the Microsoft Office program is to inform the participants to enable each student to make the best decision about completing the program. Participants who receive certification would be valuable to potential employers. The certification provides an advantage over other applicants that merely have the technical skills.

In the program certification theme, little evidence of the elements of SDT was found in the participants' responses. A small amount of the satisfaction of the need for autonomy was present in that the achievement of program certification would provide the participants with the opportunity to make choices about their futures. In the uncertainty surrounding the certifications, it is possible that the prospect of not receiving certification threatens the need for competence. Some participants may not feel accomplished, meaning they might not develop a sense of competence.

In the program certification theme, the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program participants exhibited two types of autonomous, extrinsic motivation: integrated regulation and regulation through identification. Integrated regulation was demonstrated in a participant's comments stating the program was a godsend, and in another participant's comment that the program created hope for those who felt hopeless. These sentiments exhibit the personal value of the program in addition to the program's practical value (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Regulation through identification was displayed in the value of the program, and the program's applicability

in the workplace. Additionally, the participants were excited about the new job opportunities that would be available to them once they were released (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Trust issues. The trust issues theme was present in the HiSET preparation program. The survey narrative related to the theme came from one participant. The relevance of the participant's perspective was derived from the importance he placed on the issue, and the transferability he described in his comments.

The participant's concern was about the inability to have personal conversations with staff, and the fact this did not allow personal relationships or "friendships" to form, which led to his assertion that he could not trust the staff. The participant illustrates a need for connection with the education staff. He further expressed his concern that he had no one to turn to if something happened to one of the students. He felt that without trust; he could not confide in the staff. This participant's responses indirectly describe his experiences with the educational programs at the prison. The comments also demonstrate his feeling of isolation and helplessness.

The Department of Correction's policy on personal relationships with the offenders has been put in place to protect both the staff and the inmates. My experience with the offender population in a residential facility was similar. The policies regarding "fraternization" or interpersonal relationships were strictly enforced. The potential liability associated with fraternization extended beyond friendship and included the risk of personal relationships becoming intimate relationships. The offender population in any Department of Corrections facility are unable to provide consent, which means inappropriate behavior could extend as far as criminal sanctions against the participating staff member, regardless of whether the offender perceived the behavior as consensual or harmful.

The trust issues theme demonstrates this participant's need for relatedness. He felt no connection with the staff, which led to his isolation and worry. The need for relatedness is the need to feel connected to others (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). This participant faces a considerable roadblock on his path toward psychological well-being; however, it is a situation beyond his control.

The trust issues theme appeared in the HiSET preparation program. The motivation that guided this theme came from one participant. The participant's motivation was an extrinsic motivation referred to as introjected regulation. In introjected regulation, the individual is internally motivated; however, the individual's drive involves his ego and enhancing or maintaining his self-esteem (Deci & Ryan, 2008). This motivation appeared only in this case, as part of research question 1.

Personal experiences and feelings. The personal experiences and feelings theme emerged in all three programs. The narratives from each of the programs contained similar sentiments. The majority of the comments were positive and demonstrated achievement, excitement, happiness, motivation, and connection. Most participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to participate in educational programming. Participants described the impact of their experiences differently.

The expressions of satisfaction also identified specific experiences that contributed to the participants' feelings of accomplishment. Some participants defined accomplishment in terms of their acceptance into the program, whereas other participants related their feelings to personal milestones. The vocational program participants benefited from practical learning experiences. The academic program participants' experiences varied. One participant associated his sense of accomplishment and excitement about the program, having had no education over the past 17

years, and his successes in the HiSET preparation program. The participants were proud of the work each has completed, and many saw value in their work in relation to their future endeavors. The motivations of the participants demonstrated a desire to leave prison and succeed on the outside. Some participants' motivations led to goals to complete further education and more personal challenges.

The narratives from the surveys showed the benefits of educational programming and the impact on the lives of the participants. The participants are confident and able to face the transition from prison life to life in the community. The motivation demonstrated in the participants' comments may influence the way the participants are treated during the reintegration process.

The participants' accomplishments and new worldviews will help them overcome some of the resistance and preconceived notions that are held by the public (Baillargeon, Hoge, & Penn, 2010). The participants may not experience this resistance from everyone they encounter; however, it might have an impact on their confidence during reintegration. The Department of Corrections, the prison, and OPI should consider the perceptions and comments from the program participants to better inform the public, and possibly change some of the expectations and assumptions the public might have when they encounter a reentering offender.

In terms of SDT, the participants demonstrated some sense of autonomy and competence. Autonomy is evident in the participants' motivations and drives to have a better life once they are released. The participants have chosen a different lifestyle and are looking forward to a better quality of life (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). A sense of competence was formed in the participants' narratives about their accomplishments. The achievements highlighted by the

participants reinforce the sense of competence that exists within each participant (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

The personal experiences and feelings theme included one form of autonomous, extrinsic motivation: regulation through identification (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The motivation was consistent for participants in all three programs. The participants' narratives exhibited similar sentiments; for example, a sense of accomplishment, pride, and excitement. The narratives also demonstrated that the participants recognized the value of their programs and the programs' impact on their lives.

