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**CONTRIBUTION OF CORRECTIONAL LIBRARIES TO REHABILITATION AND
INTEGRATION OF OFFENDERS TO THE COMMUNITY IN MPUMALANGA
PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

BY

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in the School of Social Sciences, College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Pietermaritzburg, Republic of South Africa
2024**

DECLARATION

I, **Precious Kholomile Saiya**, declare that:


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2. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
3. This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs, or other information unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Candidate: Precious Kholomile Saiya

Signe 

09 September 2024

Supervisor: Dr Siyanda Kheswa

Signed: .....

10 September 2024

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family, especially my mother, Rachel Saiya; my children Buhle, Sibusiso and Muhluri for their support, love and understanding throughout my journey. You have been my constant source of strength and inspiration, and reminded me about the value of perseverance. I also like to thank Dr Shilenge for his support.

ABSTRACT

Rehabilitating offenders through education is a fundamental constitutional imperative in South Africa. Yet the contribution of correctional libraries to the development and employability of offenders remains underexplored and inconclusive. Crucially, the Desistance theory stresses the need for holistic development of offenders, while the Transformative Learning theory underlines the role of critical reflection in fostering personal transformation in offenders. Equally, the Context-Mechanism-Outcome model posits that organisational and social contexts should be constantly monitored as they impact significantly on correctional education programmes and outcomes. In this context, the purpose of this study was to assess the contribution of correctional libraries to the development of offenders in Mpumalanga Province. Through a multiple case study design and sequential explanatory approach, a combined total of 607 respondents was derived by using stratified random sampling and purposive sampling. The latter included library managers, librarians, facilitators, former offenders, community members and employers. Data were collected through a combination of quantitative and qualitative research instruments involving self-administered questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Quantitatively, the study confirmed that 90% of learners (offenders) received Library and Information services in their centres, though such services were limited by staff shortages and a lack of funding. Strategies used by librarians and facilitators to mobilise learning resources included partnerships (24%), referrals (12%), book exchanges (13%), donations (35%), and loan systems (15%). Offenders had access to functional literacy programmes (90%), vocational skills training (85%) and higher education opportunities (20%). On average, 65% of the learners were generally satisfied with the quality of education in their centres. Career transition preparations included career exhibitions (15%), on-the-job training (22%), direct applications (30%) and partnerships with sector education and training authorities (26%).

Stakeholder responsibilities included training delivery by Sector Education and Training Authorities, accreditation services by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations, policy advice by the Department of Higher Education, tutorial support services by peer educators and employment facilitation by community organisations, government

agencies and prospective employers. Qualitatively, evidence from semi-structured interviews confirmed that library and training programmes were provided through basic education, vocational education, higher education and pre-release programmes, as well as informal learning activities on the job. Prime examples were agriculture, baking, carpentry, construction, beauty and hairdressing, electricity and welding. Key training delivery strategies included peer educators, referrals, in-service training, internships, learnerships, experiential learning and mentoring by prospective employers. Common barriers to learning and career transition included limited budget allocation, understaffing, protocols, capacity, shortage of learning resources, stigmatisation, limited access to learning technologies, and learner disengagement. Quality assurance measures included accreditation, curriculum design, staff development, digitisation, records management, learner assessment, and training management.

In light of these results, the study concluded that while librarians, facilitators and stakeholders contributed significantly to educating offenders, additional efforts are needed to improve career transition outcomes. Through a transformative learning perspective, the study enhances understanding of the strategic role of librarianship in correctional education, particularly in developing countries such as South Africa. In contributing to the current body of knowledge on correctional education, the study recommended a context-specific Library and Information Services model to help improve both mobilisation and sharing of learning resources among Correctional centres in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AET	Adult Education and Training
AgriSETA	Agricultural Sector Education and Training Authority
CBR	Community-based Rehabilitation Approach
CIPC	Companies and Intellectual Property Commission
CMO	Context-Mechanism-Outcome
DCS	Department of Correctional Services
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
HET	Higher Education and Training
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
LIS	Library and Information Services
LMN	Limpopo Mpumalanga Northwest Region
MERSETA	Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
OBE	Outcomes-based Education
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAPPO	South African Pork Producers' Organisation
SARS	South African Revenue Services
SEDA	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SETAs	Sector Education and Training Authorities
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNISA	University of South Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER 1 : BACKGROUND AND OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Internationally, correctional education is offered to offenders as a basic human right in line with the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948), United Nations Minimum Rules for Treatment of Prisoners (1955), Kampala Declaration (2005), and the Mandela Rules (2015) (Vandala and Bendall, 2019:1). Educating and multiskilling offenders is also consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4, which calls for “inclusive and equitable quality education and life-long learning opportunities for all” (UN Sustainable Development Goals Fact Sheet, 2015:3). Most importantly, the Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development (2030:2) calls for joint implementation of educational policies that foster skills building, social transformation, individual behaviour change, equality, respect for human rights, as well as structural and cultural changes to achieve sustainable development. Both desistance and transformative learning researchers stress the importance of quality vocational education in facilitating social transformation and the transition of offenders to the world of work (Maruna, 2016; Taylor and Cranton, 2013; Pike and Hopkins, 2019). Within this context, this introductory chapter explains the context, research problem, objectives, research questions and significance of the study.

Information behaviour theorists such as Emasealu and Popula (2016) argue that equitable access to information provided by correctional libraries is key to offender development and integration. Correctional service libraries can, therefore, play a significant role in fostering lifelong learning among offenders, who often have limited education and skills backgrounds (Biswalo, 2011:1). This statement underscores the critical role of correctional libraries in facilitating functional literacy, skills development, career transition, and the social integration of offenders into society. This thinking is clearly reflected in the strategic goals of the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), which, among other things, advocates for the protection of the public, the promotion of social responsibility, and the enhancement of human development to prevent recidivism

and overcrowding in correctional centres. However, the extent to which correctional service libraries fulfil this role remains unclear and under-theorised in the empirical literature.

In South Africa, radical corrections reforms since 1994 have ushered in a new democratic system based on the values of equality, legitimacy, transparency, accountability, the rule of law, good governance, and respect for human rights; all of which apply to libraries and offenders in correctional centres (Muntingh, 2015:iii). Correctional education is a fundamental component of rehabilitative programming (Lindstrom, 2018:3). As such, it deserves critical attention in Mpumalanga Province, as the area still exhibits relatively high levels of poverty, unemployment and skills shortages. Chapter 10 of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) enshrines the right to human dignity, and section 29 guarantees the right to education and further training. Additionally, section 35 confers the right to equality and fair treatment of offenders before the law. The right to dignity, freedom and security of the person (section 12) as well as the right to conditions of detention that fit human dignity (including the provision of adequate accommodation, nutrition, reading material and medical treatment), are all important in meeting the information and learning needs of offenders in correctional centres (Brivik, 2005:2-3). Most importantly, Chapter 9 of the National Development Plan (2030) sees education and training as critical in reducing poverty, unemployment, skills shortages and improving living standards in South Africa. Therefore, correctional libraries are mandated by the Constitution (section 29) to take reasonable steps to progressively address the learning and development needs of offenders as part of their transformative role in society (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014).

The Correctional Services Act (No. 111) of 1998 defines human development as the process of ensuring that offenders have equitable access to education and skills development opportunities. Equally, the Promotion of Access to Information (PAIA) Act (62 of 2000) makes it imperative for librarians to provide information services to society, including offenders. These provisions have far-reaching implications for libraries as custodians of information and learning resources in correctional centres. As part of the

rehabilitation system, libraries should provide high-quality information services that effectively address offenders' functional literacy, skills development, and career transition needs. Importantly, the White Paper on Corrections (2005) envisioned a correctional system in which prisons become correctional centres of rehabilitation where offenders are given new hope and encouraged to adopt a lifestyle that will result in a second chance towards becoming ideal South African citizens. The Library and Information Services (LIS) Transformation Charter (2014:vi) stresses that library information services can play a role in redressing historical inequalities, eradicating poverty, addressing social cohesion, and growing the economy. Tackling illiteracy and skills shortages is one of the fundamental contributions libraries can make to socio-economic development in South Africa (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014). Unless offenders are equipped with useful information, skills and career support services, the goal of their reintegration into society might be hard to achieve.

1.2 BACKGROUND

As with all developing countries, South Africa is faced with the daunting task of educating and multi-skilling its rapidly growing offender population to facilitate their social transformation, employability and integration back into society. The prison library emerges as a glimmer of hope, offering a wide range of library and information services (LIS) programmes to support the information needs of offenders. However, Hurry and Rogers (2014) note that education in prisons is dogged by several problems. These include it being fragmented and poorly co-ordinated and offenders frequently having highly distinctive needs. Education provision within the correctional environment is very different from provision elsewhere. For example, it has to address the impact of sentencing, court appearances, and a criminal record; teachers tend to be isolated; and the number of learners and teachers is small compared to those in mainstream education. These factors mitigate against the development of an evidence base that reflects the particularities of education within the criminal justice system. Researchers such as Hurry and Rogers (2014) and Mdakane, Ngubane and Dhlamini (2022) have also noted the paucity of research on the nature and effectiveness of education, training, and employment for offenders. It is well theorised and documented that social inclusion in

general and gainful occupation, in particular, are likely to reduce offending. Drawing on the United States of America (USA) experience, Duwe (2018:1) argues that “American offenders are undereducated and underemployed. Compared to adults in the US, prisoners are at least three times more likely to be without a high school or general educational development (GED) diploma and four times less likely to have a postsecondary degree.” Studies have consistently found that unemployment rates for prisoners, both before and after prison, are as high as 65 percent. Prison-based education programming generally includes adult basic education, which focuses on helping offenders earn a matric certificate. Offenders can also pursue postsecondary education bachelor’s degrees.

From a desistance perspective, it has been argued that prison-based education programming improves post-prison employment, reduces prison misconduct and recidivism, and delivers a strong return on investment (Solomon and Scherer, 2021; Duwe, 2018). Learning strategies can open opportunities for an increase in participation in formal and vocational training, broaden prisoner’s academic horizons and provide a second chance to learn the skills and competencies needed to reintegrate into society and hence reduce recidivism (Mbatha, Kerre, Ferej and Kitainge, 2018). These examples illustrate the important role of correctional libraries in advancing functional literacy and skills development to address transformation imperatives in Mpumalanga Province.

Within the South African context, Stamp (2020:12) argues that correctional centres are supposed to offer education that is equivalent to mainstream educational services. However, a close examination of the correctional education system reveals insufficient progress in the achievement of these educational objectives, as evidenced by recidivism and the acceleration of violent (and other) crime. Murhula and Singh (2019:21) argue that the needs-based approach currently employed in correctional centres in South Africa is unable to sufficiently address the skills development needs of offenders, resulting in unsatisfactory labour market outcomes. These are some of the problems that warrant a comprehensive study to gain a better understanding of the contribution of LIS to the development needs of offenders.

The policy and legislative frameworks that govern the provision of rehabilitation and LIS programmes in the South African correctional services system are considered below.

1.2.1 Policy and legislative framework

1.2.1.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act (No. 108) of 1996

As argued earlier, correctional libraries in South Africa are expected to make a significant contribution to the implementation of section 29 of the Constitution (1996) through the provision of functional literacy and skills development programmes to aid the rehabilitation of offenders. To do this, correctional libraries need to be strategically positioned as drivers of transformation and sustainable development in the country's correctional services system. It is in this context that this study evaluated the role of correctional libraries in facilitating the learning and development of offenders in Mpumalanga Province. Additionally, section 32(1) of the Constitution (1996) provides that everyone has a right of access to any information held by the state for purposes of fulfilling their development needs. This section obligates state institutions to pass legislation enabling the realisation of this right. The Constitution guarantees the accessibility of information resources to all citizens in line with the principles of accountability, transparency, and shared governance. As part of society, offenders are covered by these provisions.

1.2.1.2 Correctional Services Act (No. 111) of 1998

This Act calls for the maintenance and protection of a just, peaceful and safe society by ensuring that sentences meted out against offenders are properly and fairly enforced; offenders are detained safely and securely; offenders' human dignity is protected; and, finally, social responsibility and human development of all prisoners and persons subject to community corrections are promoted. The Act further defines human development as the process of ensuring that offenders have equitable access to education and skills development opportunities. These provisions have far-reaching implications for libraries as custodians of information and learning resources in correctional centres. As part of the rehabilitation system, libraries ought to provide quality services to enable offenders to meet their information/learning needs. Section 18(2) of this Act provides that every

offender has a right to the material of his or her choice provided such material does not constitute security risks. It further states that reading material may be sourced from the library or the outside subject to security regulations. These provisions have far-reaching implications for librarians in that they impose a duty to facilitate the learning and development of offenders.

1.2.1.3 Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) (No.2) of 2000

This Act implements section 32(1) of the Constitution (1996), where the state is sanctioned to advance and facilitate citizens' right to information by ensuring that the information provided enables citizens to exercise their rights and meet their development needs. The PAIA aims to foster a culture of transparency and accountability in public and private institutions within the spirit of a democratic society. Importantly, the Act cautions that any limitations to the right of access to information must be reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality, and freedom within the ambit of section 36 of the Constitution (1996). Therefore, as agents of change, librarians are at the forefront of the implementation process, ensuring that all offenders have easy and equitable access to development information. One of the key objectives of this study is to determine the extent to which correctional libraries respond to the information needs of offenders with respect to functional literacy, skills development, and career transition needs.

1.2.1.4 White Paper on Correctional Services (2005)

This White Paper envisages a correctional system in which prisons become correctional centres of rehabilitation where offenders are given new hope and encouraged to adopt a lifestyle that will result in a second chance towards becoming ideal South African citizens. The White Paper further states that while safety and security remain the focal point of correctional services, this goes hand-in-hand with the strategic goal of correcting offending behaviour, rehabilitation and correction as a societal responsibility. In this way, the White Paper encourages all stakeholders, including libraries, to contribute to the rehabilitation and integration of offenders back into society. It emphasises that rehabilitation should be viewed not merely as a strategy to prevent crime, but rather as a

holistic phenomenon incorporating and encouraging social responsibility, social justice, active participation in democratic activities, empowerment with life skills and other skills, and contributing to making South Africa a better place in which to live. Figure 1.1 depicts the core elements of the South African corrections system as defined in the White Paper on Corrections (2005).

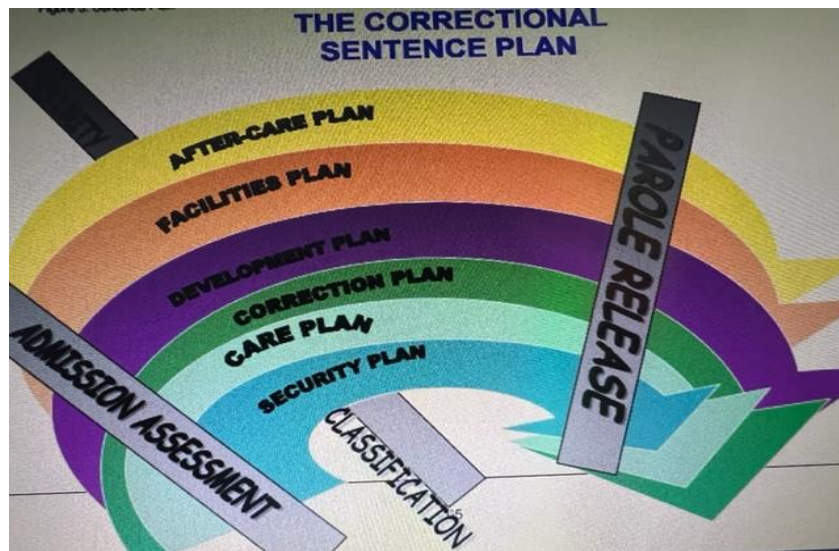


Figure 1.1: Elements of the South African rehabilitation system
Source: White Paper on Corrections (2005)

As illustrated in Figure 1.1, the White Paper envisages a rehabilitation system with six components, namely, a security plan, care plan, correction plan, development plan, facilities plan, and after-care plan. Of these six components, this study is more concerned with development which entails skills and after-care that focuses on employability and integration of offenders after release from incarceration. In this regard, subsection 9.8.3 of the White Paper provides that development interventions should emphasise helping offenders realise their full potential in every aspect of human development. This calls for the multiskilling of offenders and improving access to employment opportunities as part of the career transition process.

1.2.1.5 Strategic Framework on Self-sufficiency and Sustainability (2021)

Further to the policies mentioned above, the DCS introduced a Strategic Framework on Self-sufficiency and Sustainability in 2021 to improve the scale and quality of correctional services. This framework has a dual purpose in that it seeks to strengthen internal capacity while also creating new employment opportunities to expedite the social integration of offenders. This will be achieved through additional investments in production workshops, agricultural activities such as livestock, as well as arts and culture and skills development. Figure 1.2 depicts the six pillars of this new policy framework.



Figure 1.2: DCS Strategic Framework on Self-sufficiency and Sustainability, 2021

Source: Researcher's creation (2024)

Of the six pillars listed in Figure 1.2, this study is interested in the third pillar on the right-hand side which aims to increase the number of trained and developed offenders within the corrections system. This places a duty on correctional libraries to improve the mobilisation and allocation of teaching and learning resources through partnerships with relevant stakeholders, for example, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and sector education and training authorities (SETAs), among others. The emphasis on information technology and workshops is particularly significant for this

study as it includes a practical component to determine offenders' ability to transfer acquired knowledge and skills in workplace contexts.

1.2.1.6 Library and Information Services Transformation Charter (2014)

The LIS Transformation Charter (2014:vi) emphasises the role of the information services sector in redressing historical inequalities, poverty eradication, social cohesion, and growing the economy. The Transformation Charter further recognises that tackling illiteracy and skills shortages is one of the fundamental contributions that libraries can make to socio-economic development in South Africa. The library needs to take centre stage as both a preserver and transmitter of knowledge and information in society. Significantly, the LIS Transformation Charter (2014: xx) also recognises that the uneven and unequal provision of resources within all LIS subsectors is of great concern as it prevents many citizens from accessing such services.

The central focus of the LIS Transformation Charter is to contribute to transformation and sustainable development in South Africa by improving access to LIS for all, including offenders in correctional service institutions. The LIS Transformation Charter (2014:16) conceptualises several indicators required to judge the performance of the library sector. These include freely available resources; committed, skilled and competent human resources actively engaged in continuing professional development; redressing poverty and fostering transformation by meeting the needs of marginalised groupings (such as rural households and correctional populations); an integrated funding model; adherence to norms and standards; a commitment to monitoring and accountability; and the removal of barriers to ensure equitable access to library resources (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014:16).

1.2.1.7 National Skills Development Strategy III

The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) (2011), together with the Skills Development Act (1998), is an overarching policy framework that laid the foundation for the skills revolution not just in the workplace but also in correctional service institutions. The vision of the NSDS is to ensure that individuals and workers have access to high-

quality education and skills development opportunities, including workplace learning and practical job experience. These provisions directly impact the role of correctional libraries in supporting functional literacy and skills training for offenders. Pillar 6 of the NSDS encourages close collaboration between public, private and civil society organisations and training providers to accelerate skills development in all sectors of the economy (NSDS, 2011:5). Strategic objective 4.6 of the NSDS supports the development of cooperatives, small businesses, self-employment initiatives, and community-based training initiatives. As argued earlier, in terms of section 29 and section 35 of the Constitution, offenders are entitled to these training opportunities.

1.2.1.8 White Paper on Post-secondary Education and Training (2013)

Crucially, the White Paper 6 on Post-secondary Education and Training (2013) recognises the importance of sustainable partnerships between educational institutions and employers in facilitating skills-building and career transition, not just for ordinary learners but also for persons under detention. It recognises the need for preparing learners for the world of work through cross-sector collaborations involving community-based organisations, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges, institutions of higher learning, and current and prospective employers. For correctional centres, this means drawing employers close to skills development processes, improving the quality and diversity of provision, and scaling up workplace learning to enhance employability skills and career mobility for offenders. In summary, the White Paper on Post-secondary Education and Training envisages expanded access, improved quality and increased diversity of provision, and a stronger and more cooperative relationship between education and training institutions and employers in the workplace. As part of this study, the views of employers were canvassed to determine if collaboration is used to improve labour market outcomes for offenders.

1.2.1.9 National Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

South Africa's National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act (2008) provides for the broadening of access to education and training opportunities for all. To this end, the DHET promulgated the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy to redress past imbalances

in education and to remove barriers to learning opportunities in the country's education and training system. For correctional libraries, this means that offenders can be assessed for prior knowledge gained through informal learning in the past and be credited for such learning to enable them to transition between different occupations, career paths and qualifications including adult basic education and training (ABET), TVET, and higher education and training (HET). As such, RPL constitutes a vital tool that correctional libraries and employers can use to accelerate functional literacy and improve skills training and career transition outcomes for offenders (Anderson, Fejes and Sandberg, 2013).

1.2.1.10 Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001)

Introduced by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in 2001, this policy acknowledges the displacement and exclusion of many learners and young people from education and training opportunities due to certain barriers that impede their participation in learning programmes (Walton, 2018). One of the key objectives of White Paper 6 is to broaden access to learning opportunities for vulnerable groups, including youth, women, people living with disability, and offenders in correctional centres. Given this, it is, therefore, important to establish whether correctional libraries are using the opportunities in the White Paper to promote inclusive education in their functional literacy and skills training programmes to improve employability prospects for offenders.

1.2.1.11 National Qualification Framework (2008)

Promulgated in 2008, the NQF provides for the regulation and management of quality in South Africa's education and training system. It defines the principles and guidelines for developing and implementing learning programmes in each of the three bands, namely General Education and Training (GET), Further Education and Training (FET) and Higher Education and Training (HET). Correctional centres are required to align their skills training programmes with relevant bands on the NQF to cater for the diverse skills needs of learners within the corrections system. The NQF emphasises the need for unit standard-based training to allow credit accumulation, career pathing and transferability of

learning in the workplace. It calls for designated support services to help learners/trainees achieve their learning goals. In this study, the NQF provides useful standards for evaluating the quality of functional literacy and skills training programmes that correctional libraries provide to offenders. As part of the study, it is critically important to establish whether NQF principles are being observed to improve both the scale and quality of learning programmes and learner achievement in correctional libraries.

1.2.2 International protocols on correctional education

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) enshrines the right to education for offenders internationally. It encourages and binds United Nations (UN) member states to include in their Bill of Rights the declaration that: “Everyone has the right to education.” The South African Department of Correctional Service’s rehabilitation programmes are founded on this fundamental right to education and training, which echoes the Bill of Rights in the country’s Constitution (1996). The Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (1977) marked the first step towards recognising and institutionalising rehabilitation and social integration of offenders. It gave expression to the protocol signed on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders by the UN Congress in 1955. Article 40 of the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders provides that every correctional centre should have a library for use by all categories of offenders. It further states that correctional libraries should be adequately resourced with both recreational and instructional materials to facilitate the learning and development of offenders and that offenders should be encouraged to use library resources as part of their rehabilitation.

Resolution 45/111 of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) facilitated the adoption of principle 6 of the Basic Principles on the Treatment of Prisoners in 1990. According to this resolution, all offenders were entitled to participate in cultural and educational activities aimed at the full development of the human personality. This provision was extended to cover juvenile education in correctional centres; as evidenced by the introduction of the Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (Principle 6 of the Basic Principles on the Treatment of Prisoners, 1990; Resolution 45/111 of the

UNGA). These resolutions meant that correctional centres had to provide opportunities for basic education and vocational skills training to young and adult populations under their custody in a fair and equitable manner.

Further to these protocols, the Lisbon Treaty United Nations (2007) provides for the recognition of citizens' right to education and access to vocational and continuing training. It seeks to achieve this through the enforcement of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and Article 14 of the Charter enshrines the right to education. The Lisbon Treaty recognises offenders' right to vocational training, which is key to building entrepreneurial and employability skills among offenders in correctional systems.

Finally, in terms of international protocols, the UN in December 2015 revised the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and subsequently renamed it the "Nelson Mandela Rules 2015" to honour the legacy of South Africa's first democratically elected president who spent 27 years in incarceration. The Mandela Rules have gone a step further and expanded the scope of protection for all prisoners, including the education, health, treatment and welfare of offenders (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2015). While Rule 1 stresses fair treatment, protection and respect for offenders, Rules 2 and 3 bar discrimination and maltreatment of offenders. Rule 4 calls for the advancement of offenders' rights through programmatic interventions, including education, training, workplace learning and placement of offenders after release from correctional centres (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2015). A central thesis of the Mandela Rules is that the provisioning of educational services should be contextualised, taking into account each offender's social and criminal history, as well as their capacities, aptitudes, sentence plan and prospects after release. On the question of young offenders, the Mandela Rules state that education should be made compulsory for all young people and should be aligned with mainstream education to improve outcomes in career paths and further education opportunities after release (Nogueira, Rajab and Okocha, 2022).

1.2.3 Continental protocols

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (2017) makes a significant contribution to the learning, development and integration of offenders in African states. In particular, Article 15 on the right to work, Article 16 on the right to health, and Article 17 on the right to education lay the foundation for the advancement and protection of offenders' rights.

Beyond the African Charter, Articles 6 and 7 of the Kampala Declaration on Prison Conditions in Africa (1996) provide that offenders should be afforded living conditions that are consummate with human dignity. The Declaration also underlines the importance of improving access to education and skills training opportunities to facilitate the reintegration of offenders into society (Kampala Declaration on Prison Conditions in Africa, 1996:822-823). This document reinforces the constitutional mandate of correctional libraries in terms of section 29 of the Constitution, placing the education of offenders at the centre of the transformation process.

Article 3 of the Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action on Accelerating Prisons and Penal Reforms in Africa (2002) advances six objectives that are pertinent to this study. These include increasing the provision of rehabilitation programmes during incarceration; ensuring that all offenders have access to literacy and skills training linked to employment opportunities; promoting vocational training programmes that are certified to national standards; prioritising the development of existing skills; and offering civic and social education to aid the social integration of offenders.

Given these overarching policy and legislative frameworks, the critical question for the study then is: Have librarians taken advantage of the opportunities in these policy frameworks to improve the provision of library services to help offenders meet their functional literacy, skills and career transition needs? This question is answered in Chapters 5 and 7 of this thesis.

1.3 HISTORY OF CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

As with all developing countries, South Africa's correctional education system has evolved from a race-based education policy to a more inclusive, needs-based system of education that caters for all offenders, irrespective of their social background. The previous corrections system was largely based on a retributive approach to rehabilitation which saw punishment as a means to address criminal behaviour. With the introduction of democracy, a restorative approach with a high emphasis on social integration was adopted to make rehabilitation more humane and responsive to the development needs of offenders in correctional centres (Chikadzi, 2017). In this regard, Johnson (2015) argues that nearly 63% of African offenders in the previous prison system were functionally illiterate and exposed to harsh prison conditions.

While the previous system was highly polarised along racial and political lines, the new corrections education system, with its strong emphasis on inclusion and restorative justice, presents new complexities that warrant a significant paradigm shift in the way in which correctional libraries render information and educational services to offenders. The new system calls for a more strategic role in the design and delivery of learning and development interventions to ensure that offenders are effectively integrated back into society after release. However, given the lack of robust empirical analyses on these issues, it becomes necessary to assess the role of correctional service libraries in meeting these constitutional imperatives.

1.4 DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

The National DCS derives its primary mandate from sections 9, 10, 12, 27, 28, 29, 31 and 35 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No 108 of 1996. Specifically, offenders' rights in terms of this mandate include the right to equality, human dignity, freedom and security of the person; children's rights; health care services; education; freedom of religion; humane treatment; communication; and visits by relatives of offenders. This mandate is implemented through the Correctional Services Act No.111 of 1998. The vision of the DCS is to provide the best correctional services for a safer South Africa. The fundamental mission of the Department is to "contribute to a just,

peaceful and safer South Africa through effective and humane incarceration of offenders and the rehabilitation and social reintegration of offenders”. The guiding values include accountability, development and integrity (Department of Correctional Services: Strategic Plan, 2021:23-24). Figure 1.3 depicts the organisational structure of the DCS.

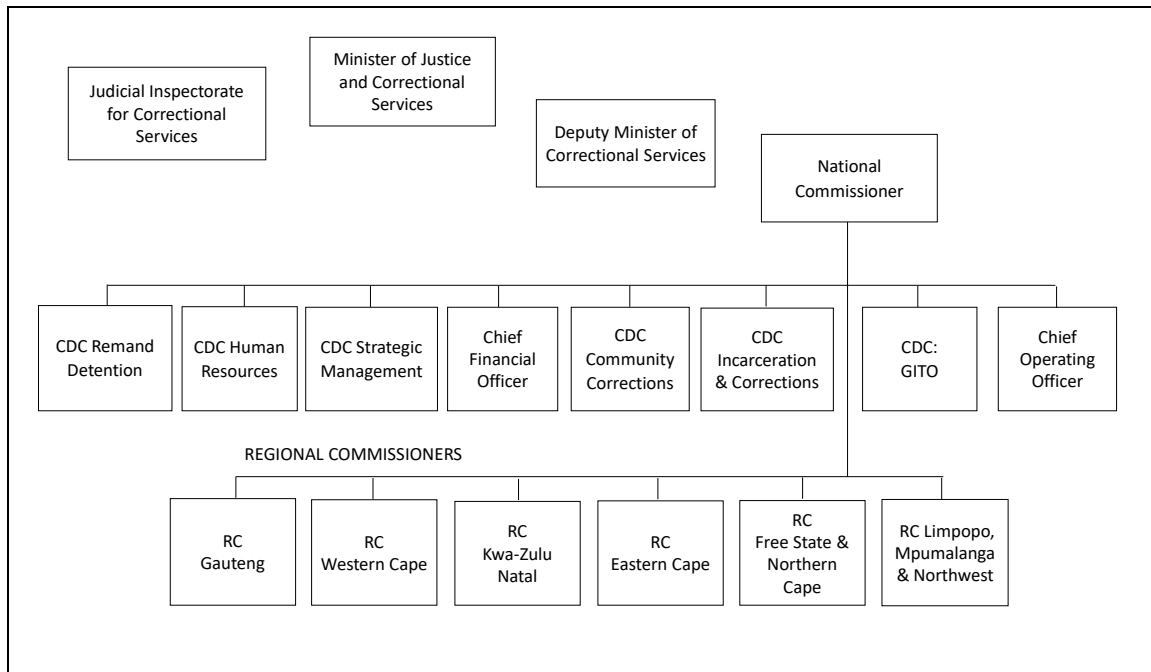


Figure 1.3: DCS: Organisational structure

Source: DCS Annual Report (2017-2018)

Figure 1.3 depicts the official organogram of the DCS and its departments. For the purposes of this study, the specific unit responsible for the rehabilitation and integration of offenders is “Incarceration and Corrections”. At the national level is the Ministry of Correctional Services, followed by specialised functional units. The third level comprises six Regional Commissioners who are responsible for the management of the correctional centres in the nine provinces of South Africa. Mpumalanga, which constitutes the research setting for this study, is clustered with Limpopo and Northwest. As of 2018-2019, the DCS had an average population of 160 583 with an approved bed space of 118 723 (Department of Correctional Services Annual Report, 2017-2018:28). The average population figure represents the consolidated number of offenders nationally.

1.4.1 Overview of correctional services in Mpumalanga

Mpumalanga means “the place of the rising sun”. The province lies north of KwaZulu-Natal, shares borders with Swaziland and Mozambique and forms 6.5% of South Africa’s landscape. In the north, it borders Limpopo, to the west Gauteng, and to the south-west the Free State. Mpumalanga’s provincial capital is Mbombela/Nelspruit. Census 2011 reveals that 87.4% of households in Mpumalanga have access to water; 61.3% have access to sanitation; 88.3% have access to electricity; and 130 000 fewer people lived in poverty in 2011 compared to 2010 (Young, 2013:1). As shown in Figure 1.4 below, there are three district municipalities in Mpumalanga with correctional centres, namely, Ehlanzeni (green), Nkangala (red), and Gert Sibande (yellow).

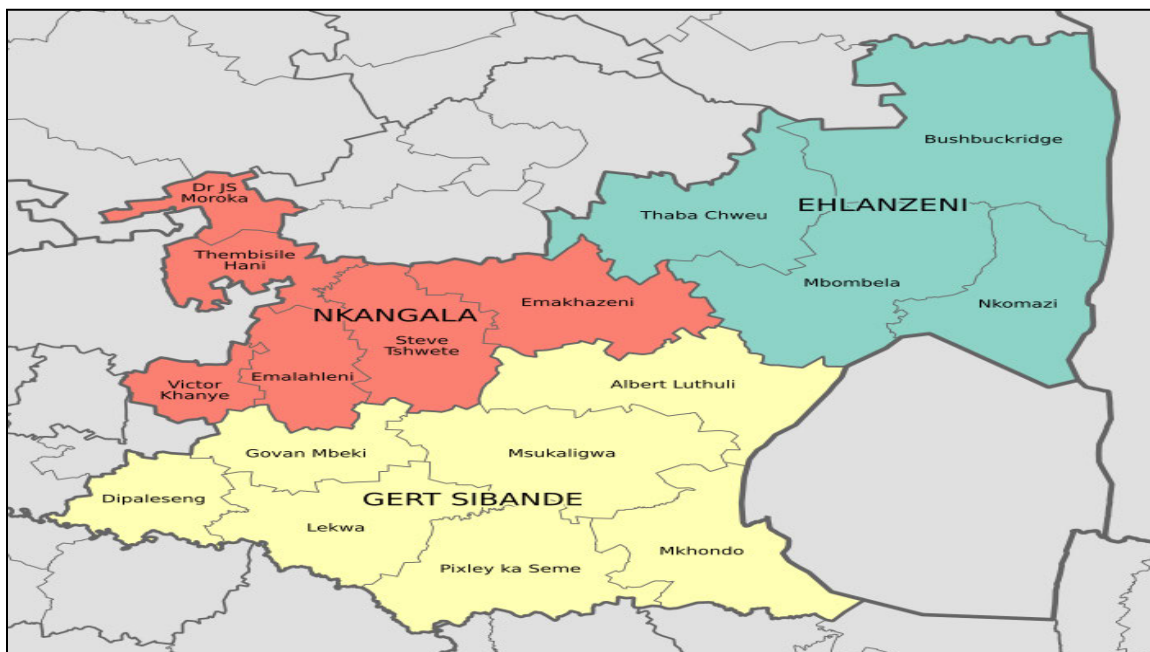


Figure 1.4: Mpumalanga district municipalities with correctional centres

Source: <https://www.google.co.za>

Ehlanzeni District has three correctional centres, namely, Barberton, Lydenburg, and Mbombela. In Gert Sibande District, there are five correctional centres, namely, Bethal, Ermelo, Piet Retief, Standerton, and Volksrust. Nkangala District has four correctional centres, namely, Belfast, Carolina, Middelburg, and Witbank. All 12 correctional centres

formed part of the study. Further details on how the research subjects were selected are provided in Chapter 4 which comprises the research design and methodology.

Mpumalanga was chosen for this analysis due to the socio-economic challenges that the province faces in terms of poverty, unemployment, and health issues. The province has a total population of approximately 4.4 million people. Of these, 49.3% are male and 50.7% female. Nearly 84.7% of the population reside in formal housing structures, 19.5% of which live in what is referred to as Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses. Only 29% of households in the province have access to piped clean water inside the yard, while 5.4% access piped water at fixed points outside the households. Approximately 79.8% of the households have access to electricity services. Poverty is still a major challenge in the province as 273 886 households live below the poverty datum line. In addition, the province has a relatively high HIV/AIDS prevalence, with 700 000 people living with the disease, which translates to 15.4% of the population (Statistic South Africa General Household Survey, 2022). Together, these challenges provided the impetus for conducting the study with the Provincial DCS, which is located in Mbombela and was the main unit of analysis for the study. The study focused on 12 correctional centres of the Department, namely, Barberton, Belfast, Bethal, Carolina, Ermelo, Lydenburg, Middleburg, Nelspruit, Piet Retief, Standerton, Volksrust, and Witbank. These were chosen to maximise data quality and integrity.

Parry 2024 notes that while there have been major reforms in South Africa's correctional education system since 1994, very little has been documented about the perceptions and experiences of offenders on the benefits of academic and vocational training programmes. Symkovych (2023:2) argues that conditions in SA correctional services are hardly rehabilitative, as there are still remnants of conflict, rape, murder, coercion and gang violence in some of these establishments. According to Bello and Matshaba (2023:1), "incarceration imposes some physical and structural constraints on offenders; making it difficult for them to adjust and utilise available educational opportunities to improve their lives and career prospects. Current research also fails to provide clear

articulations on the role of educators and librarians in advancing transformative learning in correctional contexts (Daniels, 2023).

1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Section 29 of the Constitution (1996) explicitly enshrines and protects the right to basic and further education for all citizens, including offenders in correctional centres.

Everyone is entitled to full and equal access to education and training opportunities.

Accessibility implies that correctional libraries should remove bottlenecks such as discrimination, language barriers, capacity constraints, and poverty so that offenders can meet their educational needs. The problem for this study stems from three critical issues regarding the role of correctional libraries in the skills development system: (1) recurring illiteracy among offenders, (2) the increasing rate of recidivism, and (3) the high number of unemployed offenders in the labour market despite the provision of LIS services in correctional centres. Crucially, Fox, Harrison, Hothersall and Smith (2022:138) note that violation of probation rules lead to rearrest and convictions, which in turn exacerbates recidivism rates; leading to more crime in South Africa. Similarly, Samuels, Roman and Schoeman 2024 explain that recurring rates of recidivism is costly to the country and should be effectively managed to reduce crime and operating costs to the department of correctional, services.

These issues warrant a full study to determine whether correctional libraries in the province provide adequate learning resources to facilitate functional literacy and skills development among offenders.

Furthermore, while there have been numerous research efforts to explore correctional centre conditions and the resultant negative impact on the wellbeing of offenders globally (Benatar, 2014, Randhawa and Singh, 2016), little has been done to explain the contribution of correctional libraries to functional literacy, skills development, and career transition among offenders which are the key variables for analysis in the present study. Much of the research on correctional education is largely preoccupied with recidivism, reduction of reoffending rates, social integration of offenders, deterioration of prison conditions, gang violence, and human rights abuses. Drawing on information behaviour,

transformative, desistance, and context-mechanism-outcome perspectives, this study focused primarily on the functional literacy, skills development and employability of offender's post-incarceration. None of the studies noted above offered an integrated analysis of how correctional libraries contribute to offenders' functional literacy, skills development and career transition needs. The present study used a holistic approach to derive multiple perspectives of library managers, librarians, offenders, educators, facilitators, trainers, employers and community members on the learning needs of offenders.

In Mpumalanga Province, the case study for this research, correctional libraries are expected to support the progressive realisation of offenders' right to education and further training by ensuring easy and equitable access to learning resources such as books, journals, information technology, and study materials for all offenders. However, the provision of these services continues to experience difficulties partly due to lack of funding, shortage of suitably qualified library staff, limited capacity and overcrowding in correctional centres. The inadequate supply of library services infringes on the rights of offenders to access education and training. Thus, it deprives them of the opportunity to learn and improve their knowledge and skills, which are necessary for their participation in the economy and integration into society after incarceration (Mokoena, 2016).

The rising rates of incarceration, coupled with the cycling of individuals in and out of the correctional system, have led to an array of unintended consequences for offenders, families, and communities (Rodriguez, 2016). Some of the most frequently cited constraints include overcrowding due to limited institutional capacity (Nguyen, 2012), limited access to information (Khumalo, Mugwisi and Jiyane, 2018), deteriorating health conditions (Agboola, 2016), shortage of teaching and learning resources (Emasealu, 2018), and slow implementation of prison policy reforms. Budgetary constraints, inadequate human resources, and inadequate infrastructure are all problems that undermine the work of the library (Singh, 2014:12). Prior research, for example, (Smit, Cronje, Brevis and Vrba, 2013:221) and Garner (2017:336)

Context-mechanism-outcome researchers argue that since organisational and social contexts influence both the implementation and outcomes of correctional education programmes, they should be carefully considered by policymakers to avoid failure (Nielsen, Lemire and Tangsig, 2021; Pawson, Greenhalgh, Harvey, and Walshe, 2004). Education and training play a pivotal role in integrating prisoners into their communities (Agboola, 2016). Education should confer the knowledge and skills necessary to enable offenders to participate and benefit from the economy in a free society (Garner, 2017). Therefore, a thorough investigation is needed to establish the challenges preventing correctional libraries in Mpumalanga Province from addressing offenders' learning and development needs.

1.6 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to assess the contribution of correctional libraries to the development of offenders in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. The role of correctional libraries was assessed within the context of sections 29 and 32 of the Constitution as well as the LIS Transformation Charter (2014).

1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are set out as follows:

- 1.7.1 To determine the extent to which correctional libraries and stakeholders (for example, library managers, librarians, facilitators, employers and communities) meet the development needs of offenders in terms of functional literacy, skills development, and career transition to the workplace.
- 1.7.2 To establish the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in facilitating functional literacy, skills development and career transition for offenders in correctional centres
- 1.7.3 To identify the specific programmes currently provided by correctional libraries and stakeholders to promote functional literacy and skills development for offenders, and determine strategies that are used to deliver these interventions.