Family's feelings and perceived family's feelings. Family's feelings and perceived family's feelings is a subtheme of the personal experiences and feelings theme. This subtheme, related to the HiSET preparation program, discussed the influence of the participants' families on their experiences in the program. The participants' responses about their families' feelings were brief; however, the responses provided additional insight into the discussion.

In general, participants indicated their families are or would be proud of them. One participant indicated his family felt the hassle of going through the HiSET program while incarcerated was not worthwhile. The families' expressions appeared to impact the participants' views about their program progress. One participant was proud to be one of three in his family to receive a diploma. Another saw this program as an opportunity to be a role model for younger people. No matter the opinion of the participants' families, the participants exhibited continued motivation and pride in their accomplishments.

Family support likely has an impact on the actions of the participant. An exploration into the family's influence could provide the educators insight into the participants' lives and how

this influence affects the participants' actions in the classroom. The survey responses about family's feelings infer family support aids the inmate-student to some degree.

Regarding SDT and this subtheme, there are no direct correlations between the participants' responses and the impact on their need for a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The subtheme does bring forward factors for future consideration. Despite the lack of direct correlation to the three elements of SDT, the family's feelings, in most cases, do appear to have a positive impact on the participant.

The family's feelings and perceived family's feelings subtheme exhibited one autonomous, extrinsic motivation among the participants: integrated regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The subtheme emerged in the HiSET preparation program. One participant demonstrated integrated regulation by describing the program's benefit in his life. The participant stated he would be one of three in his family to achieve a diploma; another participant associated the achievement of his diploma with the ability to become a role model for the younger people in his life. Both of these participants placed a special significance on these achievements when they discussed the HiSET preparation program (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

The participants discussed a wide variety of perceptions and experiences in their academic and vocational programs. Participants expressed the many positive effects of taking part in educational programming. The programs created a sense of pride, accomplishment, and a sense of self-worth in many participants. Some participants described the benefits of their programs, which included: learning valuable skills for the workplace, achieving their goals, and obtaining the necessary skills to reintegrate successfully. Taking part in correctional education has revitalized the participants; these men expressed gratitude, confidence, and excitement for having a chance at a new life.

The participants outlined important areas that each felt could be improved, and in turn, enhance the learning opportunities for current and future students. Some participants expressed some disappointment and frustration with aspects of their programs, which could be reviewed by prison officials and the education department to consider alternatives. The perceived deficiencies in the educational programming at the prison are topics for the administration and policymakers to consider. The perceptions of the participants present a unique insight into the programs in place at the prison and could better inform decisionmakers' choices about program cancellations, revisions to existing programs, and the addition of new programs for future students.

The elements of SDT did exist in the participants' narratives; however, there did not appear to be a strong indication that the satisfaction of the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness was present. Throughout the themes, the most common element of SDT evident in the participants' responses was the sense of competence. Many participants expressed a sense of accomplishment or demonstrated their perceived benefits from participation in their chosen program (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). The need for relatedness did seem apparent in some themes; however, some comments indicated the need for relatedness had not been met in others (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). Finally, the element of the need for autonomy did not often appear. Participants did experience a sense of autonomy when each chose to enroll in one of the prison's programs. The only other indication that the need for autonomy had been met was in the comments about the participants' choices for their futures. There was evidence that indicated a loss of some of the participants' sense of autonomy when it related to having a voice about the programs (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

The participants' motivations throughout the themes in research question 1 were autonomous, extrinsic motivations. The predominant motivation was regulation through

identification, which is a more self-determined form of extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The participants expressed a sense of accomplishment, pride, and discussed the benefits of their programs, which demonstrated the elements of regulation through identification with evidence that each placed value in his program and based his goals on that perceived value (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

The second form of motivation exhibited in research question 1 was integrated regulation, which is the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation. Integrated regulation occurred when the participants accepted the needs and values identified in their programs as their own (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The final form of motivation evident in research question 1 was introjected regulation. This motivation is an internal, extrinsic motivation, but the individual acts under pressure to avoid guilt, anxiety, or to attain ego-enhancements, which is to maintain self-esteem and feelings of self-worth (Deci & Ryan, 2008). One participant demonstrated introjected regulation, which occurred in the trust issues theme. This participant was searching for a connection with the staff that would allow him to have a sense of trust in the staff members (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Research question 1 discussed the various experiences that made up the realities of the participants in Automotive Technology, HiSET preparation, and the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. The spectrum of experiences formed an insight into the individual and shared experiences of male inmates enrolled in educational programming at the prison. Research question 2 covers the impact of the programming on the participants, which provides further insight into the correctional education experiences of the participants.

Research question 2. How do the incarcerated men at the prison perceive the impact of educational programs on their vocational aspirations?

The survey responses provided a variety of points of view about the impact of educational programming on the participants' vocational aspirations. The Automotive Technology program participants' narratives led to one unique theme: impact of the program on the participant. The theme related to post-release goals emerged in both the HiSET preparation program and the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. Two additional themes, which were unique to one program included: program benefits, in the Microsoft Office course, and personal feelings, which occurred in the HiSET preparation program. Although the themes were not consistent across all the programs, the collection of information provided a wealth of insight into the participants' perceptions.

Impact of the program on the participant. Participants in the Automotive Technology program discussed the positive aspects of the program and how those aspects affected their outlook for the future. The participants' goals were evidence of a desire to create a future rich in opportunities. The participants' responses indicated a departure from living a life that included criminal behavior. Each participant set specific goals that pointed them toward successful reintegration.