- 1.7.4 To establish whether appropriate accountability mechanisms have been implemented to ensure that correctional libraries provide adequate and high-quality services that meet offenders' learning and skills development needs.

1.8 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The key research questions of the study were as follows.

- 1.8.1 To what extent do correctional libraries and stakeholders (for example, library managers, librarians, facilitators of learning, employers, and communities) meet the development needs of offenders in terms of functional literacy, skills development, and career transition?
- 1.8.2 What are the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in facilitating functional literacy, skills development, and career transition for offenders in correctional centres?
- 1.8.3 What specific programmes are currently provided by correctional libraries and stakeholders to promote functional literacy, skills development and career transition, and what strategies are used to deliver these interventions to offenders?
- 1.8.4 What mechanisms, if any, are used to track and measure the quality of functional literacy, skills development and career transition programmes offered to offenders in correctional centres?

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Correctional education has been assessed from different perspectives. For instance, Murhula and Singh (2019) assessed the effectiveness of rehabilitation approaches and concluded that the treatment-based approach currently deployed by the DCS is insufficient. However, their study did not examine the constitutional role of the library in terms of section 29 regarding functional literacy, skills, and career transition for offenders. Sibisi and Olofinbiyi (2021) examined overcrowding in correctional facilities pointing out that it affects the provision of rehabilitation services to offenders. However, the authors did not delve into the role of correctional libraries. Johnson (2021) only assessed

correctional education from an online learning perspective, noting stringent safety protocols as a major impediment to curriculum innovation and access to digital learning materials for offenders. Loosemore, Bridgeman and Keast (2020) assessed correctional education from a career transition perspective. They identified numerous barriers that hinder the employment and mobility of offenders in the construction industry, including weak cross-sector collaborations due to transaction costs and misaligned incentives. Though relevant, the study is silent on the nature of the working relationships between correctional libraries and employers. Snyman (2019) assessed the rehabilitative role of a single correctional facility in the Western Cape and noted that correctional officials should be properly trained to motivate offenders to actively partake in rehabilitation programmes on a sustainable basis. Stamp (2020) assessed correctional education from an educator's perspective and observed lack of resources as one of the major barriers to teaching and learning in correctional settings. Though touching on the role of facilitators/instructors, the last two studies exclude analysis of how correctional libraries work with facilitators to deliver learning programmes to offenders. Considering that many offenders generally lack practical job skills on release, correctional education should, therefore, focus on building employability skills and preparing offenders for the world of work (Behan, 2021).

Despite this growing academic interest in correctional education, there has been very limited empirical analysis on the extent to which correctional service libraries execute their constitutional mandate in terms of section 29 of the Constitution – the right to education, and section 35 – the right to fitting conditions and services. Consequently, it is not clear whether offenders have equitable access to functional literacy, skills development and career transition opportunities, particularly in Mpumalanga Province where the study is located. Against this backdrop, the study sought to understand these issues from a transformative LIS perspective. Based on the results, the study explored opportunities to develop a context-specific model that will enable correctional libraries to improve service delivery and client satisfaction. High-quality, easily accessible library information helps individuals realise their socio-political, economic, and developmental goals. It also serves the same purpose for incarcerated persons (Amasealu, 2019:78). Writing in the 1970s about the role of the correctional library, Gulker (1973:55) noted that “a good library could

humanise the environment and transform the unbelievably sterile atmosphere into a productive area for learning.” Such a possibility exists for correctional libraries in Mpumalanga Province. Finally, although prior studies have examined adult basic education in correctional settings, they have not been able to provide nuanced interpretations of whether correctional libraries support functional literacy and skills development for offenders (Gearhart, 2021).

1.10 Key Concepts

The current study uses a LIS perspective to improve understanding of how rehabilitation has evolved from traditional individualistic and psychological interventions to humanistic approaches based on restorative justice, particularly in the South African correctional environment. The study hopes to achieve this by highlighting the role of prison libraries in supporting functional literacy, skills development, and career transition as a vehicle for integrating offenders back into their communities. In this way, the current study introduces fresh perspectives and insights into possible models that may enhance the conceptualisation and provision of LIS to meet the development needs of offenders. The following concepts are critical in assessing the contribution of correctional libraries to the rehabilitation and integration of offenders into society.

1.10.1 Offender

Within the South African context, offender means any person, whether convicted or not, who is detained in custody in any correctional centre or remand detention facility or who is being transferred in custody or is en route from one correctional centre or remand detention facility (Correctional Services Act, 2008).

1.10.2 Information Needs

Information needs are variously defined as a process that entails asking how people (for example, offenders) derive needs-satisfying information from a particular system (for example, the correctional library). Information is a symbol or a set of symbols that has the potential for meaning. Increased access to accurate, relevant, current, sufficient and

reliable information resources is central to meeting the learning needs of offenders (Emasealu and Popoola, 2016:3).

1.10.3 Career Transition

Conceptually, career transition is defined as the process that individuals go through as they make their way from school to the workplace. It is when an individual deliberately changes career roles in pursuit of a different goal or altering orientation towards their current career disposition (Sullivan and Arriss, 2021:1).

1.10.4 Correctional Library

A correctional library represents a body of collected information brought together for the purpose of knowledge dissemination and utilisation. As custodians of information, correctional libraries have a statutory obligation to provide adequate information and resources to help offenders meet their education and training needs, personal development needs, as well as their business and employment needs (Omagbemi and Odunewu, 2008:246).

1.10.5 Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation means a systematic and evidence-based process designed to help the offender meet his (or her) development needs, including easy and equitable access to reading materials and resources. It includes all efforts undertaken by correctional centres and libraries to support offenders in their efforts to learn and readapt to society after incarceration (Miriti and Kimani, 2017:59).

1.10.6 Social Integration

Social integration is the process by which offenders are reunited with their communities. Integration is based on the notion that once offenders have been successfully rehabilitated, they will be able to live crime-free and productive lives after imprisonment (Brand, 2016:34-35).

1.10.7 Functional Literacy

Functional literacy is conceived as the process of empowering learners, for example, offenders, with skills and abilities they need to take an active and responsible role in their communities, everyday life, the workplace and educational settings (Burgess and Hamilton, 2011:9).

1.10.8 Skills Development

As defined by Sida (2018:1), skills development refers to “the productive capabilities acquired through all levels of learning and training, occurring in an informal, non-formal, formal and on-the-job setting. Thus, skills development enables offenders to become fully and productively engaged in livelihoods, and to have the opportunity to adopt these capabilities to meet the changing demands and opportunities of economy and labour market”.

1.10.9 Skills Transfer

Learning transfer or skills transfer involves the practical application of acquired knowledge and skills back into the workplace. The learned behaviours should be contextualised and linked with the relevant jobs to ensure congruence between theory and practice, as expected in the case of offenders (Burke and Hutchins, 2007:265).

1.11 ORIGINALITY/CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The theoretical focus of this study is to improve understanding of how integrated LIS services can be used to contribute to social transformation through the empowerment of offenders with functional literacy and employability skills. The practical policy implication of this study is the development of a context-specific LIS model to scale up the provision of library services to offenders through collaborative approaches that harness social capital and resource mobilisation opportunities within the South African correctional services system. The managerial implication of this study is the adoption and use of evidence-based approaches to inform the design and development of literacy, skills development, and career transition programmes to help offenders learn better.

This study looked beyond empirical discourses on health risks, substance abuse, overcrowding, and recidivism in correctional institutions (O'Brien, King, Phillips, Dalton and Phoenix, 2021) by providing a more nuanced interpretation of the development needs of offenders from a transformative LIS perspective. It examined the

role of correctional education in not just preparing offenders for the world of work, but also their placement and retention by employers. Crucially, the study raises awareness about the need for inclusive education that fosters personal transformation as well as the socioeconomic integration of offenders in developing countries such as South Africa.

1.12 DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1.12.1 DELIMITATIONS

Miles and Scott (2017:7) conceptualise delimitations as “chiefly concerned with the scope or parameters of the study. Simply put, delimitations are self-imposed restrictions to your study compared to limitations which have inherent restrictions to your methodology.” Given this explanation, the study focused exclusively on the libraries of the 12 correctional centres selected for the study; this meant that ordinary public libraries were not part of the inquiry. The contributions of the correctional libraries and their stakeholders were assessed in relation to three key variables, namely, functional literacy, skills development, and career transition. Functional literacy refers to basic reading and writing, whereas skills development is focused on building employability skills beyond incarceration. The assessment of the contributions was achieved by canvassing the views and experiences of library managers, librarians, offenders, facilitators of learning, that is, educators and trainers, employers, and community members. With respect to the study population, the study targeted youth offenders between the ages of 18 and 35 years, as well as adult offenders between 36 and 55 years. This means that children were excluded from the study. The analysis was confined to three district municipalities in the Mpumalanga Province, namely, Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande, and Nkangala. Multiple case study analysis allows for the results to be generalised across correctional libraries in South Africa.

1.12.2 LIMITATIONS

As defined by Ross, and Zaidi (2019:261), “limitations represent weaknesses within the study that may influence outcomes and conclusions of the research.” Similarly, Theofanisdis and Fountouki (2018:156) articulate that “limitations of any particular study concern potential weaknesses that are usually out of the researcher’s control, and are closely associated with the chosen research design, statistical model constraints, funding constraints, or other factors.” This study was susceptible to a range of limitations which impacted both the scale and robustness of the data analysis process. These are set out as follows. First, analysis in this study was geared towards the generation of provincial data rather than national data, which led to the exclusion of other correctional centres in the study. Second, institutional protocols limited access to documentary evidence which could have been used to bolster analysis and interrogation of primary data in the study. Third, the composition of the sample was confined to offenders eligible for education services only. Fourth, while the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative research methods aided the generalisability of the results, limited observations meant that inferences could only be drawn on limited categories of participants (for example, offenders who qualified for rehabilitation services). However, overall, the study benefited significantly from the deployment of both quantitative and qualitative research methods as it enhanced data quality and integrity.

1.13 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Chapter 1: Background and Outline of the Research Problem

This chapter introduced the study by contextualising the constitutional mandate of correctional service libraries in terms of sections 29 and 35 of the Constitution which concern the right to education and information services. From a transformative LIS perspective, Chapter 1 argued that the role of correctional service libraries remains underexplored and inconclusive in the empirical literature, which warranted the present study. Contextually, the study was set in 12 correctional centres in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter provides a synopsis of local and international literature to provide a conceptual justification for the study. The review focuses on historical criminology perspectives, current schools of thought on the role of correctional service libraries, rehabilitation programmes, skills development, employability skills, and cross-country reviews to enhance understanding of the research topic. The chapter concludes that there is a gap in current research as most of the reviewed literature focuses on healthcare, overcrowding, gang violence, and offenders' perceptions of rehabilitation programmes, rather than the transformative role of libraries in terms of section 29 of the Constitution.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

This chapter reviews seven theories deployed as an analytic lens to understand the role of correctional libraries in functional literacy, skills development, and career transition for offenders in Mpumalanga Province. These are the Information Behaviour theory, the Desistance theory, the Context-Mechanism-Outcome (CMO) theory, Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystem theory, the Human Capital theory, Hettler's Wellness model, and the Transformative Learning theory. Theory triangulation enabled in-depth analysis and interpretation of the research findings.

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology

Drawing on the mixed-methods research tradition, this chapter outlines the research design, sample population and sampling strategies (stratified sampling and purposive sampling), and data collection techniques (questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and observation). Inductive and deductive data analysis techniques, which were applied to generate meaning from the data collected, are discussed. Chapter 4 also covers the issues of validity and reliability as well as the ethical considerations applicable to the study. The chapter highlights the researcher's experiences in administering the questionnaires and conducting the interviews, focus groups and observation during the fieldwork stage of the study.

Chapter 5: Research Results

This chapter presents results from the quantitative component of the study which assessed offenders' perceptions of functional literacy, skills development and career transition in the 12 correctional centres targeted by the study. Results from the qualitative component of the study are presented as part of the analysis in Chapter 6. A case study designed informed and guided data presentation in line with the mixed-methods research approach employed by the study. The quantitative data (drawn from the self-administered questionnaire survey) are presented numerically in descriptive statistics in the form of figures and tables.

Chapter 6: Discussion of Results

Chapter 6 provides an integrated interpretation and discussion of the results from the quantitative phase of the study (the self-administered questionnaire) and the results from the qualitative phase. The latter consisted of the data collected via interviews, focus groups, and observation. Thus, a combination of thematic analysis (qualitative) and descriptive statistical analysis (quantitative) was used to accomplish this task. The quantitative results are corroborated with “thick” descriptions (qualitative results) to address the research problem – to determine whether correctional service libraries are fulfilling their constitutional mandate in terms of sections 29 and 35 of the Constitution which concern education and development services for offenders.

Chapter 7: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This, the final chapter, reflects on and provides a synopsis of the results obtained, the contribution made by results, recommendations, and suggestions for further research regarding the role of correctional service libraries in functional literacy, skills development, and career transition for offenders housed in correctional facilities. To enhance validity and reliability, the conclusions are drawn against the four research objectives underpinning the study to highlight policy implications for correctional service centres in Mpumalanga. Finally, to enable correctional libraries to improve service delivery and client satisfaction, context-specific adaptations to two of the theories underpinning the study are presented.

1.13 SUMMARY

Chapter 1 set out the background and context of the study which focused primarily on the role of correctional libraries in addressing the development needs of offenders. Analytically, the study was concerned with three variables, namely, functional literacy, skills development, and employability of offenders following their release from the correctional system. To achieve this goal, the study used 12 Mpumalanga correctional centres as a case study.

Chapter 2, the literature review, provides the conceptual foundation for the study and follows next.

CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1, the context of the study and the problem that warrants the operationalisation of the research were discussed. Taking this into consideration, Chapter 2 critically assesses extant empirical literature on rehabilitation and the role of correctional libraries in education and training services for offenders. The intention behind this review is to firstly provide a synopsis of what has been documented in the literature about rehabilitation as a means to empower and integrate offenders back into society, and secondly, to consider the historical debates around these issues and their implications for the study. The literature review follows from the four research objectives articulated in Chapter 1 to attain consistency and logic throughout the discussion.

Vithal and Jansen (2010) offer valuable insights into what a literature review should focus on. They opine that it should provide a synthesis of existing literature on the topic, identify gaps or inadequacies in the current research – whether conceptual or methodological – and clarify how the researcher’s proposal addresses these gaps, silences, or weaknesses in the existing knowledge base. In the same vein Palmatier, Houston and Hullah (2018) observed that reviewed articles serve as an important synthesis of findings and perspectives in the available knowledge base. Additionally, Synder (2019) argues that reviewed articles enable the researcher to adequately answer the research questions rather than focusing on a limited or single study.

The literature reviewed in this study comprises three categories. The first entails a review of preliminary sources. Databases containing lead information on published articles that are pertinent to the study, for example, news and media releases on correctional education, were examined. The second category involves a review of extant literature such as books, institutional reports, government policies and reports on the implementation of education and training interventions in the correctional services system. The third category comprises a review of primary empirical research, which was

mainly systematic inquiries into correctional education practice, management, implementation, and employability of offenders.

This review aims to “join the conversation” by providing a critical examination of prior research on the research topic, focusing on methodological similarities and differences, sampling and interpretative frameworks used, data generation instruments and knowledge gaps to advance scholarship (Maggio, Sewell and Artino, 2016). The outcome of this review is a clear articulation of the critical scholarly gaps that exist in current research and the systematic approach that this research followed to address these knowledge gaps.

2.2 HISTORIC DEBATES ON CRIMINOLOGY

There are debates in the literature as to whether incarceration deters criminal behaviour and can promote future social integration or whether correctional centres do not have a redeeming feature and, in fact, promote further criminality because of the inhumane conditions and mixing with other criminals and learning their ways (Duguid, 2000; Lehman, 2011). The theoretical contestations between scholars of punishment and rehabilitation reached a turning point in the 1970s when proponents of the “nothing works” doctrine, for example, Wilson (1975), Gendreau (1989) and Holin (1992), among others, openly questioned the ability of the justice system to respond effectively to the risks posed by criminals in society. Both the Reagan administration in the USA and the Thatcher government in the United Kingdom (UK) had given up on rehabilitation, shifting public spending towards harsher penal measures. From a traditionalist criminology perspective, the main purpose of incarceration is to isolate, punish, control, deter and “lock them up” strategy, which precipitated high levels of incarceration through the 1970s and 1980s in the USA (Martinson, 1974; Adams, 1976; Gendreau, 1989; Ferabee, 2005). It was argued that these were the only measures that could bring about positive change in the attitudes and behaviours of offenders. Traditional criminology theory, as contended by Wilson (1975) in Maruna (2016:291), asserts that “crime is committed by ‘wicked people’ acting independently as rational actors decontextualised from historical, economic and cultural forces”.

In terms of this view, criminal behaviour is both rational and intentional in that criminally minded individuals have the capacity to decide when and how to commit a crime. Before committing a crime, individuals contemplate the risks and benefits of their criminal behaviour. With a strong background in politics and the right realism movement, Wilson (1975) and Murray (1990) were deeply concerned about the inability of sociological interventions to deter the rising incidents of crime in the USA, particularly during the 1980s (Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research, 2016:7). Traditional criminology theory decontextualises criminal behaviour by attributing the underlying causes of crime to the individual and completely shuns the potential influence of environmental factors as having a causal effect on criminal behaviour.

For Wilson and others before him, the answer to crime detection and prevention lay in policy practice rather than the possibility of salvaging offenders from criminal behaviour (Cornish and Clarke, 1986). In justifying his empirical observations, Martinson (1974:25) found that academic achievements, as measured by the grade achieved by juveniles in a correctional education and training programme, made no significant difference in reducing recidivism rates. Based on these observations, Martinson (1974) concluded that social control would be more effective in mitigating reoffending than simple education programmes, stating that “Punishment is the major means we have for deterring incipient offenders”. In his subsequent study, Martinson (1979:4) noted that in most instances, juveniles exhibit a relatively higher propensity to reoffend than adult offenders, especially if they are socially marginalised or excluded from mainstream economic activities such as employment. An important observation in Martinson’s (1979) argument is that the effectiveness of correctional education can only be tested by comparing outcomes with post-release reoffending rates. High reoffending rates convinced Martinson and others that correctional education is ineffective.

Farabee (2005:9), also a staunch proponent of the “nothing works” doctrine, wrote that “Tackling prisoner recidivism is serious business requiring serious solutions and is unlikely involve workbooks, videos or talk therapy.” In deconstructing Farabee’s (2005)

assertions, Cullen, Smith, Lowenkamp and Latest (2009:114) argued that intensive supervision and electronic monitoring and tracking systems, as proposed by Farabee (2005), would not significantly reduce recidivism. Instead, these measures would lead to the waste of public funds and more suffering for offenders already traumatised by appalling prison conditions.

In a subsequent critique of classical criminology theory, Hearn (2010) questions Kelling and Wilson (1982) argument that the causes of crime should not be considered, as the answer to crime reduction lies in policy analysis rather than social factors. Wilson's perception of criminology was heavily influenced by the Enlightenment period when societies were alienated by the stigmatisation of crime as a social evil. Duguid (2000) goes so far as to question the efficacy of rehabilitation by asking, "rehabilitation or illusion?" Scholars such as Duguid cast doubt on the ability of the correctional system to positively influence offenders. In terms of this perspective, correctional systems, by design, are not conducive to the progressive development of offenders. Rather, they make offenders worse off than they were before incarceration.

While sociological criminology equated criminal behaviour with social factors such as unemployment, poverty, disintegration of family structures, ill-health, peer influence and poor living conditions, traditional criminology saw the upsurge in criminal behaviour as a manifestation of policy failures. The criminal justice system requires extensive reform to ensure that law enforcement agencies respond effectively to the risks posed by criminal behaviour in society (Davey, Day and Balfour, 2015). In contrast to the traditional view, contemporary criminology theories are mainly grounded in restorative justice and tend to view rehabilitation as a social remedy rather than a once-off intervention intended to punish offenders for their transgression. For example, Lehman (2011:507) challenges the traditional view of rehabilitation by asserting that the purpose of correctional services is not well understood in the rehabilitation literature. Consequentially, rehabilitative measures have followed a one-size-fits-all approach, which does not consider offenders' unique and diverse learning and development needs.

A second strand of literature examines cooperation between the various stakeholders within the correctional services system such as the Department of Education, SETAs, employers, and industry associations (Mokoena, 2016 and Tonseth and Bergsland 2019). In this view, effective rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders into society depends on close collaboration between these stakeholders. The current study also supports this view, arguing that LIS need to be provided through strong collaborative networks that transcend correctional environments, right up to the labour market.

A third strand of literature explores the library's critical role in providing career counselling services to offenders to prepare them for employment beyond incarceration. Maree (2009), for example, argues that career counselling and related services should be accessible to all offenders. This will help them make informed choices about educational programmes and occupational goals before they leave correctional centres.

2.3 ROLE OF CORRECTIONAL LIBRARIES IN THE REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS

As highlighted in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study was to assess the contribution of correctional libraries to the development of offenders in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. The empirical literature on the role of correctional libraries in the education and training of offenders can be classified into four categories as outlined below.

In the first category, education and training are viewed as critical in mitigating recidivism, that is, the propensity to commit crime after release from prison (Smith and Bath, 2006; Uggem, 2000). It is argued that education and training create a leeway for released offenders to connect with and build productive relationships with society. The second category of literature examines cooperation between the various stakeholders within the correctional services system, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), churches, as well as education and training institutions. From this perspective, effective rehabilitation, and reintegration of offenders into society depends on close collaboration between these institutions. This perspective is also supported by the current study which

argues that library services need to be provisioned through strong collaborative networks that transcend correctional environments right up to the labour market. The third category of literature looks at the critical role of the library in providing career counselling services to offenders to prepare them for employment beyond incarceration. One pioneer study by Maree (2009), for example, argues that career counselling and related services should be accessible to all offenders. This will help them make informed choices about educational programmes and occupational goals before they leave correctional centres. The fourth category of literature is critical of library services as a rehabilitative tool, suggesting that these services are ineffective or less important. In another early study of correctional libraries, Duguid (2000) ponders: "Rehabilitation or illusion?" Subsequent researchers such as Wilkinson (2005) and Martinson (2001) were also sceptical of the ability of the correctional system to positively influence offenders. In this perspective, correctional systems, by design, are not conducive to the progressive development of offenders. Rather, they make offenders worse off than they were before incarceration, hence the sharp increase in recidivism in both advanced and developing economies.

However, current research on the changing role of correctional libraries paints a totally different picture from pioneer studies that focused exclusively on the traditional role of the library and that is providing reading materials. For example, Huissain, Batool and Mahmood (2023) note that correctional libraries, particularly in developed countries such as the USA and the United Kingdom, have become more responsive to the needs of offenders as a result of improved budget allocations, access to the Internet, technology, automated catalogues and cooperation with other libraries.

In another recent study of correctional libraries, Awofeso and Opensanwo (2024:64) underscores the "pivotal role played by these libraries in fostering personal growth, facilitating social integration among inmates, and serving as havens where prisoners are afforded the autonomy to choose their reading materials, empowering them to enhance their lives through self-directed learning and contributing to cultural enrichment, literacy advancement and preparation for successful reintegration into society."

Similarly, the IFLA-UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (2022) sees the library as a driving force and strategic resource required to promote and deepen education, culture, information and most importantly, as an agent for peace, community empowerment and sustainable development in society.

Despite a marked increase in scholarly interest, correctional libraries remain a hotly debated topic among researchers. Sambo, Usman and Rabi (2017:6-7) argue that “offenders’ right to education and library services is enshrined in the UN (Rule 40) Standard Minimal Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners of 1955.” In terms of this rule, all correctional libraries should have sufficient supplies of reading materials and relevant information to enable them to achieve their learning goals. Rule 40 further states that offenders must have access to information and libraries should be located within reach of offenders. This view is supported by Shirley (2003) who posits that effective service is reflected in programmes, services, and resources. While correctional libraries have always been involved with rehabilitation, however, their contribution is largely influenced by the type of rehabilitation adopted by each country.

The rehabilitative function of correctional libraries is explicitly recognised as providing a therapeutic release from strain. Stearns (2004) in Finlay and Bates (2018:120) is critical of prison library scholarship, saying that it merely describes what the library should do rather than proving its worth in terms of service quality. In Stearns’ (2004) view, the library cannot be trusted unless it can prove how well it serves its audiences. By contrast, scholars such as Trounstine and Waxler (2006) and Sweeney (2012) have expressed optimism about the positive role of the library in supporting the learning and development of offenders. From another perspective, Lehman (2011) argues that correctional libraries do not function as isolated entities, rather, they are part of the broader correctional system environment. Therefore, any attempt to theorise the role of the library should take into account the diverse and sometimes conflicting aspects of the correctional system that undermine the functioning of libraries. One example is the conflict between correctional policies and library goals, where stringent prison rules severely limit the ability of libraries to fulfil their legislative mandates, such as improving access to information and resources.

For most librarians, the challenge is how to impart knowledge, skills and information to offenders in a tightly controlled and culturally diverse environment. In his seminal work, Gulker (1973:55) observed that a good library was capable of humanising the environment and transforming the incredibly sterile atmosphere into a productive learning environment.

Finlay and Bates (2018) contend that more robust research is needed to enhance understanding of the role that correctional libraries play in the rehabilitation of offenders. This can be achieved by situating correctional services within disciplines such as librarianship, education and criminology. In the midst of this debate, the present study maintains that despite their inherent limitations and controversies, correctional libraries represent a glimmer of hope for many incarcerated individuals in society. The library has a strategic role as a resource centre and driver of functional literacy not just among offenders but also in the communities in which they live (Singh, 2014). With rapid developments in information and communication technologies (ICTs), the role of the librarian needs to change drastically, as the library environment has become more complex and demanding than it used to be (Singh, 2014:12).

Constant change in the world of work requires constant learning and adaptation for both library managers and staff. Change in job content, and work processes, requires learning and acquisition of new knowledge and skills (Nel, Werner, Haasbroek, Poisant, Sono and Schultz, 2008:414). Dressler (2013) explains that strategic human resource planning is key to aligning an organisation's strategic plan with its current and future staffing needs to ensure optimal acquisition, development utilisation and retention of much-needed talent. This principle is particularly important for libraries as they often face acute talent shortages. Amos, Ristow, Ristow and Pearse (2008) emphasise that employees should be regularly trained and developed so that they can broaden their skill levels, competencies, and job knowledge while at the same time adjusting their behaviours to the changing work environment. Likewise, library employees need to be exposed to relevant skills training interventions to help them update their competencies to cope with rapid change fuelled by ICTs and the increasingly diverse learning and development

needs of offenders. Some researchers have identified several challenges that constrain the provision of LIS in correctional services centres.

Empirical literature suggests discrepancies in the provision of correctional education and library services and there is no consensus among scholars regarding the adequacy of these services (Singh, 2014; Garner, 2017). A review of the literature shows that correctional centres face different challenges both internally and externally. Some of the most frequently cited constraints include overcrowding due to limited institutional capacity (Nguyen, 2012); limited access to information (Khumalo, Mugwisi and Jiyane, 2018); deteriorating health conditions (Agboola, 2016); shortage of teaching and learning resources (Emasealu, 2018); and slow implementation of prison policy reforms. Budgetary constraints, the lack of properly trained library personnel, and inadequate infrastructure are all problems that undermine the work of correctional libraries (Singh, 2014:12). A related constraint is the lack of coordination, which entails integrating all organisational tasks and resources to meet the organisation's goals (Smit, Cronje, Brevis, and Vrba, 2013:221). Despite widespread institutional constraints, the correctional library could play a crucial role in facilitating functional literacy, skills development, as well as the transition of offenders to the workplace. These three variables have not been sufficiently theorised by the current body of research in South Africa. In light of this knowledge gap, the present study argues that improving access to correctional library services can contribute significantly to the development of functional literacy and employability skills among offenders (Garner, 2017).

2.4 CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION

Objective three of the study sought to establish the programmes implemented by correctional libraries for functional literacy, skills development, and career transition for offenders. In terms of this objective, a review of the nature of correctional pedagogy or education is first given in order to understand the complexities libraries face in executing their roles in terms of section 29 of the Constitution – the right to education.

Panitsides and Moussiou (2019) argue that correctional education initiatives have been in existence since the 1800s with a predominantly religious focus. In the 1930s, correctional education underwent a great paradigm shift from a focus on spirituality and the wellbeing of offenders to restorative justice where education became an instrument for social transformation and reintegration of offenders into society (Adade, 2020). In the South African context, correctional education and training services have been modelled on the outcomes-based education system (OBE). As conceptualised by Schmidt (2017:369), OBE is an instructional practice in which facilitators of learning teach general knowledge, skills and values that learners should acquire. The OBE model revolves around two pillars, namely, competency-based education and mastery learning. Progress towards achieving learning outcomes is determined through formative assessment, while summative assessment is applied to establish the transfer of knowledge and skills to the workplace. Both basic education and vocational training programmes in correctional centres are shaped by the National Qualification Framework (NQF). A defining feature of OBE is that the teaching and learning process is centred around the learner. Practically, this means that instructional methods and learning resources are adapted and aligned with the developmental needs of learners, including learners with disabilities.

To complement the OBE model, the DCS has proposed a needs-based approach to correctional education services. In a needs-based approach, instructors and facilitators of learning are required to match learning programmes with the unique learning styles of their learners or trainees. For instance, some learners learn by doing, some by seeing, and some through interaction with others, while others learn best through observation and demonstration. Despite a lack of convergence in the literature on what constitutes sound prison pedagogy, Shepard (2022) suggests that effective vocationally-oriented skills training initiatives are more likely to reduce repeat offences and unemployment among offenders, especially if they are aligned with post-incarceration programmes at the community level. As regards teaching and learning processes, Mader and Gibson (2019) note that correctional centres are not sufficiently prepared for their tasks. Many of them do not share a deep appreciation of the profound learning difficulties that offenders from disadvantaged backgrounds face in the classroom.

Wilson (2005:229) cautions that adult learners may bring into the learning situation a whole range of personal baggage that directly affects how well they respond to and participate in learning processes. Therefore, in determining the information needs of offenders, correctional libraries and educators need to be wary of the barriers that offenders face in trying to satisfy their learning needs. Svensson (2011) cautions that personal learning difficulties in reading, writing and concentration may signal limited choices in choosing subjects, which can be a dispositional barrier experienced by some offenders in correctional education programmes. Kaiser, Keena, Piquero, and Howley (2020) advocate for well-resourced correctional centres to provide evidence-based programming that responds to offenders' skills needs to improve outcomes. Educators and librarians in correctional centres need to look beyond the subject matter and create a caring, supportive, and empowering learning environment that sees potential in all learners (Crosby, Gay, Baroni and Somers, 2015 in Lindstrom, 2018:4).

In addition to their routine pedagogical tasks, educators should be able to work closely with state agencies and community-based organisations to address the challenges affecting the wellbeing of offenders in the classroom, such as violence, trauma, overcrowding and isolation (Price-Tucker, Zhou, Charroux, Tenzin, Robertson, Abdallah, Gu, Barton, Keseli, Barton, Alexis, Odavappan and Escalante, 2019). In a study of correctional colleges in South Africa, Mkosi and Mahlangu (2015:503-504) observed that "managing a full-time school within the correctional environment was challenging due to lack of support from management". Added to this was the high emphasis on punishment rather than rehabilitation, which marginalised the role of education as a rehabilitative tool.

What follows is a review of correctional education in relation to inclusive education, functional literacy, skills development, technology in correctional centres, skills development partnerships, and lastly, the career transition and employability of offenders. The literature concerning the quality of education in correctional institutions is then briefly reviewed.

2.4.1 Inclusive education

Some researchers have lamented the slow progress in implementing inclusive education in correctional service institutions. Inclusive education has been broadly defined as a rights-based approach to education that seeks social justice by resisting exclusion within and from school communities and promoting access, participation and achievement of all learners in a transformative learning environment (Baumgartner, 2019). As a philosophy, the concept of inclusive education in the South African context embraces the democratic values of equality and human rights and the recognition of diversity among learners (Engelbrecht, 2006; Molina, Marauri, Aubert, and Flecha, 2021). Despite a growing emphasis on inclusion, studies on the provision of inclusive education in correctional centres have reported mixed results. In a study of inclusive education in Sepeto, Kalimaposo, Mubita, Milupi, Mundende and Daka (2022:349-352) found that education was not inclusive due to many challenges such as inadequate teaching, learning, and training materials and inadequate funding from the government. In a similar study in South Africa, Dalton, McKenzie and Kahonde (2012), observed that the actualisation of inclusive education is hampered by the lack of teachers' skills and knowledge in differentiating the curriculum to address a wide range of learning needs. Also in South Africa, Ntombela (2019) found that the rollout of inclusive education is still in its infancy and remains fragmented because there is a lack of a national policy on disability that guides education and training institutions on how to operationalise an inclusive education policy. Drawing on data from the UK, Gormley (2022) argues that "people with learning disabilities' experiences of punishment and prison life remain invisible within prison policy and research". Very little is known about how people with learning disabilities experience and make sense of prison.

Within the South African context, it is important to establish whether correctional education services cater for the diverse skills development needs of all learners, including offenders with disabilities. As Gray, Ward and Fogarty (2019) correctly point out, for correctional education partnerships to be truly effective, they must embed transformative pedagogic practices at their heart, ensuring the "how" that is taught is as important, and deliberately considered, as the "what" that is taught.

2.4.2 Functional literacy

The capacity of correctional education systems to develop functional literacy and employability skills has been a subject of debate among criminology scholars. Functional literacy entails reading, writing and numeracy skills and should ideally be part of the skills development process for all offenders. Functional literacy as defined by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2000) means “the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities, at work, at home and in the community to achieve one’s goal, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential.” These are foundational skills that lay the basis for FET among offenders. Based on this definition, the OECD (2000) further identifies three domains of literacy skills. These are summarised in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1:Three domains of literacy

Literacy skills domain	Description
Prose literacy	The knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from text including editorials, news stories, brochures and instruction manuals.
Document literacy	The knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in various formats, including job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables and charts.
Quantitative literacy	The knowledge and skills required to apply arithmetic operations, either alone or sequentially, to numbers embedded in printed materials, such as balancing a chequebook, figuring out a tip, completing an order form or determining the amount of interest on a loan from an advertisement.

Source: OECD (2000:x)

2.4.3 Skills development

Coates (2016:3) emphasises that educational programmes in correctional centres should give individuals the skills they need to unlock their potential, gain employment, and become assets to their communities. Properly executed skills development interventions can “reduce underemployment, increase productivity, and improve standards of living” (The World Bank Skills Agenda, 2021). It is one of the pillars of effective rehabilitation. Education should build social capital and improve the wellbeing of offenders while serving in correctional centres. Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge, and Ngcobo, (2008) postulate that quality education should prepare learners for their future careers, keep them engaged, and foster their constant participation in learning activities.

Therefore, the multiskilling of offenders is particularly important as employers are looking for people who can add value in terms of both performance and competitive advantage (Khanyinga and Muathe, 2018). Technical skills training exposes offenders to such practices as operating machinery and equipment, as well as computers; while social skills training programmes help offenders develop both interpersonal skills and team skills. In the UK, Spielman (2022) identified several impediments to the delivery of skills programmes in correctional facilities. These included the misalignment between literacy programmes and the mainstream curriculum; a heavy emphasis on formal learning programmes rather than skills-oriented interventions; a high dependence on NGOs as training providers; the inability of correctional centres to conduct proper skills audits to inform training programmes; and limited access to library services which deprived offenders of the opportunity to improve their reading skills. Zampini, Osterman, Stengel and Bennallick (2019) highlight the unequal treatment of female offenders in correctional centres, noting that traditional masculine cultures result in women receiving less preferential treatment, particularly regarding career choices.

2.4.3.1 Vocational skills

Mbatha, Kerre, Ferej and Kitainge (2018) posit that TVET learning skills programmes afford offenders a great opportunity to prevent recurring offending behaviours, thus making it possible for them to improve their likelihood of community integration and

restoration of their livelihoods after incarceration. Another advantage of TVET learning programmes is that they include career support services to facilitate the entry of newly released offenders into the workplace. Payton (2021) concurs with this view by adding that correctional education programmes such as TVET improve society by fostering opportunities to create positive social change and help former offenders become productive community members upon release. However, Buanes (2017) contends that the effectiveness of correctional education programmes such as TVET depends largely on self-efficacy and self-regulated learning. Consequently, offenders with higher self-efficacy for self-regulated learning and mathematics self-efficacy were more likely than those with lower scores to succeed in TVET programmes than those with low self-efficacy scores. From another angle, Behan (2021) notes that participation rates in TVET-oriented programmes are heavily impacted by offenders' varied sentence plans. Offenders with long sentences and high-risk profiles are unlikely to benefit from such learning programmes. In summary, offenders with shorter and less serious offences are more likely to benefit from TVET programmes than high-risk offenders confined to maximum security establishments.

2.4.3.2 Entrepreneurial skills

Akhtar and Golra (2021) argue that many state agencies are concerned about conventional skills-training programmes and pay no attention to entrepreneurial learning and training programmes. Consequently, McGrath and Powell (2016) observed that many prisoners opt for criminal activities once free because of limited job opportunities for conventional skills and potential employers' discriminatory attitudes because of the stigma attached to ex-prisoners.

Scholars such as Terragni, Arnold, and Henjum (2020) posit that exposing ex-offenders to entrepreneurship-based skills and training programmes can deter them from reoffending because self-employment can mitigate against potential employers' discriminatory attitudes. Furthermore, these entrepreneurship empowerment training programmes such as food literacy skills were found by Zareimanesh and Namdar (2022) and Palumbo (2016) to have yielded positive results in learners development. Such

initiatives can improve self-awareness, self-worth, self-efficacy, rational thinking and social skills (Jenkins, 2016). Timler, Brown and Varcoe (2019) found that farming programmes in correctional centres have grown in popularity in recent years and have physical, social and mental health benefits, as well as a positive impact on inmate rehabilitation and recidivism. Muzekenyi, Zuwarimwe and Kilonzo (2022) and Khapayi and Celliers (2016) suggest that the commercialisation of small farmers can contribute significantly to local economic growth and development, job creation, food security and income generation opportunities.

Much work on entrepreneurial education for prison reforms and criminal rehabilitation is done across the Western world (Grosholz, Kabongo, Morris and Wichem, 2020) and our understanding is limited on this topic from an African perspective (suggesting a research gap in this subject area). Hamenda and Hamenda (2021) argue that incorporating entrepreneurship skills in correctional education may help foster positive attitudes about business and self-employment opportunities among offenders. One of the questions included in this study sought to establish if offenders had been exposed to learning programmes that equipped them with entrepreneurial competencies.

2.4.4 Technology in correctional education

In a study of e-learning systems in correctional centres in Gauteng Province, South Africa, Mdakane, Ngubane, and Dhlamini (2022:94) observed that although institutions of higher learning have adopted blended learning to improve teaching and learning outcomes, offenders in correctional centres face difficulties in accessing online learning resources as the internet is still considered by prison authorities as a high-risk service. This problem is not confined to South Africa. In Australia, Hopkins and Farley (2015:37) found that “most offenders have no direct access to the internet and must rely on education officers, where available, to print out approved online educational resources upon request.” In addition, mobile phones, storage media, and internet-enabled tables are typically banned and cannot be brought into the prison system, even by staff. Proponents of this conservative view (that is, restricting access to the internet and digital devices) argue that exposing offenders to online education only contributes to creating more sophisticated

criminal behaviours that exacerbate criminal activities in society (Adeyeye, 2019:327). O'Brien, King, Phillips, Dalton and Phoenix (2021), in contrast, emphasise the need for aligning instructional programmes, materials and methodologies with the latest technology to increase the preparedness of offenders for the world of work and business.

2.4.5 Skills development partnerships

As contemplated in the White Paper on Corrections (2005), the DCS is mandated to provide education and training services through partnerships with various stakeholders within and outside the corrections system. Figure 2.1 shows some of the key stakeholders required to plan and deliver education and skills development programmes.