The Automotive Technology program is a 2-year program, which has limited spaces for participants. The survey responses indicated that the participants were taking full advantage of the opportunity to complete the program. The participants exhibit hope and ambition. Each participant identified future goals, which included: further education in the field, college, and owning their own shop. Further, the participants were excited about leaving prison with a trade and having marketable skills. The success of these participants demonstrated that the Automotive Technology program is serving the participants well. Community reintegration after successful completion of the Automotive Technology program should prompt the education department,

prison officials, OPI, and policymakers to continue to evaluate the program's content to be sure the content continues to remain relevant and meet the needs of the industry.

Participants in the Automotive Technology program demonstrated two elements of SDT. The participants experienced a sense of autonomy; each has taken charge of his future. Additionally, the participants demonstrated competence; the men felt confident and accomplished as a result of having participated in the program (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). The participants appeared to be working toward psychological well-being. Each participant needs to form a sense of relatedness to begin to complete this process (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

The participants' motivations in this theme were consistent with the autonomous, extrinsic motivation of regulation through identification. The participants showed indications that they have identified with the value of the Automotive Technology program and have acknowledged the regulation of their actions as their own (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Regulation through identification is a more self-determined form of extrinsic motivation. The participants' drive to complete the program is evidence of the motivation's autonomous nature (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Post-release goals. The post-release goals theme emerged in two programs: HiSET preparation and the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. Participants demonstrated an ambition, and many had created specific plans for their futures. Some of the participants set their goals to pursue various areas of focus in higher education. Other participants had formed goals to work toward jobs in specific vocational areas. Within the participants' goals, each demonstrated personal reasons for the pursuit of his chosen endeavor.

The participants exhibited hope and were driven to continue on a path of personal improvement, which will help them successfully reintegrate into society. Some participants desired to write poetry or share their personal experiences in a book. These participants indicated that their learned skills would help them realize these goals. Some participants desired to pursue education and professional careers that would enable them to give back and help other offenders needing assistance in the criminal justice system.

The participants' narratives demonstrated positive experiences and outcomes from their participation in their programs. The participants were self-aware and seemed to embrace a prosperous future that did not include criminal behaviors. The educational department should explore the views of the program participants. Each participant's comments illustrate strengths in the programming and are worthy of further consideration. The feedback obtained from the participants could be valuable to the process of program evaluation, revision, and the creation of new programs.

The participants in both HiSET preparation and the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program exhibited two elements of SDT: autonomy and competence. Autonomy is demonstrated by the participants' drive to take control of their futures. The participants demonstrated a sense of competence with confidence in their abilities and their feelings of pride (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). The potential for a sense of relatedness is apparent. Participants who have expressed a desire to help other offenders is an indication of the intent to connect with others (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

The motivations of the HiSET preparation and the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program participants demonstrate the autonomous, extrinsic motivation of integrated regulation. Integrated regulation is similar to intrinsic motivation since it is autonomous and unconflicted;

however, it is considered an extrinsic motivation based upon the perceived practical value of the behavior. The participants have assimilated the value and benefits of the program into their behaviors and as a part of their value system (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Program benefits. The program benefits theme emerged in the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program. Participants expressed the positive impact of the program on their lives. The participants demonstrated an awareness of the importance of technical skills in the workplace. The participants exhibited many ambitions that formed throughout the program. Some participants discussed working from home. Other participants talked about obtaining employment with a major company. Regardless of the post-release goals, participants recognized the value of having marketable skills and the way those skills translated into new vocational opportunities once they are released.

The impact of the Microsoft Office 2016 certification program affects more than just the participants; the benefits extend into the community. Potential employers could benefit from hiring participants because the program provided them with a specific skill set. Employers that have to spend less time training their employees could potentially see a financial impact. The employers would not be paying for training time; the wages would be for productive output from their employees. Society can benefit from successful program participants; each participant would be capable of earning a livable wage, which would impact the economy and demonstrate a possible decrease in crime (Shoham et al., 2017). Further, positive impacts on the taxpayers could potentially influence policymakers when decisions are being made about investments into correctional education.

Elements of SDT evident in this theme included: autonomy and competence. Participants formed a sense of autonomy when it became apparent that the skills learned in the program

would provide them with control over their futures. The participants demonstrated a sense of competence in their confidence in their new abilities, and the future benefits associated with those new skills (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). The potential for the participants to form a sense of relatedness might occur once they are released and working in the community. Participants might be able to settle into their new jobs and begin to feel a connection with their coworkers and the company.

The participants' narratives related to the program benefits demonstrated the autonomous, extrinsic motivation of regulation through identification. Participants recognized the value of program participation and formed their goals based on that perceived value. Regulation through identification is partially internal, making this motivation more autonomous (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Personal feelings. The personal feelings theme emerged in the HiSET preparation program. The participants' feelings focused on several areas. Some of the participants saw the program as an opportunity to learn and have a better future. A few participants saw value in their experiences, as the new skills they had acquired would allow them to help their children with homework. Finally, some participants expressed that participation in the program was a confidence boost.