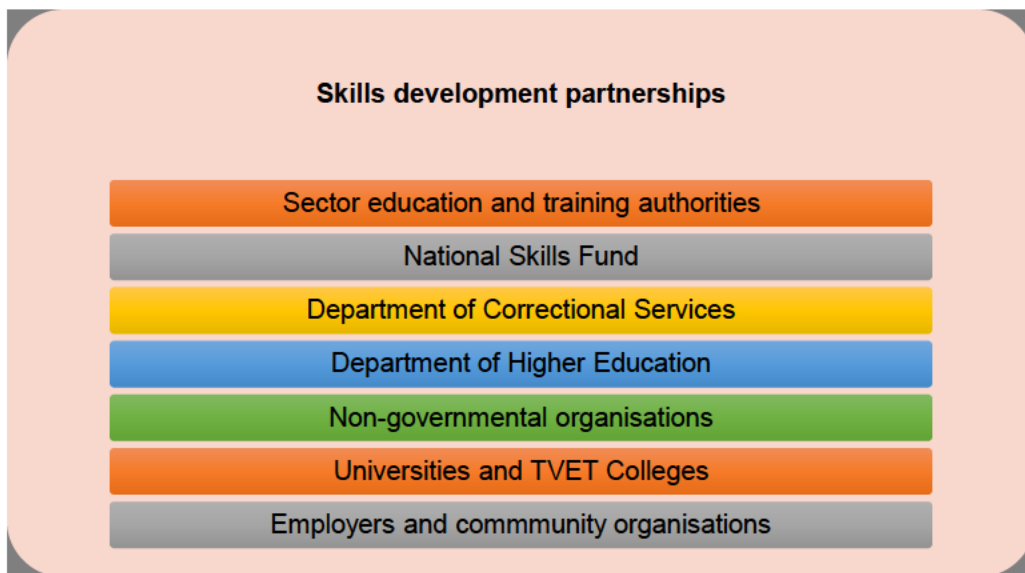


Figure 2.1: Skills development partnerships

Source: Adapted from DHET Annual Strategic Planning Session Partnership (2020:18)

Partnerships fulfil various responsibilities within the skills development system, such as the accreditation of skills programmes and quality assurance which is done by the SETAs and Umalusi (a quality control body); the registration of qualifications, which is done through the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the QCTO under the auspices of the DHET (DHET, 2020). The DCS skills programmes are consistent with the Government's Plan of Action which seeks to create much-needed jobs and unlock the potential of small, medium and micro enterprises to accelerate economic growth

(Government Programme of Action, 2015:2). The DCS skills programmes are founded on principles of restorative justice, equity, and social integration. The overarching mission/vision of the DCS is to “provide market-related skills to offenders that equip them with occupationally directed skills and vocational education and training in order to facilitate their rehabilitation and social integration.”

The long-term goal is to contribute to the government’s Programme of Action, which seeks to maximise job creation, entrepreneurship and SMME development. The DCS also works closely with SETAs to drive skills development. SETAs are established in terms of section 10 of the Skills Development Act of 1998 as amended. Chapter 2 spells out the legal mandates of SETAs in the new QCTO-driven skills development environment. In this new education and training landscape, a SETA is tasked with the development of sector skills plans, allocation and administration of skills grants, and monitoring the implementation and management of learnerships in the workplace. In line with the changing needs of industry and the labour market, the DCS has aligned its skills programmes with quality assurance agencies within the skills development system, including the SAQA, Umalusi, and the QCTO Figure 2.2 depicts the 10 levels of the NQF that inform education and training practice in South Africa broadly and Mpumalanga Province specifically.

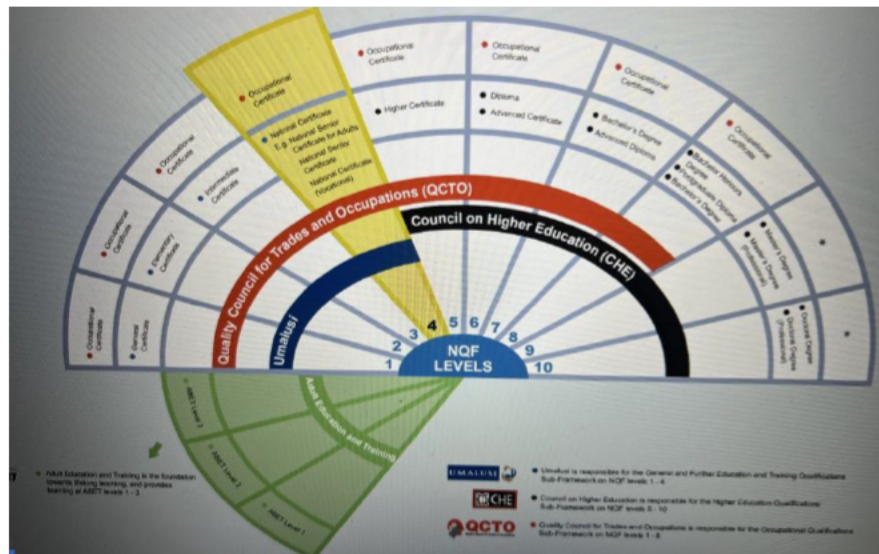


Figure 2.2: Levels of the National Qualifications Framework, 2008.

Source: Department of Higher Education (2008)

With the amendment of both the Skills Development Act (1998) and the NQF Act (2008), SETAs have assumed new roles under the leadership of the QCTO. They have been relieved of accreditation and quality assurance functions so that they can focus on facilitating skills development in their respective sectors. Correctional learning programmes target a wide range of skills and competencies that are needed within the DCS and the labour market. Prime examples include gardening, confectionary services for internal consumption by offenders, milk production, meat and vegetable production, renovations, plumbing, maintenance and repairs, bricklaying, dressmaking, painting, and carpentry, among others. The then Deputy Minister of Correctional Services, Mr Holomisa, motivated offenders to participate in adult education programmes ranging from Grade 4 to Grade 9 to improve their functional literacy and employability skills (DCS Newsletter, 2021). Daniels (2020) established that the AET policy framework provides an opportunity to those who never had an opportunity to learn how to read and write including the young and old. In terms of basic minimum entry requirements, offenders have to meet certain minimum criteria, including valid personal identity document or passport, basic reading and writing skills, including the ability to read in English as a medium of instruction

and Grade 8 or Grade 9 at AET Level 4 (DCS Executive Summary: Skills Development, 2021:4). To accelerate skills development, the DCS has committed itself to eight strategic priorities (Stamp, 2020) as reflected in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2: Pillars of the correctional skills programme

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accreditation of training facilities and workplaces to ensure that offenders receive NQF-aligned skills training services in all centres• Alignment of TVET curriculum with workplace learning initiatives• Effective implementation policies and processes• Ensuring a supportive organisational culture that fosters lifelong learning• Strengthening internal and external partnerships for skills development• Sustained mobilisation of voted funds to accelerate skills development• Budget allocation e.g. R54 million set aside to train 5400 offenders over 3 years• Annual funding applications are sent to SETAs to mobilise additional funds for skills development
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Source: Stamp (2020)

2.4.6 Career transition and employability of offenders

Work readiness and employability of offenders have been the subject of lengthy debate among scholars. On the one hand, there is scholarship that recognises the positive role of employers, industry and the community in providing employment opportunities for released offenders. In the study conducted by Nee, Singh and Kularajasingam (2022) in Malaysia some employers were keen to employ ex-offenders under prescribed conditions provided the offence was not related to the job for which an ex-offender seeks employment. In the UK, the study by Porter, Haggard and Harvey (2022) also confirmed the use of selection criteria to bar ex-sexual offenders from employment. However, another UK-based study paints a bleak picture of the employment prospects of ex-offenders by arguing that many offenders often face limited job opportunities upon release and find it difficult to secure jobs (Backman, Estrada and Nilsson (2018).

On the other hand, some scholars have expressed scepticism about the employment prospects for offenders. In this view, employers are hesitant to hire offenders due to the perceived risk of reoffending and criminal behaviour motivated by personal circumstances

and lack of devotion to change one's life (Duwe, 2018). A study by Sheppard and Ricciardelli (2020) revealed a strong preference for community-based employment programmes among offenders. These programmes were seen as key to strengthening the social bond between offenders and their families and the communities in which they live after release. Other scholars, for example, Mavunga and Cross (2017), have attributed unemployment among offenders to structural inequalities resulting from apartheid policies and the failure of the new government to address these barriers post-1994. From another perspective, Wiafe (2021) argues that the employment of offenders depends largely on the type of skills held, for example, while offenders with basic entry skills were less likely to find jobs, those with intermediate and high-end skills were more likely to be considered by prospective employers in the labour market. While acknowledging these discourses, the present study contends that correctional libraries can play a major role in the education of offenders, especially in situations where they are fully capacitated to perform their responsibilities effectively and competently (Vuk and Applegate, 2021).

Some researchers have found that offenders who exhibit a positive orientation towards the future tend to have relatively higher confidence levels than those who have pessimistic feelings about the future. The latter face a higher possibility of recidivism than desistance from crime. Other studies have noted that frequent participation in education and workplace learning activities positively influences work readiness among offenders (Doekhie, 2019). Added to this are personal goals and value systems, and a positive outlook about the future (Carvalho, Capelo and Nunez, 2015). The Four Factor model by Caballero, Walker and Fuller-Tyszkiewicz (2011:52) has been used to explain work readiness among graduates across disciplines, including offenders. Critical transferable skills and competencies include personal work characteristics, organisational acumen, work competence and social intelligence, resilience, flexibility, stress management, adaptability, and personal development (Caballero et al., 2011:52). Astray-Caneda, Busbee and Fanning (2011) argue that correctional learning programmes are situated within social contexts, and it will be hard for offenders to acquire employability and entrepreneurial skills. Gearhart (2021) contends that workplace learning opportunities

should not be confined to offenders alone. Rather, efforts should be made to expose correctional instructors and facilitators to workplace learning as well as to help them improve their teaching skills. Mukeredzi (2021) argues that properly planned workplace learning experiences can significantly improve marketability and employability prospects for offenders graduating from vocational programmes. Forrester (2018:34) identifies three types of learning transfer that need to happen in correctional education, and these are depicted in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Types of learning transfers

Dimension/type of learning transfer	Definition
Vertical transfer	Vertical transfer occurs when learners are able to use prior knowledge and skills to solve new problems. Prior knowledge may include the application of reading and writing skills to solve a particular problem in workplace contexts. This depends on clear instructions and guidelines from facilitators of learning.
Horizontal transfer	In horizontal transfer, learners are able to consistently apply learned knowledge and skills across different work contexts at the same level of abstraction. For this to happen, learners must be exposed to contexts that they are familiar with. Horizontal transfer is more effective in situations where practicum experiences are contextualised or modelled on learners' social world.
Far transfer	Far transfer means the ability of learners to apply acquired knowledge and skills in complex or challenging work situations. Transferring learnt knowledge and skills to complex and demanding situations requires that learners be guided on how to use abstract concepts and theoretical principles to solve problems.

Source: Adapted from Forester (2018:34)

For these learning transfers to occur (Table 2.3), learning experiences need to be properly planned and implemented to maximise outcomes. As Forrester (2018) points out, the most effective teaching practice begins with clearly articulated learning goals and outcomes that are communicated to the learner at the beginning of the learning experience. Clarity on the desired learning outcomes helps to prepare the learner for experiential learning at the end of the training programme (Kolb, 1984). This requires instructors and facilitators to create a conducive and inclusive learning environment that fosters critical thinking, creativity, reflection, problem-solving, and shared learning. This would require the facilitator or instructor to use engaging teaching methods, such as “questioning, inquiring, and learner participation which acknowledges the central role of learners as stakeholders and knowledge bearers, and who construct understanding and meaning through active participation” (Younker 2012 as cited in Forrester, 2018:34).

Peng, Feng, Zhao and Chong (2021) emphasise the need to evaluate the performance of learners deployed in workplace learning assignments and projects to determine the effectiveness of learning transfer. From these perspectives, it can be argued that career transition for offenders is possible, especially when work readiness programmes are implemented jointly by correctional centres and prospective employers.

2.4.7 Quality of education in correctional institutions

Objective four of the study sought to establish whether appropriate accountability mechanisms have been instituted to improve the quality of education services rendered to offenders. Several researchers have reported declining quality standards in prison education due to systematic resource constraints. For instance, Stamp (2020) documented that in many correctional centres, trainees still experience difficulties in accessing learning resources and study materials in libraries attached to these centres. Stamp (2020) further notes that correctional libraries need to be properly managed to be able to address the unique learning needs of offenders and instructors. Key and May (2018:14) underscore the importance of quality education in prison systems by postulating that “when prisoners enrol in classes, they are participating in a discourse that projects them as scholars rather than offenders; learners instead of threats, people

instead of numbers.” Behan (2014) cautions that unless there is a paradigm shift from viewing education as part of the penal system to education as a transformational learning tool, very little will be achieved in training outcomes. Politicisation of correctional education undermines the quality of education and training outcomes in correctional centres.

Accounts of resource shortages in prison education have long been documented by researchers in both developed and developing countries (Piche, 2008). Researchers in Australia, for example, have observed that inadequate resources and staff shortages impact negatively the provision and delivery of correctional education (Watts, 2010; Farley and Doyle, 2014; Stamp, 2020). In England and Wales peer educators have become prevalent and mitigate educator shortages (Bagnall et al., 2015; Topping, 2022). Based on their analysis of online education services for offenders in Gauteng Province, South Africa, Mdakane, Ngubane and Dhlamini (2022:94) observed that although institutions of higher learning have adopted blended learning to improve teaching and learning outcomes, offenders in correctional centres face difficulties in accessing online learning resources as the Internet is still considered by prison authorities as a high-risk service. This problem is not confined to South Africa.

In Australia, Hopkins and Farley (2015:37) found that most offenders “have no direct access to the internet and must rely on education officers, where available, to print out approved online educational resources upon request. In addition, mobile phones, storage media and internet-enabled tables are typically banned and cannot be brought into the prison system, even by staff.” Proponents of this conservative view (that is, restricting access to the Internet and digital devices) argue that exposing offenders to online education only contributes to creating more sophisticated criminal behaviours that exacerbate criminal activities in society (Adeyeye, 2019:327). O’Brien, King, Phillips, Dalton and Phoenix (2021), in contrast, emphasise the need for aligning instructional programmes, materials and methodologies with the latest technology to increase the preparedness of offenders for the world of work and business.

Besides the lack of learning resources, there have also been concerns about teacher qualifications and in this regard, there is contentious debate among criminology scholars (Lukacova, Lukac, Lukac, Pirohava and Hartmannova, 2018). Gashi (2021:105) contends that working in correctional education and training systems requires appropriate training of instructors and teachers and an awareness of the demands of prison education in terms of preparedness. Correctional instructors need to have a clear understanding and appreciation of prison culture and learners' emotional distress, suffering, health problems and cognitive challenges that prevent them from achieving their learning goals. Other scholars, for example, Johnson and Dizon (2021) argue that correctional teachers' ability to provide high-quality education is constrained by rigid administrative and security protocols that keep instructors and learners entrapped in heavily guarded classrooms 24 hours a day. Earlier studies on professional development of prison educators reported deficits in teacher preparedness for correctional education (Reis-Jorge, 2009). Mkosi and Mahlangu (2015:501) contend that in South Africa, prison culture is still focused predominantly on security measures, which increases barriers to learning as risk management is prioritised over the learning needs of offenders. Kabeta (2017) sees teacher insensitivity and administrative inefficiency as one of the major stumbling blocks in prison education. The experience and readiness of teachers and administrators to work cooperatively in such learning environments are insufficient and unsustainable. Lukacova et al. (2018) argue that the quality of teaching and learning in correctional centres is diluted by the fact that the pedagogical approach of the teachers reflects mainstream education practices that are not necessarily compatible with the demands of prison education. In conclusion, Lukacova et al. (2018) warn that "insufficient specific training might not only cause helplessness in prison teachers but also often lead to decreased effectiveness of education."

A related quality concern has been the need to improve the quality of conditions in correctional learning environments. This is considered particularly important given that the majority of offenders have low literacy levels with high drop-out rates and often negative experiences of basic education. Most of them face severe learning difficulties

associated with poor health, depressing prison conditions, violence, abuse and insecurity (Lukacova et al., 2018:65).

Taugerbeck, Ahmadi, Schorch, Unbehaun, Aal and Wulf (2020) caution that the restrictive nature of correctional learning environments deprives offenders of the opportunity to connect with the outside world via digital technology, making it difficult for them to adjust to the new reality brought by the internet. He argues that following years of online absence from real life, offenders run the risk of significant digital illiteracy challenges when they leave prison, making them unattractive to employers in the labour market. Barring access to ICTs and digital media in correctional learning environments may have detrimental effects on their resocialisation and employability post-release. While acknowledging the positive aspects of correctional programming, Piche (2008) contends that excessive social control where offenders are told “what to do, when to do it and where to do it” precludes many prisoners from participating in learning processes. In an environment that is often characterised as dangerous, unsafe, overcrowded and alienating, many prisoners have negative experiences of learning continuity.

In a relatively recent study of prison barriers in Tanzania, Msoroka, Findsen and Barnes (2020) found that “most prisoners were affected by the barriers associated with the prison and imprisonment situation, as well as dispositional barriers.” Researchers have identified a wide range of inhibitions or impediments that undermine teaching and learning in correctional centres (Stamp, 2020). Learner-related causes of demotivation include negative self-projection, negative thoughts about oneself, feelings of self-doubt and self-rejection, and attitudes towards the learning programme (Ng, Renandya and Chong, 2019).

At a personal level, these include low self-esteem, lack of motivation to learn, inability to take responsibility for own learning, family challenges, and impairment of vision and hearing senses. Extrinsic factors that undermine learning include curriculum design, misalignment between skills programmes and workplace learning, inappropriate teaching methods, the lack of learning resources, and the lack of a learning culture in the

organisation that is sponsoring the skills programmes. In the USA, Kaiser, Keena, Piquero and Howley (2020) noted that barriers to learning are not just confined to prison spaces but are also prevalent in the workplace and communities to which offenders are released. Prime examples include stigmatisation associated with the crimes committed and incarceration records, under-resourced custodian facilities, and perennial staff shortages.

Other key challenges that impede learning in correctional centres are overcrowding, limited infrastructural capacity, inadequate planning, limited support services, understaffed classrooms and workshops, and the scarcity of relevant learning materials that align with vocational skills programmes offered in correctional centres (Brosens, Croux and De Donde, 2019; Stamp, 2020). At the time of this review, training providers in South Africa, including the DCS in Mpumalanga Province, were migrating from SETA-driven skills development to a QCTO-based training system involving full and part qualifications. This transition has meant that unit standard-based training will now be replaced by qualifications-based training where QCTO provides trainers with a standardised curriculum for each occupation. In terms of QCTO policy, training providers must use the standardised curriculum as a guide to develop their own tailored training materials (National Qualifications Framework, 2008). As noted earlier, quality assurance functions previously performed by SETAs have been transferred to the QCTO. This means that quality management in skills programmes is now under the auspices of the QCTO. This mandates the DCS to align all its formal and informal skills programmes with QCTO quality management policies. The QCTO is mandated by the Department of Education (DoE) to fund and oversee the review and reconfiguration of qualifications in all streams, including agriculture, engineering, and financial services. Certification is also done by the QCTO in all occupational categories and qualifications. As a custodian of qualifications and learning programmes, the QCTO derives its legal mandates from the Skills Development Act (1998), the NQF of 2008 as amended, and the White Paper on Post-School Education and Training (2013). Thus, while previously the SETAs were tasked with quality assurance and accreditation of training providers, this function has now been transferred to the QCTO with effect from 2021. Chief among its statutory responsibilities, the QCTO is also required to monitor its quality partners to ensure that

delegated quality assurance functions in the correctional education system are performed in accordance with DHET policies.

2.5 REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES

The literature classifies rehabilitation programmes into three categories, namely institution-based programmes, surveillance-based transition programmes, and assistance-based programmes (Griffith, Dandurand and Murdoch, 2007). Institution-based interventions are aimed at preparing offenders to reintegrate with their communities and include education, mental health care, substance abuse treatment, occupationally-based training, counselling, and mentoring. An important aspect of institution-based initiatives is vocational training which entails the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies and assisting offenders to find unemployment and business opportunities when they leave prison. Irrespective of the context in which they are designed, rehabilitative educational programmes are likely to include some or a combination of the interventions depicted in Figure 2.3 below.