The participants appeared to value the opportunity to obtain a diploma. The sentiments expressed in the participants' narratives were feelings of satisfaction, achievement, and opportunity. The participants demonstrated a valuable lesson. A person can enter prison, make changes, and leave a better person than when they arrived. Additionally, each participant chose to enroll in the program. The conscious effort to obtain their diploma demonstrated a desire to do something more with their lives. The participants set an example that should be recognized by

society. These participants are not merely sitting out their sentences in prison; the participants are using their prison time to their advantage.

The HiSET preparation participants demonstrated a sense of autonomy. Each participant expressed different reasons for completing his diploma. Autonomy is evident in the ambitions of the participants, which demonstrated their assumed responsibility to take charge of their futures (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). Some of the participants exhibited a sense of competence. The participants expressed a sense of accomplishment, which is an indication of their sense of competence (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

The HiSET preparation program participants demonstrated autonomous, extrinsic motivation. The form of extrinsic motivation exhibited is regulation through identification. The participants are self-determined and have identified the value of their participation and accepted its regulation as their own (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Throughout the themes in research question 2, there were several similar sentiments among the participants. The participants are preparing themselves for a better future and a life without criminal behaviors. There were expressions of excitement and hope for the future in the participants' responses. Finally, participants invested their time into self-improvement and the acquisition of marketable skills for future job opportunities.

The participants have set an example for the education department, prison, OPI, policymakers, and society, which demonstrated the ambition to make positive changes in their lives. The community should consider these positive changes that have been made while assisting the formerly incarcerated with their reintegration efforts. If society has an awareness of the efforts made by these participants who are reentering society, there is a potential that this awareness will help the participants' transitions into the community (Houston, 2013).

The elements of SDT present in all themes were the senses of autonomy and competence. The participants have taken charge of their futures, which is one indication of autonomy. Competence has been demonstrated in the participants' senses of accomplishment and their confidence in their abilities (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). In two themes, the potential for the satisfaction of the need for relatedness was present. The participants were planning to either use their skills to help other offenders or through forming a connection with coworkers in their new positions (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

The predominant motivation present in the themes was the autonomous, extrinsic motivation of regulation through identification. Regulation through identification was demonstrated in all three of the programs. The participants are self-determined and have internalized the value of the program and the subsequent behaviors related to the value of the program to some degree (Deci & Ryan, 2008). In the HiSET preparation and Microsoft Office 2016 certification programs, the participants exhibited the autonomous, extrinsic motivation of integrated regulation. Integrated regulation is not conflicted, and the participants have fully assimilated the values and behaviors as their own (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

The participants' narratives included perceptions and insights that were not directly related to the survey questions. The comments in the survey responses demonstrated the experiences of the participants in both the academic and vocational programs at the prison. These responses added dimension and perspective to the various perceptions and experiences expressed by the participants.

Other experiences and perceptions. Some of the participants expressed their thoughts about the effect of prison personnel on their experiences. The participants discussed bullying and “mental beat downs” they perceived were imposed to deter the participants from filing

grievances. Further, the participants expressed their views about the corrections officers, which were derogatory. The participants discussed their perceptions that the corrections officers were, in some way, attempting to hinder their rehabilitation through educational programming.

The participants' perceptions demonstrate frustration with the corrections officers. There is a possibility that the participants are misinterpreting the corrections officers' actions. Another possible explanation for the comments could be derived from the participants' resistance toward authority or the possibility they do not fully understand prison policy. Conversely, the participants may be reporting the corrections officers' behaviors accurately. It is difficult to understand the true context of the comments; however, the impact of these perceptions on the participants should be considered when evaluating the findings. The participants' perceptions of their living environment might carry over to their learning experiences. The participants' views about the instructional staff could also be affected by their experiences with the corrections officers.

The other experiences and perceptions discussed did not demonstrate any of the elements of SDT, nor did they show any indication of the existence of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. The participants' responses were included as a frame of reference when considering the results of the survey responses. The participants' experiences in the housing unit differ from those in the educational environment. Nonetheless, the potential for one environment impacting the other is evident.

Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature

Previous studies on correctional education, the perceptions of inmate-students in educational programming, and the elements of SDT related to the experiences of the incarcerated students provided the foundation for the present study. The results related to the body of

literature found on the perceptions of inmate-students involved in both academic and vocational programs and the literature that explored correctional education and its impact on the incarcerated adult learner. Additionally, the results were consistent with the literature found on both SDT and autonomous forms of motivation in correctional education participants.

Bozick et al. (2018) found intellectual and moral development are crucial to behavior modification through education, which challenges a participant to build the necessary skills to encourage the inmate-student's sense of purpose and formation of his goals. Additionally, the student became more mature and better understood the consequences of his actions (Bozick et al., 2018). Diva discussed the HiSET preparation program and explained the program was an opportunity for him to learn for a better future. The participants' responses demonstrated an awareness of the many practical applications for their new skills, as well as the personal impact of the programs. Many participants discussed the elements of their programs that motivated them to create better lives for themselves on the outside. One participant did not want to fail anymore. Other participants wanted better lives and wanted more for their futures than they had before their incarceration. Practitioners considering these findings could improve current programming, help educators to become more effective in their roles, and build a supportive learning environment.

Newly acquired skills do not change an offender's frame of mind alone. The importance of the problem-solving skills associated with the courses helps change the offender's frame of mind to a more positive one, which is critical to creating lasting change (Bozick et al., 2018). Participants noted their programs had given each of them a new worldview. In each participant's own way, he demonstrated a shift in his state of mind and discussed how that new outlook would significantly impact his life. The participants planned for successful reintegration by using their

new skills to obtain sound employment or to pursue higher education. It appeared that the participants were determined to lead crime-free lives. Scholars and practitioners could use these results to evaluate the currently accepted practices in correctional education and further investigate ways to build on the existing system. Personal transformation among the participants opens up another avenue to pursue new insights to help improve correctional education administration.

Hall and Killacky (2008) found students' perceptions of success impacted their study habits, motivation to continue their classes and work on their study materials, and the students' plans for the future. In the present study, the results were similar, in that; the participants' perceptions of the value of their programs motivated each to complete the programs and prompted various post-release goals. Further, students in Hall and Killacky (2008) equated success with individualism, contentment, and the motivation to study. The participants in the present study related success to program completion, the ability to achieve their goals, and the benefits of the program on the participants' futures. These results hold importance for practitioners and scholars, in that; new information on participant motivations contributes to both the practical and theoretical concepts that currently exist in the body of knowledge in this field.

The participants had several different motivations for taking part in educational programs. Some participants wanted to learn to be able to help their children, whereas others were motivated by the prospects of finding a good job once they were released. These results are consistent with Hall and Killacky (2008), which indicated students were motivated by the notion they could positively influence their children about the importance of school, in addition to having the ability to obtain sound employment upon release. Practitioners could benefit from

these findings; the results provide evidence that an engaging learning experience has many positive effects on the participants.

The participants' motivations were consistent with McKinney and Cotronea (2011) that found that students are autonomously motivated about activities when they see the value in the action. The participants in the present study were autonomously, extrinsically motivated in most themes. The most common forms of autonomous, extrinsic motivation found were regulation through identification and integrated regulation. Only one theme demonstrated the extrinsic motivation of introjected regulation; however, this motivation was unrelated to conditions that could be controlled by the participant directly. The participants' motivations were fairly clear in their narratives; however, the existing body of literature would benefit from further study on inmate-student motivations and the many aspects of correctional education.

Limitations

The study does provide additional information to apply to the existing body of knowledge; however, some limitations require consideration. The qualitative narrative inquiry method provides a limited view of the perceptions and experiences of a small sample of inmate-students (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The use of this method does not produce results that can be generalized; however, the results could be transferable. The present study included only male participants, which limited the experiences and perceptions of a subset of participants in educational programming. A subsequent study using both quantitative and qualitative data could produce valuable information about inmate perceptions but may also include statistical information. Further exploration of qualitative data could include both male and female inmate-students and be expanded to include additional prisons. Quantitative analysis could be implemented to evaluate numerical data that compares groups, such as males versus females, a

comparison of the programs studied, and a comparison of facilities, or in a more detailed fashion, males versus females by each facility in comparison to other facilities.

The study was bound by time constraints, prison staff availability, and logistical concerns regarding inmate movement. The Public Information Officer (PIO) of the prison approved the study with the specific parameters that included access to only students in the lower-risk classification unit and the limited window of access to the study participants. The expansion of the pool of available inmates to recruit for study participation could have an impact on the findings by increasing the higher-risk classification unit's students. The difference in security risk levels might contribute different perspectives because the experiences in different environments may affect how the individual perceives his learning environment and future aspirations. There is also a possibility that students in the higher-risk classification unit are not eligible for release at any time, which may also impact their views.

The stipulations placed on the recruitment of participants and the way the data were collected impacted the level of thick and rich description for each survey response and the data used to answer each research question. The inability to conduct semi-structured one-on-one interviews with the participants left only the written survey responses, which may not have relayed the entire point of view or experience for each of the survey questions. Participants may have better expressed themselves verbally due to their inability to express their thoughts adequately in writing. The interviews could produce additional data to contribute to the answers for each of the research questions. The opportunity for the participants to speak with a researcher directly could encourage more complete responses and a deeper understanding of the phenomena.

Implication of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory

The results of the present study can be applied to the existing body of literature on inmate-student perceptions about correctional education programming. The results contribute additional insight into the application of SDT in the correctional education setting. Consideration of the results can help inform and guide correctional education program administrators, educators, prison officials, the Department of Corrections, policymakers, and the public about the current programs in the prison, and how the participants perceive these programs in terms of value and efficacy. The results could influence lawmakers' decisions about financial allocations for educational programs, course resources and materials, and additional teachers, which could improve the rehabilitative opportunities that stem from participation in educational programming during incarceration. The present study provides another opportunity for practitioners and scholars to review and evaluate participants' perceptions of academic and vocational programs at the prison. The results could motivate corrections professionals and policymakers to collaborate and refine the education department's operations to improve the participants' experiences and achievements while incarcerated.

Another implication of the present study is the value of the participants' narratives compared to the perceptions of the public, practitioners, and officials. The voices of the incarcerated have often been set aside because the marginalized "other" has no forum to discuss their experiences (Ahmed et al., 2019). The results indicate there is potential for an in-depth understanding of the inmate-students' views about their programming. The community of practice can only benefit from the participants' narratives. Further, the narratives provide scholars with a better understanding of the phenomena, thus opening doors to alternative foci of study.