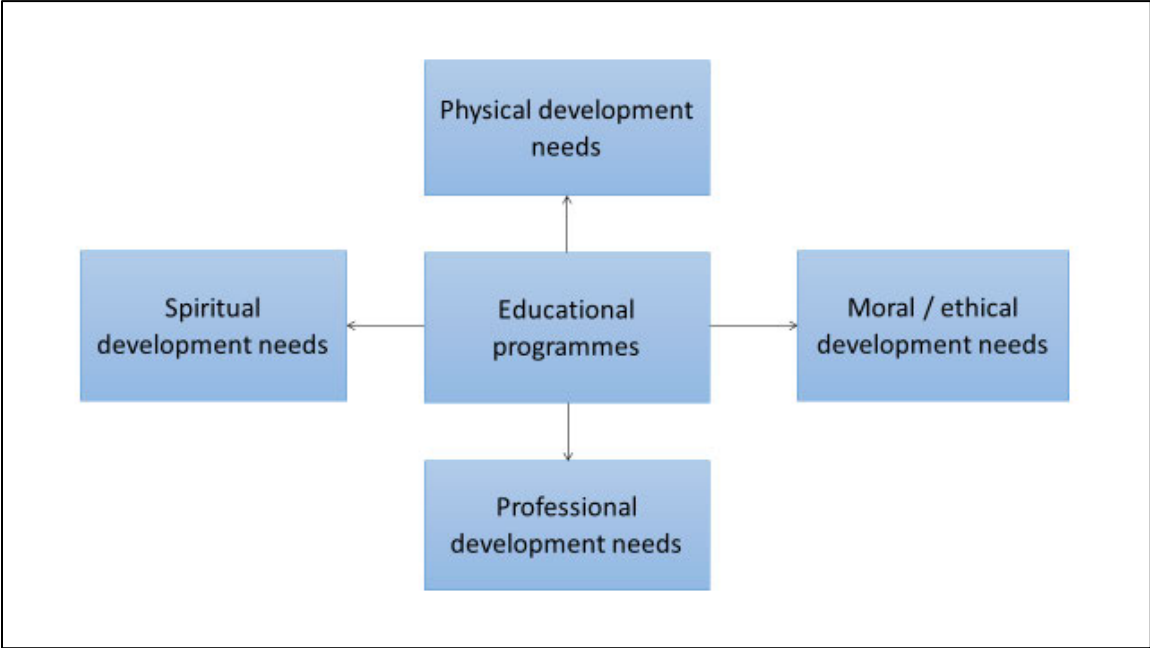


Figure 2.3: Development needs satisfied through education

Source: Researcher’s creation (2024)

Together, these four interventions (Figure 2.3) have direct implications for how library services are conceptualised and delivered to offenders. The expectation is that librarians should approach the education needs of offenders from a holistic perspective in which academic, social, spiritual, moral, physical, and financial wellness are addressed. As Linden and Perry (2008) rightly point out, education programmes are most likely to succeed if they are intensive and offer post-release services to offenders. The third objective of the study aimed to uncover the programmes implemented by correctional libraries and stakeholders to meet the functional literacy, skills development, and career transition needs of offenders. The study examined rehabilitation based on the fundamental principles outlined in the White Paper on Corrections (2005). According to this policy document, rehabilitation is aimed at addressing and correcting offending behaviour and assisting offenders to learn, integrate socially, and make a living after incarceration. Table 2.4 summarises the six components of South Africa's rehabilitation programme as articulated in the White Paper on Corrections (2005).

Table 2.4: Key components of the DCS rehabilitation programme

Component	Implications
A. SECURITY	This component ensures the security of offenders, correctional centre officials and citizens. The intention is to balance the development needs of offenders with public safety needs.
B. CARE	This component focuses primarily on the health and wellbeing of offenders and includes a wide range of social and psychotherapy services aimed at promoting the holistic development of offenders.
C. CORRECTION	The sentence is administered in such a way as to help offenders realise the pain and suffering that their offending behaviour has caused citizens and victims of their crime and to take responsibility to meet with and reconcile with victims' families as part of their integration back into society. It infuses the principles of accountability, remorse and moral regeneration.
D. DEVELOPMENT	This dimension facilitates and promotes access to skills training opportunities for offenders, including both formal and informal learning programmes at all levels of the NQF, for example, general, further and HET levels.
E. FACILITIES	This component focuses on strengthening institutional capacity and support networks to ensure that offenders are kept and rehabilitated in humane conditions in line with the Bill of Rights in the Constitution (1996).
F. AFTERCARE	Once they have been rehabilitated, offenders must be assisted to find their way back to society and the world of work. The intention is to promote and facilitate the social integration of offenders after serving their sentences.

Source: Adapted from White Paper on Corrections (2004:68)

Examining Table 2.3, it can be argued that the DCS follows a holistic approach to the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders in South Africa. Of the six components of the rehabilitation programme, the current study is primarily concerned with the development of offenders, particularly skills development, career transition, and employability skills. The White Paper on Corrections (2005) explicitly states that constructive work assigned to offenders in the course of their rehabilitation must be consistent with their learning and

development needs. Practically, this means that any experiential learning activity should have skills transfer outcomes, including workplace learning.

A brief review of approaches to the rehabilitation of offenders with an emphasis on community-based rehabilitation (CBR) and its implications for the study follows.

2.6 APPROACHES TO THE REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS

Since the effectiveness of LIS provision generally centres on the type of models employed to rehabilitate prisoners in each country, it is helpful to highlight some of the approaches used and their implications for service delivery in correctional libraries. These include the abolitionist approach, the classical approach, the person-centred approach, and CBR.

The abolitionist approach asserts that correctional centres do very little to rehabilitate offenders; instead, they make them worse. In terms of this approach, the prison system, by its very nature, is repressive and uncaring, stripping offenders of all their familiar social and cultural support systems. Any rehabilitation efforts must first overcome these hurdles. Abolitionists believe that offenders are powerless to give or withhold consent to these issues. Offender rehabilitation has been denounced by scholars such as Wilkinson (2005) and Martinson (2001) for its inability to impact positively on reforming offenders. They advance a posture that despite isolated few cases of success in the broader scheme of things the initiatives have not succeeded.

The classical approach posits that punishment must fit the crime, as a principle of will and hedonism (Beccaria, 1963 in Amarasinghe, 2020). Human beings are naturally pleasure-loving and use their free will to choose acts that will not bring them pain and suffering. Breaking the law is deliberate and done of one's own free will in pursuit of pleasure. Thus, to prevent people from breaking the law, punishment must be severe and painful enough to deter such acts. However, unlike the classical approach, the Neoclassical theory recognises circumstances involving age, mental condition and extenuating circumstances in the criminal themselves which must be considered when punishing (Ugwuoke and Ojonugwa, 2014:35). However, Meijer (2017) contends that classical approaches to

rehabilitation are misplaced as they overlook the social dimension of rehabilitation which focuses on the advancement of human rights in rehabilitation programmes. The Deterrent theory assumes that punitive sanctions, if applied fairly and correctly, can be a strong deterrent to criminal behaviour in society (Bartol and Bartol, 2014). Relatedly, the non-conformist perspective holds that human beings are basically undisciplined creatures who, without the constraints of the rules and regulations of a given society, would flout society's conventions and commit crimes indiscriminately. Correctional education, therefore, is "inconceivable and a waste of taxpayers' money on criminals who are supposed to be punished for their deeds. Many critics question the wisdom of spending public funds on educating criminals instead of using such funds for the benefit of the victims of crime or their families" (Quan-Baffour and Zawada, 2012:74).

By contrast, the person-centred (or reformation) approach argues that tackling anti-social behaviour and moral deficits is key to the rehabilitation of offenders. Offenders' vulnerability to criminal activities is largely influenced by the kind of social, economic and environmental conditions under which they live. Because of this, rehabilitative efforts, including LIS services, should take into account the special needs and problems of each offender. Rehabilitation should be aimed at changing the personality of the offender rather than looking at how dangerous he/she is to society.

As with all developing countries, South Africa has made significant strides in adopting and implementing a CBR approach. This approach works similarly to the New Zealand restorative justice approach which provides a space for interaction and understanding between the victim and the offender and also the wider community (Davis, Bahr and Ward, 2012). This was particularly important for the present study as it incorporated qualitative interview questions on how community members assist offenders in finding employment opportunities and socially integrating after incarceration. Rule, Roberts, McLaren, and Philpott (2019) argue that the conceptualisation of CBR has eluded scholars resulting in confusing interpretations of what the concept actually means, given that it is largely shaped by local context. However, M'kumbuzi and Myezwa (2016) contend that CBR has evolved over time and now prioritises the development needs of

people living with a disability. From an offender's perspective, CBR places greater emphasis on equity in the allocation of resources, inclusive social integration, and advancement of human rights (World Health Organization, 2011 in M'kumbuzi and Myezwa, 2016:1). Unfortunately, CBR as a rehabilitation strategy suffers from lack of credible empirical evidence on its effectiveness, particularly in correctional services contexts.

In essence, CBR approaches seek to restore offenders' dignity and foster close social bonds with their families and the communities in which they live. In South Africa, this is achieved through the social restorative justice model where offenders and victims are offered the opportunity to forgive and reconcile with each other. As noted in the empirical literature (Ugwuoke and Ojonugwa, 2014; Murhula and Tolla, 2021) community-based approaches to rehabilitation seek to instil societal values in offenders, making them realise that crime is evil and therefore unacceptable in society

For correctional libraries, this means appreciating the unique individual circumstances that shape offenders' information needs and responding to these needs in a fair, equitable and human manner. Close interaction between the library staff and offenders is important in ensuring that offenders' information/learning needs are met. Treating offenders humanely is one of the most fundamental aspects of LIS in correctional facilities (Miriti and Kimani, 2017:60). From an African perspective, Johnson and Quan-Baffour (2016:1) contend that improving the effectiveness of rehabilitation services requires consideration of the African philosophy of Ubuntu which embodies forgiveness, a collective world view, cultural and spiritual orientation, collective engagement, and shared responsibility. It enables young and adult offenders to reflect on their wrongs, which leads to forgiveness and acceptance by families of their victims. Hence the Sotho saying: "motho ke motho ka batho" (a person is a person because of others). Within the spirit of collectivism, young and adult offenders are empowered and given the skills that they need to make a living outside prison after release. In this view, "It takes the whole village to raise a child and any child is my child." This philosophy is expected to guide the provision of correctional education and training services in South Africa (Johnson and Quan-Baffour, 2016:2).

2.7 INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

As highlighted earlier, incorporating African and global experiences will enhance understanding of the research phenomenon and facilitate meaningful analysis of the results. The discussion below yields insights and perspectives on policy responses to correctional education and library service in both advanced and developing countries to enrich the study.

2.7.1 African perspective

African perspectives of correctional education and library services are largely shaped by the Kampala Declaration on Prison Conditions in Africa (1996), the Arusha Declaration on Good Prison Practice (1999), and the Mandela Rules (1998). Based on these treaties, this section reviews the experiences of three African countries regarding correctional education and library services to determine their implications for Mpumalanga Province, the focus of the study.

2.7.1.1 Kenya

In Kenya, prison education is offered through the Department of Correctional Facilities headed by the Commissioner of Prisons. The Department derives its mandate from the Prisons Act, the Borstal Act, and the Public Service Commission Act. An average of 50% of all offenders do not have a Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) and approximately 75% have no vocational or collegiate education (James, 2017:22). Correctional centres are mandated to contain and keep offenders in safe custody, rehabilitate and reform offenders, facilitate administration of justice and promote prisoners opportunities for social reintegration. Kenyan correctional centres provide rehabilitation programmes and vocational education and training that help offenders be reintegrated into society and actively participate in positive socio-economic engagements upon release. In a recent study of rehabilitation programmes in Kenya, Mburu and Gathitu (2022) noted the increasingly diverse nature of the skills programmes provided to improve employment prospects for offenders. The study stresses the need for correctional officials to sensitise offenders on available learning opportunities to foster positive attitudes about

the future. Of particular significance is the proposition that the government should increase the skills development budget and incentives for offenders who demonstrate a keen interest in entrepreneurship or venture creation.

The skills gained enhance offenders' chances of engaging in gainful employment and minimise their chances of returning to criminal activities. "Vocational education and training offered expose offenders to livestock production and growing vegetables and fruits. It also includes other skills such as carpentry, garment making, upholstery, metalwork, soap making, salon management and cosmetology, masonry, painting, knitting, pottery and brickmaking" (James, 2017:23). Correctional education in Kenya has benefitted greatly from the involvement of practitioners and policy experts from across a wide range of fields, including psychotherapists, social workers, doctors, and science and technology (James, 2017).

2.7.1.2 Zambia

Zambia's approach to correctional education largely resembles that of other developing countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and Swaziland, focusing on both basic education and occupationally directed learning programmes involving TVET skills. In this regard, Kakupa and Mulenga (2021:2) note that the primary objective of correctional education in Zambia is to equip young offenders with functional literacy and employability skills. As is the case in South Africa, the Ministry of Education works closely with Correctional Service Authorities to facilitate teaching and learning in correctional centres. The entire correctional education system revolves around the 7-5-4 Curriculum model, where offenders spend seven years in primary school, five years in secondary school, and four years in higher institutions of learning.

To improve access to education and training opportunities, the Zambian Correctional Authorities partnered with the Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) to facilitate accreditation of skills programmes in high demand, such as agribusiness, mechanical and electrical engineering, food and beverage, welding and plumbing (Kakupa and Mulenga, 2012:2). Given the relatively high

levels of illiteracy in the offender population, the Zambian Correctional Authorities have prioritised implementation of functional literacy programmes to build life skills, numeracy skills and reading skills. While these efforts are commendable, challenges remain in balancing curriculum needs with offenders' psychosocial support needs, given the trauma, violence and stigma that they face during incarceration (Sepeto, Kalimaposo, Mubita, Milupi, Mundende, Daka and Mbewe, 2022).

The relatively slow progress in meeting offenders' educational needs has also been noted by Situmbeko and Kalimaposo (2022:80). In particular; their study observed the perilous state of resource allocation, which limited access to occupationally directed learning programmes. Many of the correctional centres surveyed lacked basic teaching and learning materials, while classroom infrastructure was reportedly inadequate and, therefore, inappropriate for teaching and learning. While the correctional education system provided farm work opportunities to young offenders, this was not augmented with apprenticeships or learnerships to balance theory and practice.

2.7.1.3 Zimbabwe

Drawing on an empirical analysis of correctional education systems in Zimbabwe, Chakamba (2019:3) reported on six state-assisted correctional training centres in Zimbabwe, where juvenile offenders are sent for institutional care and rehabilitation. Zimbabwe's approach to correctional education is to facilitate not just economic empowerment of offenders, but also social integration. In this light, education is perceived as instrumental in helping young offenders desist from criminal behaviours. Like Zambia and South Africa, Zimbabwe's correctional education system is predominantly geared towards TVET programmes such as welding, bricklaying, social skills, employability skills, clothing and textile, and citizenship skills (Chakamba, 2019:8). Although many trainees from the correctional education system have successfully been integrated back to their communities, those who remain outside the labour market end up committing other crimes, which precipitates recidivism rates in the country (Chakamba, 2019). Correctional education is severely hampered by inadequate attention to monitoring and evaluation

which deprives teachers and learners of the opportunity to contribute to curriculum innovation and improvement at the classroom level.

An earlier study by Mutanana and Gasva (2016:2) noted that insufficient educational services, low self-esteem, and peer influences contributed significantly to recidivism in the country's correctional services system. Their study further observed that relationships between offenders and their teachers were relatively poor and intermittent, with some learners struggling to find personalised mentoring support from their facilitators. The study recommended professional development interventions to improve teaching practice and learner achievement in Zimbabwe's correctional education system. With regard to the employment of ex-offenders, the study recommended that the government explore ways to address the stigma associated with incarceration to improve labour market outcomes for released offenders. In a related study, Dube-Mawerewere and Chiborise (2017:37) found that despite challenges, almost 77% of the offenders interviewed had completed basic education programmes, suggesting significant improvements in functional literacy skills. Adversely, the study noted that 67% of released offenders struggled to access employment opportunities partly due to stigma and social exclusion, resulting in reoffending and further incarceration.

From an African perspective, therefore, correctional education has been and continues to be shaped by policies aiming to accelerate the formation of vocationally oriented skills to increase employability prospects and social integration for offenders after incarceration. The tendency is to view skills development as a solution to job creation, income generation and poverty alleviation for young offenders. Having considered the African perspective on correctional education, the focus now shifts to perspectives outside of the African continent to provide a holistic picture of correctional education practice.

2.7.2 Global perspectives

Given the primacy of the Mandela Rules (2015) which lends credence to education as one of the fundamental rehabilitation interventions necessary to facilitate social and

economic integration of offenders back into society, this study reviewed correctional education practices in four countries to broaden understanding of the phenomenon under study. These were Finland, Germany, Norway, and the USA. Insights and perspectives from this review were subsequently corroborated with the findings and conclusions of the study to enhance credibility, confirmability and transferability of the research results. What follows is a brief consideration of these country experiences and their implications for the study.

2.7.2.1 Finland

Mertanen and Brunila (2018:156) explain that the aim of prison education in Finnish national policies is to teach offenders the skills and knowledge that they can use in life after release and thus reduce recidivism. Correctional education is contextualised as adult, vocational and general education. Typically, half of the forms of education offered in prisons are courses that aim to enable prisoners to finish mandatory education or various kinds of vocational education programmes, for example, metalwork and carpentry that lead to a professional qualification. In addition to adult and vocational education, preparatory education and action programmes are also rendered to support career transition for offenders. Here, correctional education programmes are aimed at building knowledge and skills to enable recipients to be able to undertake vocational education in the future. As with all correctional service establishments, Finland's educational system is confronted with low learner participation rates, which have been attributed to learning disabilities such as substance abuse, mental health problems, and the high cost of designing correctional education programmes compared to the mainstream curriculum. To remedy the situation, correctional authorities have partnered with NGOs to offer short-term skills training interventions to improve rehabilitation outcomes (Rantala and Sulkunen, 2006 in Mertanen and Brunila, 2018).

2.7.2.2 Germany

Rehabilitation policy in Germany addresses three imperatives: the first is resocialisation aiming to rebuild trusting, peaceful and respectful relationships between offenders and communities. The second goal is social integration to ensure that offenders successfully

reunite with their families after incarceration. The third, and most important goal, is the increased participation of offenders in economic activities following their release from incarceration (Kury, 2018:2). Post-release interventions increase the absorption of offenders into the economy – a clear indication that economic participation is key to post-release integration. These interventions have made employment compulsory for all released offenders to prevent recidivism.

A recent study by Mburu and Gathiu (2022:489) confirms that rehabilitation programmes in Germany are effective. The study found a 16.7% decrease in utilisation of correctional capacity as a result of government investment in post-release employment programmes. Within the corrections system, a key challenge is the limited human resource capacity, which adversely impacts the quality of education (Kury, 2018:8). The right to resocialisation encompasses the right to gainful employment which is enforced through obligatory post-release programmes aiming to curb recidivism. Article 20(13) of the German Federal Constitution recognises the role of the state in assisting and empowering vulnerable and disadvantaged communities and minority groups, such as offenders, to participate in socio-economic development opportunities (Meijer, 2017:152-153).

In their empirical analysis, Becker-Pestka (2022:7) found that Germany has made significant strides in improving access to online learning for its corrections population. This has been achieved through the establishment of learning centres in each corrections facility. Digitisation efforts include provision for in-house and distance learning where learners can engage in e-learning with guidance from their instructors.

2.7.2.3 Norway

As is the case in South Africa, correctional education and library services in Norway are based on the principle of restorative justice, which sees education as a rehabilitative and integrative strategy, the defining feature of positive criminology. The provision of education and library services aligns with tenets of normality and normalisation. Formal education in correctional centres includes primary and secondary school, work-qualifying courses, vocational training, and tertiary studies. While the correctional service is

supervised by the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education and Research has the professional and financial responsibility for prison education (Tosenseth and Bergsland, 2019:3). Education in Norwegian correctional centres is informed by the Import Model of 1969. This model envisages all social services, such as health, school, culture, employment, and priesthood, as being part of the prison experience. Correctional education is based on the same guidelines that apply to ordinary education, which hold the county municipality as the implementing agent responsible for both administrative and academic aspects of correctional education (Denny, 2016).

Beyond normal teaching, there are follow-up classes to enable offenders to complete their education if they are released before completing their training programmes. Follow-up classes are also offered to offenders assigned to community services. These classes provide regular instructional programmes and practice sessions to build employability skills (Tosenseth and Bergsland, 2019:3). Through collaboration between correctional authorities and the Department of Education, a central server has been installed to enable controlled access to Web-based learning resources inside the correctional environment. A defining feature of this remote-controlled server is that it comes with a built-in alert system that monitors internet access, traffic and content use. This ensures that offenders only use Internet resources to meet their learning needs (Becker-Pestka, 2022:9). The use of computers and Web-based communications facilitates and enables knowledge and skills acquisition (Godbold, 2006; Sun and Cheng, 2007). With the clearance of intellectual property rights and licence protocols, this facility holds greater promise for offenders in developing countries such as South Africa.

However, prison education and library services in Norway are not without challenges. Many of the prisoners struggle to read and write properly, prompting many offenders to depend on others for learning. Offenders who complete vocational education have a greater chance of getting a job than those with general academic qualifications. Correctional education outcomes include social benefits, self-determination, and accountability by enabling ex-prisoners to improve employability skills and self-esteem.

However, these gains are reversed by a lack of knowledge of what follow-up services are needed after the release of offenders from incarceration.