The theoretical implications of the results begin with the participants' responses. The results demonstrated that only parts of the elements of SDT were present in any given theme. The underlying reason for the lack of satisfaction of the participants' needs is unclear. McKinney and Cotronea (2011) evaluated SDT and its use in correctional education and encountered challenges when reviewing previous studies on the application of SDT in prison educational programming. McKinney and Cotronea (2011) developed theories about ways to introduce SDT into programming to produce positive results; however, there was no indication of any one method being more successful than another. The motivations of the participants in the present study appeared to have some impact on needs satisfaction.

Autonomous, extrinsic motivation was found in all the themes. Regulation through identification was the predominant motivation in the results. Regulation through identification is consistent with the existing body of literature, in that the participants were aware of the value of their programs and internalized that value, which continued to drive them toward success (Deci & Ryan, 2008). In a few themes, integrated regulation was identified. This form of motivation was a positive indicator of personal transformation. The participants had become more aware of the practical value of the skills, and therefore, more capable of finding uses for their new skills. The participants had taken ownership of many of these actions and had begun to form goals for their futures. Integrated regulation was also consistent with findings in the existing body of literature. Hall and Killacky (2008) found several reasons that motivated inmate-students to change. The findings showed intrinsic and extrinsic motivations; however, the motivation in each case was affected by the reality of the participant.

Recommendations for Further Research

The availability of educational programming in correctional facilities is widespread. Both state and federal prisons typically have various forms of academic and vocational programs. Additionally, some jails include some educational programming (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Enrollment in academic programs is either mandatory or voluntary, depending on the facility's policies. In the present study, one men's state prison was chosen to recruit volunteers for participation. The PIO approved the research study; however, she placed restrictions on the available pool of potential participants. The sample was obtained from both academic and vocational students who were housed in the lower-risk classification unit. Due to time and staffing constraints, the higher-risk classification unit students were excluded.

A qualitative narrative inquiry design was chosen for the study. Two changes to the design of the present study could produce additional data valuable to the discussion. The addition of the higher-risk classification unit students would provide perceptions that could differ from those of the lower-risk classification unit students, due to their living environment and the likelihood of having longer sentences. The second addition would be to include all classification units in the state women's prison. Female inmate-students may have different views about their educational programs. The female population would also have different vocational programs, which would expand the discussion. Collectively, a study of male and female inmate-students in all classification units would provide a valuable perspective about the state's correctional education system.

Another recommendation for further study would be to change the design to include researcher observations in the classrooms, with detailed field notes to capture information about the environment and the interactions between the teachers and students. Further, the

administration of an open-ended question written survey followed by a one-on-one interview with the researcher to clarify survey responses and to obtain additional commentary would broaden the spectrum of data collected and prompt a comprehensive discussion of the results. If a researcher was able to use all three methods of data collection, the impact of the results on the community of practice and scholars, as well as the existing body of literature, could be valuable.

A final recommendation for further research would be the addition of a quantitative analysis of some elements of the data. For example, the inclusion of grade level equivalencies (GLE) with a comparison of those students' GLE's at various points in time during their program enrollment would allow researchers to measure progress among the students. The quantitative data, coupled with the qualitative information, could provide another perspective about the students' perceptions and the environmental implications of the educational programming at the prisons.

Conclusion

The opportunity to see to the participants and allow each to know his comments were valued and important, was a unique experience for all of us. The participants appeared to be excited to have the chance to share their experiences. Although there was no direct interaction during the data collection, during the time the participants were waiting for clearance to return to the housing unit, there were a few participants who engaged in general conversation. The participants talked about day-to-day topics and appeared to be happy to have someone to talk with. The conversations did not include research-related commentary, so there was no potential impact on the data analysis process. I intended to listen, but separate the impressions the participants' conversations left, to mitigate any potential for bias.

In research question 1, the aim was to obtain descriptions of the participants' experiences with the educational options available to them. Many participants expressed satisfaction with their programs. Participants also discussed areas they perceived as needing improvements, as well as some frustrations that existed in their learning experiences. The narratives included suggestions to address the perceived deficiencies and included some interest in online courses to help them learn for a better future.

Many participants were proud of their accomplishments. Some of the participants were initially intimidated by starting school after so many years but became more comfortable in class after a short time. The general theme among the narratives demonstrated excitement, ambition, and the desire to have better lives once they were released. The participants' responses about the educational programs left the impression that the education department offered some good programs; however, there was room for improvement. The participants appeared to be driven toward personal improvement, and with the help of the education department, their desires could become a reality.

In research question 2, the intention was to explore the impact of the educational programs on the participants' vocational aspirations. Vocational education participants wanted to obtain jobs related to their area of study. Some of these participants were planning on pursuing further education in their fields to improve their job prospects. The academic program participants were focused on various vocational disciplines, and in some cases, the participants wanted to pursue higher education to obtain professional degrees. Participants who had children wanted to learn to be able to teach their children, as well as show their children the importance of having an education.

Some of the narratives included future goals that included using their new skills to promote their art, create poetry books, and to do informative writing about their experiences in prison. The participants appeared to embrace the notion of having new vocational avenues to pursue with their newly acquired skills. One participant hoped to have a career and build a retirement fund for himself. Many participants' comments included long-term goals. There were very few participants looking for immediate gratification upon release. The general theme in the participants' narratives showed sound planning for the future and included plans for a continued path of personal transformation.