2.7.2.4 United Kingdom

There are 130 correctional centres in England and Wales, 16 in Scotland and three in Northern Ireland. The UK prison population comprises people with drug abuse or alcohol-related problems, with the number of 60-year-olds increasing steadily (Silvestri, 2013:18). In all cases, prisons are required by law to have a library to improve access to LIS by offenders. Correctional libraries have professional librarians and are subject to regular inspections to ensure that they meet the required quality standards. The Prison Library Group plays a major role in supporting correctional libraries, as exemplified by the Edinburgh Correctional Library which won the UK Libraries “Change Lives Award” in 2010 (Silvestri, 2013:34). In the UK, learning initiatives provided through the library help prisoners get new skills, for example, learning to read and write, use computers, and do basic maths, and a variety of subjects like woodwork, engineering, or gardening. Most offenders get an individual learning plan, listing courses and training, and their training often leads to a recognised qualification. Although there is no funding for higher education, offenders can secure funding from the Prisoners’ Education Trust. In Scotland, classes range from basic literacy and numeracy needs to more advanced levels, as well as covering a range of areas, including art and music, and drama classes can be provided. Skills training is routinely offered in youth correctional centres to engage incarcerated young people in education.

Correctional education in the UK has benefited immensely from partnerships with the Open University (OU), which assists with the design and implementation of learning programmes nationwide. Working closely with UK correctional agencies, the OU has prioritised the implementation of literacy programmes to ameliorate illiteracy in correctional populations. With its high emphasis on localisation of education, the OU has been successful in breaking down barriers to learning for offenders in different streams of the curriculum. Most importantly, blended learning interventions create rare opportunities for offenders to engage in self-directed learning using the latest

technologies. In-cell learning technologies have been established in Wales and England, opening further learning opportunities for offenders (Earle, Mehigan, Pike and Weinbren, 2020:80). Pike and Hopkins (2019) report that offenders with long sentences have benefited significantly from these learning opportunities, with many of them migrating to the higher education framework.

In particular, the OU's Virtual Campus brings learning opportunities directly to offenders in their cells and the demand for in-cell learning opportunities is growing (Burgon, 2018 in Earle, Mehigan, Pike and Weinbren, 2020:80). Education partnerships span corrections agencies, the OU and the Prisoner Learning Alliance. A related positive development has been the introduction of virtual simulation learning experiences by the OU to improve teaching and learning practices in correctional education. These technologies simulate real-world experiences to help offenders catch up on workplace technologies and work practices. In a study on the implementation of e-learning in correctional centres, Farley and Doyle (2014) reported positive outcomes, noting that such practices have significantly improved the accessibility of learning opportunities for offenders, especially with e-books and SAM e-learning equipment. Finlay's (2022:12) study of correctional library staff in the UK underlines the importance of "giving a voice to those who are often overlooked within their workplace and their wider profession."

2.7.2.5 United States of America

Correctional libraries in both federal and state correctional institutions in the USA provide learning materials to offenders, although the level and quality of such services have not been documented (Lehmann, 2011:494). A key distinguishing feature of the USA correctional library system is that it encourages partnership between public libraries and designated prison libraries, thereby increasing delivery capacity to benefit offenders. However, the provision of LIS services to offenders is affected by such constraints as overcrowding which appears to be a worldwide problem and which also impacts the provision of these services in South Africa's correctional centres (Lindsay, 2011:5). As is the case in South Africa, correctional centres in the USA provide both basic education and vocationally oriented training that targets employability skills. The approaches

employed to deliver correctional education vary across states. While some states have their own district schools for offenders, others partner with community-based colleges to improve access to education and skills development opportunities for offenders (Davies, Bozick, Steele, Saunders and Miles, 2013; Duwe, 2018).

A designated agency called EMPLOY Participants has been established to prepare offenders for the transition from correctional centres to the world of work (Duwe, 2018:7). Three months before their official release from correctional centres, offenders meet with job training specialists to discuss skills assessments, curriculum vitae, job search skills, and job interview skills. The job development specialist contacts existing and potential employers to identify hiring opportunities for offenders a week before their release. The job search is based on offenders' competency profiles and career needs. This ensures that they are placed in appropriate job openings after release. On the whole, the USA experience suggests that correctional education does increase the employment prospects of offenders after incarceration (Duwe, 2018). However, as in all countries, its correctional education system faces several challenges, including limited admission opportunities and time for completing learning programmes, stringent admission criteria which limit access to learning opportunities, limited curriculum choices, and lack of diversity in current skills programmes (Kaiser, Keena, Piquero and Howley, 2020:4). A study by Couloute and Kopf (2018) found that "formerly incarcerated people are unemployed at a rate of over 27% which is higher than the total U.S. unemployment rate during any historical period, including the Great Depression. For those who are Black or Hispanic – especially women status as 'formerly incarcerated' reduces their employment chances even more."

2.7.3 Implications for Correctional Libraries

An important lesson from Kenya's correctional education system is the need for flexibility, innovation, and diversity in designing skills development programmes in correctional centres. For example, the inclusion of manufacturing skills such as silk production, production of spices and herbs, soap making, and cosmetology increases both employability and entrepreneurial skills for offenders. Zambia's curriculum includes non-

formal learning activities to help offenders improve their reading and writing proficiencies. This curriculum innovation is particularly important in situations where there are high incidents of illiteracy among offenders. The Zimbabwe case underlines the importance of curriculum review and adaptation to ensure that offenders have employability skills.

In Finland, education services are aimed at preventing recidivism, ill health, and drug abuse as major barriers to learning, and the involvement of the private sector in correctional education has been prioritised. The German experience underscores the significance of institutionalised labour market interventions targeting returning offenders. In Norway, there is a designated research unit focusing on the skills development needs of offenders and labour market needs. Correctional education is implemented by two ministries which helps with escalation and intensification of correctional education. Norway has mooted further investments in ICT infrastructure.

In the UK, offenders have individual learning plans, while in Scotland, more learning opportunities are given to the youth with full support from the correctional services ministry. Other key learnings from the UK are regular inspections of correctional libraries, and institutional arrangements, for example, the Prison Library Group provides support to correctional libraries in terms of their resource needs, and correctional libraries assist with ICT skills among offenders. The UK Prison Education Trust also supports disability through the prioritisation of learning programmes for offenders with disabilities. Evidence from the USA shows that with increasing prison populations, correctional libraries are inevitably compelled to partner with ordinary public libraries to increase service delivery. The USA has a designated EMPLOY Participants agency which facilitates the preparation and entry of inmate graduates from prison into the labour market; a job-development specialist who assists with the development of personal profiles and curriculum vitae of inmate graduates; and the above-mentioned collaboration between public and correctional libraries.

2.8 EMPIRICAL LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES ON CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION

In a mixed-methods research study with convergent design, Vandala (2019:1) investigated the transformative effect of correctional education on former offenders who attended correctional education programmes during incarceration in South Africa. Quantitative findings overwhelmingly demonstrated that correctional education transforms offenders. Qualitative findings confirmed that correctional education changes behaviour, boosts self-confidence, and transforms offenders into law-abiding and productive citizens. The study concluded that correctional education transforms offenders since it boosts their self-esteem and confidence, revives their humanity, improves their literacy levels, equips them with skills, and transforms them into law-abiding and productive citizens on release. The study recommends increased implementation of vocational education programmes. Doing so may help in reducing crime, recidivism rates, poverty and inequality. Equally, the study recommends international research on the effect of correctional education on recidivism rates.

Stamp (2020:5) explored educators' perceptions of factors that hinder effective learning in South African correctional centres. The findings reveal that extrinsic factors militate against effective learning and teaching. These include poor infrastructure, poor planning, disruptions, unhealthy working relations, lack of capacity, lack of support, and an inappropriate curriculum. The findings also show that successful teaching and learning are hindered by intrinsic factors such as disability, knowledge gaps, communication difficulties, and emotional and behavioural problems. The study makes two key recommendations. The first is that correctional educational programmes be reviewed to align them with the prison context and the needs of offenders. The second is that the educational and psychosocial environments in correctional centres be improved.

Mukeredzi (2021) carried out a cross-sectional survey of prison educators and managers in AET centres in five South African prisons. The study attempted to understand their perceptions of what motivates prisoners to pursue further education. The research draws on Vroom's Expectancy Motivation theory, which holds that behaviour is a result of

deliberate choices among alternatives to maximise pleasure and reduce pain. The semi-structured interviews conducted with 10 prison managers and 11 educators revealed instrumentality motivation coupled with expectancy and valency motivation reflected in three major findings: first, that prisoners pursue adult education to improve themselves educationally and prepare for employment after their release; second, that prisoners seek to prevent a relapse into criminal activity and re-imprisonment and to prepare for a crime-free life; and, third, that learning takes their minds off their incarceration and kills time. These findings have direct implications for policy and practice as they indicate a need to support the fight against recidivism.

Kakunda and Mulenga (2021) used a qualitative research strategy and empowerment theory to explore the correctional education experiences of 10 male adult prisoners serving long jail sentences at a maximum-security prison in Zambia. The analysis revealed the following: (i) correctional education is perceived as meaningful and relevant to offenders' post-release employment needs; (ii) despite the transformation of prisons into correctional centres, correctional facilities are still characterised by coercive and oppressive practices that impinge on the effective delivery of correctional education; and (iii) correctional education, as currently provided, emphasises economic objectives and neglects offenders' broader rehabilitation needs. The implication is that correctional education may not be fully rehabilitative. The authors recommend that the structure and delivery of these education programmes should incorporate processes that offer a holistic remodelling of offenders' behaviours.

Addae (2020) in their research, employed a case study research design. Thirty young offenders in a Ghanaian correctional facility were purposively selected for focus-group interviews. The study found that the need for better employment, life opportunities, and literacy post-release were the main push factors for offenders' participation in the educational programme. With regard to challenges, the offenders reported varying experiences impeding their learning including the lack of institutional support in learning, the lack of teachers coupled with poor teacher attendance, and punishment. These

findings have significant implications for the design and delivery of future correctional education programmes.

Obatusin and Williams (2019) used in-depth interviews to canvass the views of employers who hired ex-offenders in the Baltimore Metropolitan area. The data showed that employers regarded perception and trust as the most important factors in hiring former offenders. The study shows that offenders did not possess the skills employers need in the workplace regarding job readiness and employability skills; thus, there was a mismatch between acquired skills and what employers wanted. These findings are relevant to the present study as they highlight the need to determine if libraries provide career transition support to offenders in Mpumalanga's correctional centres.

Mudau, Banda and Raselekoene (2018) investigated recidivism among youth offenders in the Female/Juvenile Correctional Centre in the Vhembe District, Limpopo Province. The purpose of the study was to establish the causes of recidivism. Both male and female juveniles participated in the study and a qualitative research design (interviews) was used to collect data which were thematically analysed. The study revealed that there are pull factors in society that influence youth to offend and reoffend; these include early exposure to substance abuse, poverty, dysfunctional family structure, and the lack of employment opportunities and social recreational infrastructure. The study recommends that the rehabilitation of offenders should not only be prison-based but should also focus on addressing communities where offenders come from. This research offers a broad analysis of rehabilitation and, in terms of sampling, it focused on male and female juvenile populations rather than the entire prison population. The latter is targeted by the present study through stratified random sampling and purposive sampling.

A Malawian study by Gama, Chipeta, Phiri and Chawinga (2020) examined the information behaviour of Mzimba Prison offenders. It focused on several research themes, namely, information needs, sources of information, and the barriers to seeking and using information. A qualitative approach was used coupled with a case study design. Data were collected through focus group discussions with 12 offenders and interviews

with two prison teaching staff. The study found that health information, education information and spiritual information are the major information needs of Mzimba Prison offenders. The study also found that the majority of respondents agreed that the six most popular sources of information are their friends, teachers, radio, television, books and newspapers. However, the study concluded that Mzimba Prison (library) fails to fulfil its role as a source of information and meets the information needs of offenders due to various challenges. Challenges identified are a lack of information resources, limited time available for offenders to search for information, poor services, and the lack of funding for correctional libraries.

Obiano (2020) examined the availability and use of library resources in the rehabilitation of offenders in Imo and Abia states, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design using three research questions and three hypotheses. The population of the study comprised 3 854 prisoners from the five prisons in the two states. A sample of 713 prisoners was drawn through a combination of purposive and random sampling. The results revealed that these correctional centres only had two correctional libraries, indicating shortages in the provision of LIS services in these centres. The study further noted that while learning resources such as fiction books, textbooks, magazines, chairs, and lighting were available, other essential learning materials like newspapers, audio cassettes, videotapes, DVDs, and library software were not available to offenders. The study recommended the provision of additional resources to improve teaching and learning in correctional services in Nigeria.

Akirapa and Yawe (2022) assessed the management of education services in Ugandan prisons, with Luzira Upper Prison as the unit of analysis. The purpose of their research was to establish the type of education services rendered to offenders and the working relationships between the administration and the education system. The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches to gather the necessary data using a case study design. A questionnaire and an interview guide were used to collect data from offenders accessing education services, teachers, prison warders and senior prison staff who were purposively selected and who comprised the sample (n=104). The study

findings confirmed the provision of vocational training and basic education in the form of general subjects and creative art teaching lessons, among others, to the offenders. It concluded that the government needs to effectively increase finances to mitigate shortages arising from the provision of education to offenders, and strategically plan an expansion of the curricula to include skills targeting psycho-social aspects in a restricted environment to allow complete rehabilitation after inmate tenure. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education and Sports should not only make inmate education compulsory for all offenders but also take the leading role in adopting prison schools on the list of community public schools in Uganda.

In Canada, Sheppard and Ricciardelli (2020:34-48) explored the employment concerns of former offenders released into the community. Six cohorts totalling 24 participants were followed over three years. Participants' age ranges varied between 21 and 53 years. A longitudinal study involving in-depth, semi-structured interviews was conducted with 21 men and three self-identifying women who had been released from federal correctional centres in a major Canadian city over three years. The study examined how the stigma imposed on individuals with prior experiences of incarceration interacts with the employment programming government and community-based agencies offer, particularly within the current climate of precarious employment. The results revealed that participants often secured jobs that involved manual labour and reported experiencing low-wage and non-gratifying jobs, despite participation in pre-employment programming. These experiences drive the participants' re-evaluation and re-creation of career aspirations. Stigmatisation was found to be a major impediment to the employment of offenders as they were perceived to be dangerous, untrustworthy, and cruel. This resulted in further marginalisation and exclusion of many capable and skilled offenders from finding suitable jobs.

Vuk and Applegate (2021) explored the factors linked to pre-release cognitions, future orientation and readiness for release at five medium-security correctional institutions housing male offenders in South Carolina, USA. Survey data were collected from a sample of 503 respondents in medium-security correctional centres. Quantitative analysis

revealed that idleness, marital status, and drug dependence are associated with future orientation, while idleness, engagement in work and education, age, marital status, sentence phase, and mental health issues are related to readiness for release. Overall, the study concludes that while offenders are generally future-oriented, they are less confident that they are prepared for release from prison.

Sauter, Vogel, Seewald, Hausam and Peter-Dahle (2019) investigated the relationships between occupational factors such as job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and the functionality of the organisational structure, prison climate, the number of days staff members are sick, and offenders' treatment motivation. The results of the study conducted in three correctional units in Berlin, Germany, showed that a positive correctional climate was associated with higher levels of team climate, job satisfaction, and the functionality of the organisational structure, but not with self-efficacy and sick days. The study stressed the importance of a positive social climate in improving not only morale and engagement but also work readiness among offenders. The results indicated a strong need to (i) strengthen stakeholder links, (ii) enforce industry-centric university curricula, (iii) improve graduate work experience, and (iv) hone graduate soft skills and their attitude to work. (Sauter, Vogel, Seewald, Hausam, and Peter-Dahle, 2019).

2.9 KNOWLEDGE GAPS IN THE CURRENT RESEARCH

From the literature reviewed, empirical analysis on correctional education and libraries vary considerably, comprising discourses on the quality and adequacy of correctional services, the changing role of correctional libraries, human resource issues in correctional centres, overcrowding and health conditions, teaching and learning resources, access to education and training opportunities, the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes, escalation of reoffending rates, juvenile education, and women's rights in correctional centres. However, none of the studies reviewed above offers an integrated analysis of how correctional libraries contribute to offenders' functional literacy, skills development and career transition needs. Furthermore, although the significance of correctional libraries has been recognised in UN declarations and library services guidelines, research on the role of correctional libraries remains scanty and dissipated, with most published

articles coming from the USA (Garner, 2022). Researchers, for example, Magagula, Maziriri and Saurombe (2020) have noted that there is an unequivocal gap between what educational institutions teach and what the South African labour market requires, highlighting a misalignment and one of many reasons graduates struggle to find work. Khumalo, Mugwisi and Jiyane (2018) affirm the knowledge deficits on the role of correctional libraries in advancing the educational rights of offenders and attribute this to the colonial legacy and the lack of resources, particularly in developing countries such as South Africa. Mukeredzi (2021:89) notes that prisoners' motivations for embarking on AET programmes have not been fully investigated. The voices of prisoners are hardly found in existing empirical studies and there has been limited empirical research on work readiness and placement of offenders in the workplace after incarceration. Smith (2021) concurs, stating that previous research has not explored employers' positions and attitudes towards hiring former offenders. Consequently, there is a gap in the literature regarding employer perceptions and attitudes in dealing with the employability of released offenders.

Studies conducted in the Mpumalanga Province have not been able to provide a robust empirical analysis of the role of correctional libraries in functional literacy, skills development, and career transition for offenders. Nonetheless, their findings and methodologies are of interest and relevance and are reported below.

Du Plessis and Lombard (2018) using a mixed-methods approach investigated rehabilitation challenges at correctional centres in the Bethal management area. The goal was to explore and describe how rehabilitation and unit management can be optimised to address the needs of offenders. The quantitative part of the research examined how rehabilitation and unit management could be optimised based on offenders' views and perceptions of their rehabilitation needs. The qualitative part examined the contribution of professional correctional officials and unit management to the rehabilitation of offenders. Du Plessis and Lombard (2018) concluded that the DCS needs to prioritise the strengthening of human resources (including professionals), provide resources, increase vocational training opportunities for offenders, and improve infrastructure within

correctional centres. Like their study, the current study used mixed methods comprising questionnaires, interviews and observation. Their study was conducted in a similar setting targeted by the present study. However, the two studies differ in terms of analytical variables, with the former focusing exclusively on rehabilitation and corrections management, whereas the present study examined the role of the library in supporting functional literacy, skills development, and employability of offenders after incarceration. Methodologically, the two studies share similarities in terms of stratified random sampling and, as noted, the use of interviews and questionnaires for data collection. However, Du Plessis and Lombard's (2018) study broadly concerned operational and managerial issues rather than correctional pedagogy as in the case of the current study.

In a second (and earlier) Mpumalanga Province-based study Mondlane (2013) investigated the management of the social reintegration programme in the DCS in Mbombela Municipality. The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the social reintegration programme, social acceptance, and the application of skills obtained in the correctional facility as a deterrent to committing a further crime. Like the present study, Mondlane (2013) employed a mixed-methods research approach and his study revealed that the majority of offenders do not lead a crime-free life after imprisonment. They were not equipped with skills that could make them employable and self-sufficient in the outside world, and more resources were needed to support the implementation of rehabilitation programmes. Philosophically, as alluded to, the study was guided by mixed-methods research and sought to investigate how correctional programmes, including skills development, are implemented to benefit offenders. These methodological features are shared by the present study. While the research setting is similar, the two studies differ in terms of scope as the former only made use of two case studies in Nelspruit and Barberton, whereas the present study covered correctional centres in three district municipalities of Mpumalanga (Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande, and Nkanga).

Khoabane (2018) investigated the challenges experienced by educationists as well as incarcerated learners in meeting offenders' learning and development needs. A qualitative research design using an interpretive paradigm was employed. The sample

was purposively selected from a correctional facility in the Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Northwest (LMN) region with two schools inside the correctional facility: one school was for adult learners whilst the other was for juvenile learners. A total of six educationists (three males and three females) and 10 male incarcerated learners participated in the study. Only male incarcerated learners were selected because there were no female learners registered full-time for Grades 10 to 12 at either school. The key findings of the study demonstrate that curriculum issues, learners' personal problems, educators' perceptions, and institutional challenges have a negative impact on learner progression from AET level 4 to Grade 10 within the correctional schools. Paradigmatically, the research relied on qualitative research design and an interpretative paradigm, whereas the present study used explanatory sequential design and pragmatism as the underpinning philosophy. While the present study combined quantitative and qualitative perspectives, Khoabane's (2018) offered a one-dimensional view of correctional programmes as it relied on textual data for analysis; whereas the present study makes use of both numerical and non-numerical datasets to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. In terms of focus, the study only examined educational issues from Grades 10 to 12; whereas the present study looked at both functional literacy and employability skills, thus offering a multidimensional perspective of what education and training are like for offenders in correctional centres within Mpumalanga Province.