The participants demonstrated autonomous, extrinsic motivations. Many were self-determined, and others had acknowledged the value of their participation in the programs and had accepted this behavior internally. The participants often demonstrated the satisfaction of their need for autonomy and competence. Some parts of the narratives showed indications of a sense of relatedness. The participants appeared to be working toward achieving a sense of psychological well-being consistent with the tenets of SDT.

The privilege of conducting research with educational program participants was a gratifying and humbling experience. The participants' narratives provided me with more insight into the experiences of incarcerated students. I was not aware of the size of the educational programs and was surprised at the hope and pride exhibited by these participants. As a member of the community, I have a renewed sense of assurance that these individuals will return to the community and lead productive lives.

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Appendix A: Survey Questions

1. Which academic or vocational program are you participating in?
2. What do you like about the program?
3. What do you not like about the program?
4. What do you hope to gain from this program?
5. How do you feel your program is going to help you?
6. How important is completing this program to you, and why?
7. What, if anything, do you feel your family and friends think about your participation and completion of the program?
8. What do you plan to do with the knowledge the program has given you?
9. Can you explain your experiences in your program?
10. How do you feel about the academic and vocational programs available at this prison?
11. Can you please explain how your program has impacted your decisions about the type of work you will pursue once you are released?
12. Do you feel there are parts of your program that could be improved, if so, please explain?
13. How did you feel about your program when you first began the program?
14. Do you have any other comments about the academic or vocational programs you have, or are, participating in?

Appendix B: Sample Recruitment Letter

December 16, 2018

Potential Participant:

I am a doctoral candidate at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon. I am researching education in prison. I am asking for volunteers who are currently taking part in academic or vocational courses within the prison. My interest and focus are on your perceptions and experiences. I would like volunteers to complete a written survey. The approximate amount of time required for this activity is 1 hour.

The information I am looking for with this research is simply your perceptions of the impact your academic or vocational program has on your vocational goals when you are released. I am also looking for comments on your experiences with the available academic and vocational programs at the prison.

Your confidentiality is a top priority. I will ask each volunteer to pick a name to use for the study. I am not going to ask for your DOC number, charges, and background, or any other information that would potentially reveal your identity. I am assuming responsibility for the secure storage of your survey.

This research project is not connected to the prison or the Department of Corrections. Your research information is not given to any prison or Department of Corrections officials. I am using this for my final requirements to graduate. If you choose to participate, you will be given a consent form that will go over all the details of this study. You can ask questions about the project before committing to participation.

At any time, you may withdraw from the research project. There are no consequences for withdrawing from the study. You will be provided a form to sign stating you are withdrawing from the study, with the agreement none of the information you might have provided will be used. Any information obtained will be destroyed securely.

I thank you for considering my invitation to participate. Your perceptions and experiences matter to me, and my research. I look forward to speaking with you.

Appendix C: Volunteer Participation Form

I _____, would like to participate in the research study being conducted on the academic and vocational programs at the prison. My chosen name for identification purposes is _____. I will use this chosen name for all aspects of participation in the study. I have the right to withdraw from this study at any time, without any impact on my standing in the facility or academic and vocational programs.

Participant

Researcher

Appendix D: Consent Form

Research Study Title: Perceptions of Incarcerated Individuals in a Men's Prison about the Impact of Educational Programs on their Vocational Aspirations: A Narrative Inquiry
Principal Investigator: Jody L. Bergstrom
Research Institution: Concordia University–Portland, OR
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Audrey Rabas

Purpose and what you will be doing:

The purpose of this survey is to obtain your experiences and perceptions about the educational or vocational program that you are participating in. We expect approximately 20 to 25 volunteers. Individuals will not be compensated for their participation. We will begin enrollment on February 1, 2019. To be included in the study, you will be required to complete a short, written survey.

Taking this survey should require less than one hour of your time.

Risks:

There are no risks to participating in this study other than providing your information. However, we will protect your information. When we or any of our investigators look at the data, none of the data will have your actual name or any type of identifying information. We will only use your chosen name to analyze and sort the data. We will not identify you in any publication or report. Your information will be kept private at all times and then the study documents will be destroyed three years after the completion of the research.

Participation in this study in no way impacts your status at the prison or with the Department of Corrections. This study is not connected to the Department of Corrections or prison. The information you provide in your survey is not provided to any prison personnel or Department of Corrections officials.

Benefits:

By providing your open and honest answers, you could provide important information about the academic and vocational programs at the prison. Information you provide could help make any changes to educational programs that are identified to need changes or improvements.

Confidentiality:

This information will not be distributed to any other agency and will be kept private and confidential. The only exception to this is if you tell us about any abuse or neglect that creates a serious concern for your immediate health and safety. Prison staff will have your name for security and movement purposes. Prison staff will not be given your chosen name.

Right to Withdraw:

Your participation is greatly appreciated, but we acknowledge that the questions we are asking are personal in nature. You are free at any point to choose not to engage with or stop the study. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. This study is not required and there is no penalty for not participating.

Contact Information:

You will receive a copy of this consent form. If you have questions you can talk to or write the principal investigator. If you want to talk with a participant advocate other than the investigator, you can write or call the director of our institutional review board.

Your Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I asked questions if I had them, and my questions were answered. I volunteer my consent for this study.

_____ Participant Name	_____ Date
_____ Participant Signature	_____ Date
_____ Investigator Name	_____ Date
_____ Investigator Signature	_____ Date

Concordia University–Portland
2811 NE Holman Street
Portland, Oregon 97221

Appendix E: Right to Withdraw from Research Project Form

I no longer wish to participate in this research study. I acknowledge that any information that I may have provided will not be used and will be destroyed securely.

Participant

Researcher

Date

Appendix F: Code Book

Research Question 1

- **Automotive Technology**
 - **The education department** – Relates to education department administration and the administration's impact on programming.
 - Lack of funding
 - Need more teachers
 - Difficult enrollment process
 - Lack of leadership in administration
 - **Program experiences** – Relates to experiences in the program and the learning environment.
 - Individualized instruction
 - Hands-on learning
 - Peer support
 - **Course resources and materials** – Relates to instructional materials, tools, and other resources needed to learn course content.
 - Areas for improvement
 - Up-to-date books
 - Computer programs and tools
 - Educational support
 - **Personal experiences and feelings** – Discusses the participants' experiences and feelings about the program that are not related to any other theme.
 - Positive feelings
 - Pride
 - Treated like a person
 - Have more knowledge than before
 - Value of program

Research question 1

- **HiSET preparation program**
 - **Education department and educators** – Relates to the education department administration and the course facilitators.
 - Experiences with the department and educators
 - Areas of deficiency
 - Teachers do not show up or not on time
 - Need more individualized instruction
 - Positive and beneficial aspects
 - Program works well
 - Gratitude
 - Personal improvement
 - **Trust issues** – One participant's concerns about the inability to trust staff.
 - Desire for a friendship with teachers
 - Lack of trust means there is no one to turn to if something happens
 - Lots of participants have trust issues
 - **The program** – Relates to the program, how the program makes the participants feel, and their suggestions.
 - Importance of the program
 - Value
 - Impact on the participants' lives
 - Disappointments
 - Amount of instruction per day
 - Testing process
 - Internet access desired
 - **Classroom experiences** – Relates to the classroom environment, the course's impact on the participants, and course completion.
 - Importance of completing a diploma
 - Success
 - Confidence
 - Achievement
 - Learning environment
 - **Personal experiences and feelings** - Discusses the participants' experiences and feelings about the program that are not related to any other theme.
 - Supportive environment
 - Achievements
 - Sense of identity
 - **Family's feelings and perceived family's feelings (subtheme)**
 - Pride
 - Achievement
 - Not worth the hassle

Research question 1

- **Microsoft Office 2016 Certification Program**
 - **Education department and educators** - Relates to the education department administration and the course facilitators.
 - Areas of deficiency
 - Teachers late or not showing up
 - Teachers not adequately trained
 - Staff not helpful
 - Administration creating program difficulties
 - Certification process
 - Department has improved over the years
 - **Internet and online resources** – Relates to internet access, online assignments and materials, and course format.
 - Importance of technology and technical skills
 - Lack of internet
 - Impedes learning
 - Cannot access some assignments and resources
 - Suggest a secure, monitored internet connection
 - **Program and learning** – Relates to program likes and dislikes, classroom learning environment, and concerns about teachers.
 - Relevant programming
 - Provides real-world skills
 - Makes them feel worthy
 - Teachers need adequate training
 - Would like newer instructors
 - Desire more group work
 - **Personal experiences and feelings** - Discusses the participants' experiences and feelings about the program that are not related to any other theme.
 - Value and importance of program
 - Impact on participants
 - Ambition
 - Place to escape housing unit environment

Research question 2

- **Automotive Technology**
 - **Impact of the program on the participant** – Relates to the aspects of the class that affected the participants.
 - Interest in further education
 - Goals for employment
 - Learning viable skills
- **HiSET preparation program**
 - **Post-release goals** – Goals as a result of program participation.
 - Pursue college education
 - Obtain professional degree and use it to help other offenders
 - Pursue personal projects
 - **Personal feelings** – Relates to feelings about the program and the program's impact.
 - Impact on their personal lives
 - Personal value of the program
 - Able to help their children
 - Set example for children
- **Microsoft Office 2016 Certification Program**
 - **Post-release goals** – Goals as a result of program participation.
 - Aspirations
 - Pursue additional education
 - College
 - Become self-employed
 - **Program benefits** – The personal and professional benefits of program participation.
 - Gain skills
 - Confidence
 - Personal uses for skills
 - Job opportunities
 - The emotional impact on the participants

Appendix G: Statement of Original Work

The Concordia University Doctorate of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically-informed, rigorously- researched, inquiry-based projects that benefit professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, adherence to the principles and standards outlined in the Concordia University Academic Integrity Policy. This policy states the following:

Statement of academic integrity.

As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

Explanations:

What does “fraudulent” mean?

“Fraudulent” work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one’s own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, including another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate’s final work without full and complete documentation.

What is “unauthorized” assistance?

“Unauthorized assistance” refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been either explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Use of unauthorized notes or another’s work during an online test
- Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting
- Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
- Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.

Statement of Original Work (continued)

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University–Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.
2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association*

Jody L. Bergstrom

Digital Signature

Jody L. Bergstrom

Name (Typed)

August 13, 2019

Date