Using Barberton as a case study, Nel (2017) examined how correctional facilities can suppress gang activity in correctional centres. The findings of the observation revealed that gangs each have a unique way of greeting, using hand gestures, tattoos and verbal greetings. The observational findings were confirmed by utilising qualitative research. The experiences of gang members were examined by means of questionnaires to better understand the dynamic. The qualitative study was conducted at four correctional facilities, namely a maximum, medium A, and medium B security facilities as well as a town youth facility in the Barberton management area. Using action research design the study focused exclusively on gang activity as its key analytic variable. This contrasts sharply with the present study, which considered a broad range of variables, including information needs, teaching and learning processes, types of skills programmes offered

to offenders, employability skills, and collaboration between LIS personnel and stakeholders in the skills development system. While Barberton is included in the sample selection for the present study, the analysis incorporates multiple case studies to allow meaningful comparisons of LIS programmes offered to offenders across the three district municipalities (Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande, and Nkangala).

In response to the knowledge gaps outlined above, the present study adopted a holistic approach to derive multiple perspectives of library managers, librarians, offenders, educators, facilitators, former offenders, employers, and community members on the learning needs of offenders. The intention was to provide an in-depth understanding of whether correctional libraries collaborate with other stakeholders within the correctional system to address the learning and skills development of offenders. The potential contribution of this study to the current body of research is its development of a service delivery model for correctional libraries in South Africa. From an LIS perspective, the study established how education and training services offered by the library can be utilised to positively influence the attitudes and behaviours of offenders to facilitate their social integration back into their communities. The study was enhanced by reference to how criminology theory has evolved from prescriptive top-down approaches that emphasise policy reforms to a more integrative approach that places offenders, families, communities and stakeholders at the centre of the restorative justice system. Emasealu (2018) affirms the lack of research on the role of correctional libraries in functional literacy and skills development by stating that rehabilitation research has focused mainly on correctional authorities while that of offenders has been sparsely investigated. Qiu (2020) argues that the right of offenders to education has not been adequately addressed as it rarely appears in the LIS literature, while correctional libraries have received little attention from mainstream scholarly works, particularly in developing countries such as South Africa.

An outline of the key concepts that underpinned the study follows.

2.11 SUMMARY

Chapter 2 provided a critical assessment of extant literature on traditional criminology approaches and restorative justice models. While classical criminology decontextualises criminal behaviour and sees policy as instrumental to alleviating criminality, restorative justice theory embraces the power of transformative learning in improving the lives of offenders. In contrast to these perspectives, and from a LIS perspective, the present study argued that the purpose of correctional services has been misconceived in the rehabilitation literature. Overreliance on stringent policy measures has led to the adoption of a one-size-fits-all approach which has failed to bring about meaningful social transformation in correctional populations. The review of empirical studies revealed gaps in scientific knowledge, with many of these studies delving into prison conditions, recidivism, health and human rights issues, overcrowding, rehabilitation programmes, and the plight of women offenders. Detailed empirical accounts of functional literacy and employability skills needs of offenders are missing in current studies. Considering these knowledge deficits, the current study sought to determine the role of correctional libraries in addressing functional literacy, skills development and career transition needs of offenders in Mpumalanga Province.

Chapter 3 follows and provides a review of the triangulated theoretical framework that guided this mixed-methods study.

CHAPTER 3 : THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 provided insights into the historical debates surrounding criminology, as well as the evolution of rehabilitation as a practice. While penal approaches see rehabilitation as punishment, behaviouralist approaches perceive rehabilitation as a tool for bringing about positive and enduring change in offenders' lives. An important lesson from the literature reviewed is that rehabilitation is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that requires multiple insights from quantitative and qualitative data. Against this backdrop, Chapter 3 examines seven theories that relate to the phenomenon under study and then highlights the four most relevant ones that constituted the analytic lens for the study. The theories examined are the Information Behaviour theory, the Desistance theory, the Context-Mechanism-Outcome (CMO) theory, Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystem theory, the Human Capital theory, Hettler's (2000) Wellness model, and Mezirow's (1997) Transformative Learning theory. Theory triangulation involves using multiple theoretical perspectives to plan a study or interpret the data (Neuman, 2011:165). In this research, the theories are used as a collective lens to understand whether correctional libraries support the learning and development of offenders. The discussion below also illustrates how each chosen theory aligns with the research questions.

3.2.1 Information Behaviour theory

The departure point in Wilson's (1975) pioneer study of Information Behaviour is that living organisms have goals that must be satisfied, and for that, organisms must locate and identify their goals. Organisms must guide themselves to their goals. To do so, organisms need behaviourally relevant information about their environment (Hjorland, 2015:20). In subsequent studies of information behaviour, Wilson (1999) and Young and Yuan (2022) emphasise that meaningful information-seeking processes are intertwined with a strong feedback mechanism from those in charge of information resources, for example, librarians. In this study, Information Behaviour theory is intended to enhance understanding of how offenders determine their information needs. It also provides a

means to assess the contribution of correctional library managers and librarians to meeting offenders' information and learning needs. To this end, the study employed the theory to deepen understanding of the types of information that offenders use to meet their learning and development needs in their correctional services centre.

Contemporary information behaviour theorists such as Agarwal (2023) have included other dimensions of information seeking behaviours, avoiding, distorting, encountering by chance, organising, storing, creating, sharing, diffusing and deciding to stop using information. In another contemporary study, Bates (2022) advances six frameworks that can be used to understand individuals' information search behaviours and these include the self, the thinking and motivated being shaped by societal norms and values, traditions and cultural orientations.

Emasealu and Popula (2016:13) point out that information means facts or ideas transmitted and received through communication, which involves acquiring knowledge. It is symbols which have the potential for meaning and is crucial for satisfying offenders' development needs. This ultimately triggers an information need, prompting a personal search for relevant information resources to meet personal goals, such as education and career development. As far as skills development and career transition are concerned, offenders have information needs that are almost similar to ordinary learners outside the correctional services system. Shirley (2003) and Hjørland (2015) have reviewed and adapted Wilson's model to reflect other crucial constructs that shape the information needs of individuals. These include education, research, professional, vocational, cultural, personal development, spiritual and physical needs.

While yielding useful insights into what triggers individual desire and motivation to search for information, Wilson's Information Behaviour Theory overlooks the mediating role of technology in bridging the gap between individuals and the library. A review of information behaviour theory is warranted to provide a more nuanced understanding of the evolving role of correctional libraries in the age of information and communications technology and more lately, artificial intelligence. Notwithstanding these limitations, Information

Behaviour Theory provides the basis for understanding the extent to which offenders use LIS to meet their functional literacy, skills, and career needs in Mpumalanga's correctional centres.

3.2.2 Desistance theory

Initially conceptualised by Wright (1982) and subsequently adapted by Maruna (2001 and 2016) and others, the Desistance theory advances the view that criminal behaviour can be progressively remedied or corrected through an empowering self-development programme that focuses on the inner strengths of the individual to disengage from criminal behaviour. As theorised by Devers (2011:2), desistance implies the voluntary cessation of grievous criminal behaviour. It is when an individual voluntarily stops committing a crime completely. However, desistance patterns vary considerably between offenders in terms of age, marital status, and gender over time. Consequently, young men tend to be more prone to crime than older men. In other words, individuals tend to desist from criminal behaviour as they get older. Equally, offenders with intimate spousal relationships are more likely to desist from criminally inclined behaviours than those who are single. Gender influences desistance in various ways too, with women tending to commit fewer crimes than their male counterparts (Weaver, 2018). By applying the Desistance theory in the study, the researcher sought to understand the role of correctional libraries in promoting desistance through education.

The Desistance theory is in response to the shortcomings detected in classical criminology theories, including the prescriptive nature of crime prevention measures, which were wholly attributed to policy analysis rather than social factors. In defending the Desistance theory, McNeill, Farrall, and Lightowler and Maruna (2012) claim that the desistance process (that is how and why individuals withdraw from criminal activities) has the potential to enhance understanding of how the criminal justice system could be reformed to reflect a more human and dignified approach to rehabilitation of offenders in correctional centres. In essence, the Desistance theory examines the holistic development of individuals placed in rehabilitation programmes rather than their biological make-up. This requires a collaborative approach involving offenders' families and

relatives, community-based organisations, faith-based organisations, and relevant state institutions to provide integrated rehabilitation solutions. In this view, rehabilitation services must be diversified to address the unique development needs of offenders. Therefore, rehabilitation should focus on all aspects of life, such as cognitive, spiritual, emotional, cultural, and relational needs. From this angle, rehabilitation is more than just helping individuals abstain from criminal behaviour, which is what most classical criminology theorists assume should be the case. Instead, rehabilitation should be viewed as a multi-faceted intervention aimed at facilitating moral regeneration, self-renewal, and social adjustment. Empowering others to reflect on and learn from their “wicked behaviour” is a central tenet of the Desistance theory.

Rather than isolating and stigmatising offenders, the Desistance theory suggests that wrongdoers can still be salvaged from their deeds through observance of fundamental human rights, such as equality, mutual respect, non-discrimination and human dignity (Maruna, 2016). In summary, a distinguishing feature of the theory is that meaningful rehabilitation cannot be attained without consideration of social capital, highlighting the importance of community support networks in correcting criminal behaviour. Rather than focusing on short-term policy interventions (as implied by classical criminology), the Desistance theory posits that rehabilitation should take a long-term focus to ensure that reformed individuals do not resort to recidivism. In Muruna’s (2016) view, the theory is about helping offenders find their inner self (personal identity), and rebuild and restore hope so that they can see themselves as part of society rather than outcasts. The Desistance theory is useful in addressing the first research objective concerning the extent to which correctional libraries and stakeholders (for example, library managers, librarians, facilitators of learning, employers and local communities) support functional literacy, skills development, and career transition of offenders to the workplace.

While yielding useful insights into how contextual factors shape rehabilitation interventions, there is still a lack of scholarly convergence of the meaning and interpretation of the concept of desistance as it applies to incarcerated individuals in society. Desistance theory underestimates the adverse impact of stigma on former

offenders when they seek employment opportunities. Offenders who have ceased committing crimes may still suffer from discrimination and social exclusion as a result of their incarceration record. Desistance theory also fails to account for the recurring incidents of recidivism by individuals who have ceased committing crime.

3.2.3 Context-Mechanism-Outcome theory

Originally linked to Pawson and Tilley (2004), the CMO theory examines how social and organisational contexts shape programme implementation and outcomes. Within the CMO framework, Nielsen, Lemire and Tangsig (2021:1) observed that contextualising policy interventions is an important consideration in understanding under what conditions an intervention works, for whom, and why it has a positive or an adverse impact on intended beneficiaries. Programme context encompasses a multitude of variables, including social, economic, legal, political, and ecological factors that explain how complex interventions lead to changes in outcomes. Blamey and Mackenzie (2007) emphasise that the successful implementation of rehabilitation programmes depends on critical contextual factors, such as leadership, culture, poverty, unemployment, family background, and prevailing economic conditions. While classical criminology approaches downplay the importance of socioeconomic factors in shaping criminal behaviour, the CMO theory maintains that contextualisation is key to understanding why crime prevention strategies succeed or fail to achieve the intended goals (Pawson, Greenhalgh, Harvey and Walshe, 2004).

The impact and severity of context on rehabilitation programmes, for example, may differ from one location to another. While some contexts may be supportive of correctional initiatives, others may be unsupportive or distractive (Coldwell, 2019) and may contain variables that are beyond the control of programme stakeholders, such as the political climate. In other words, determining the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes requires a deep understanding of how social, cultural and political dynamics shape both the design and execution of such interventions. Therefore, the impact of complex and multi-level rehabilitation initiatives cannot be established with confidence if contextual factors are excluded from programme evaluation. Consequently, this study incorporated

questions for librarians, managers, facilitators of learning, employers and community representatives to ensure that all the contextual issues shaping the provision of functional literacy and skills development services were reflected in the analysis.

Recently adapted by Szifris, Fox, and Bradbury (2018:41-62), the CMO theory articulates correctional services education in three interconnected principles, namely, hook, safe space, and qualifications. While hook portrays engaging in education as a catalyst for change and rediscovery of personal identity, safe space examines how the learning environment or classroom helps shape the self or personal identity. Qualifications imply the relevance of the knowledge and skills that offenders acquire whilst enrolled in learning programmes in correctional facilities (Szifris et al., 2018). In this perspective, correctional education should prepare offenders for the world of work in a holistic rather than a piecemeal fashion. In essence, the CMO represents a pragmatic approach to exploring complex, multilevel policy interventions such as rehabilitation programmes to determine “what works, how, why, in which context, for whom, and to what extent” (De Wiger, Van Vooren, Wong, Dalkins, Marcha, Drewes, and Baan, 2020). A central thesis of the CMO theory is that rehabilitation programmes need to be hypothesised not only in terms of their intended outcomes but also in terms of the contexts that shape them (Pawson and Tilley, 1997 in De Wiger et al., 2020). The CMO theory propagates a data-intensive approach to evaluating the effectiveness of policy interventions (Hobbs and Tully, 2020), hence the need to blend qualitative and quantitative analysis in this study.

In this research, a multiple case study design enabled contextualisation of the factors that impact the contribution of libraries to the rehabilitation and restoration of offenders. The CMO theory helps understand why individuals or a group of beneficiaries respond differently to rehabilitation programmes. A precondition for CMO is that evaluators (researchers) should have a clear understanding of programme characteristics, such as objectives, tasks, roles and responsibilities, and targets, and the desired outcomes should be clearly understood. Pawson (2013) observes that programme context comprises various factors, including individuals’ needs and wants, work relationships, reciprocal social networks, power relations, stakeholders’ needs and expectations, political climate

and societal norms and values. Similarly, Ludlow, Amstrong and Bartels, (2019) postulate the need for practitioners in corrections to forge professional relationships both within and outside of the service delivery system to improve their knowledge and expertise. Contextual factors such as power relations and relationship dynamics are important in understanding critical research questions such as an intervention for who? by whom? why? and how? As with all theories of change, the CMO theory holds that interventions reflect the multiple views, perceptions and expectations of diverse stakeholders and the complex decisions that have to be made to get those interventions off the ground (Pawson and Tilley 2004). The CMO model tends to place high emphasis on linear analysis of programme outcomes based on contextual factors such as institutional barriers; resources and stakeholder influences. Consequently, this theory overlooks the potential impact of technical aspects of programme design, such as objectives, scope, beneficiaries and programme implementation technologies. One of the key revelations of this study is that environmental factors alone are not sufficient to explain why rehabilitation interventions fail to produce the desired results. The implication of this statement is that rehabilitation interventions are also affected by factors beyond the micro-environment; such as societal perceptions of offenders.

3.2.4 Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystems theory

Bronfenbrenner's (1975,1977,1979) Ecosystems framework comprises three levels that influence the learning and development of individuals, including offenders, in society. The first level is the microsystem which includes the individual's immediate family, peers and school. These shape early development and profoundly impact how individuals progress through the other stages in life, such as work and business. The second level is the exosystem which comprises other people and places that, although not directly linked to the individual, provide additional avenues for learning and growth. Classic examples include institutional rehabilitation practices, the workplace, relatives, neighbours and the church. The third level is the macrosystem, which is fairly distanced from the individual's immediate environment and spans rehabilitation policy, regulations and programmes advanced by the government through its implementing agencies (Arditti, 2005). Although naturally beyond offenders' control, this environment comprises factors that profoundly

influence their development. These include societal culture and values, freedoms citizens enjoy, the economy, subcultures, political leadership, and labour market conditions. These elements can either have a positive or negative effect on both the development and reintegration of offenders in society.

Wright, Pratt, Lowenkamp and Latessa (2011:776) argue while early theorists and policymakers were primarily occupied with “getting tough” on crime and the “lock them up” strategy, ecological researchers shifted the debate from punish and control to the centrality of ecological contexts in both the design and administration of offender rehabilitation programmes. From an ecological perspective, Wright et al. (2011) argued that rather than focusing on programme choice or variety, greater emphasis should be placed on the quality of the intervention, hence the need for the examination of all ecological contexts. In the ecological view, consideration of ecological factors is more significant than examining the variety of policy options needed to punish and restore offenders, which is what classical theorists such as Martinson (1974) thought would ameliorate criminal behaviour in offenders.

Highlighting the negative impact of macro-level factors on reconviction rates for black males in Florida, USA, a study by Reisig, Bales, Hay and Wang (2007) revealed that a high prevalence of inequality and racial discrimination was more likely to precipitate reoffending behaviour among returning offenders. A subsequent study by Mears, Wang, Hay and Bales (2008) noted the devastating impact of severely under-resourced ecological contexts on offender transformation and social integration and concluded that such environments tended to reverse the benefits derived from rehabilitation programmes. The ecological view offers critical insights into the role of micro-level and macro-level factors impacting the development of offenders, particularly in this Mpumalanga case study. Ecosystem theory provides deeper understanding of how social, economic and ecological factors support or hinder learning and development among individuals; such as offenders. These factors include family, friends, peers, school and the broader macro-economic environment. Adversely, this theory fails to demonstrate

the empirical relationships or connections between the various ecosystems, for example, family, school or workplace.

3.2.5 Human Capital theory

Initially propagated by Schultz (1960) and subsequently advanced by Becker (1964), the Human Capital theory sees education and training as the basis for building not just employability skills and income generation opportunities for offenders, but also as a means to improve efficiency gains in national economies worldwide. Grounded in the economics of education, the theory asserts that aggregate investment in intellectual capital drives economic growth and development for the benefit of individuals and society (Marginson, 2017). The skills and expertise that offender graduates bring to the labour market play a vital role in ameliorating joblessness, skills backlogs, income inequality, and poor productivity.

The fundamental premise of the Human Capital theory is that education and training opportunities are central to building critical human capital required to drive economic growth, innovation, entrepreneurship and technological development nationally (Becker, 1964). In this theory, human capital encompasses the knowledge and skills individuals gain through schooling and vocational training (Khanyinga and Muathe, 2018). As an investment, education benefits the economy, including building and retaining talent, increasing the ability of people to adjust to changing labour market conditions, and increasing skill levels critical for gaining competitive advantage and sustained economic development (Mutamba, 2016:2). This cannot be realised without the involvement of correctional libraries.

In so far as the present study is concerned, the Human Capital theory provides a useful lens for understanding government spending on correctional education as both an economic investment and a primary source of human capital in correctional contexts. It conceptualises the interconnections between education, employability skills, and income-earning potential. In a knowledge-driven economy, the workforce's competencies and expertise ensure excellence in performance and customer experience through creativity,

innovation, and knowledge sharing (Al Majali and Almomani, 2020). By stressing continuous improvement in the cognitive development of individuals, the Human Capital theory creates space for exploring how correctional service institutions use education to shape the future of offenders beyond incarceration. Empirically, it has been shown that intellectual capital is increasingly replacing traditional means of production as an instrument for driving socio-economic transformation worldwide (Fang and Chao, 2021). Because of this, the Human Capital theory has been factored into the study as a critical lens for understanding human capital development in criminology contexts.

While acknowledging the vital role that education plays in preparing individuals for the world of work and the future, human capital theory, fails to account for the dynamics that impact individuals' participation and progression in the education system. Examples include the quality of education; curriculum requirements and changing labour market conditions. Human capital theory assumes that all individuals go through a linear process of education that leads to a qualification and a productive life in the economy. Consequently, little has been documented about how education reproduces inequality and social stratification in society (Marginson, 2017).

3.2.6 Hettler's Wellness model (1976)

Hettler's Wellness model (1976) comprises six components that impact offenders' learning and development (Botha and Brand, 2009:3-4). Firstly, intellectual wellness examines how individuals learn to improve their knowledge and skills. It promotes life-long learning, self-development, self-motivation, creativity and innovation, achievement, career development, and skills acquisition. The lack of learning opportunities can lead to demoralisation, anger, frustration or withdrawal (Hettler, 1976). Engaging in educational experiences through the library and self-directed learning activities enhances and lends credence to Hettler's wellness model (Snyder and Horton, 2009).

The emotional aspect of wellness demands a balance between an individual's psychological and emotional needs, including intimate relationships and sexual satisfaction. Social wellness is important and underlines the need for belonging,

socialising, being part of a group and living in a healthy natural environment free from pollution and violence. The spiritual dimension focuses on morality, clean life and ethical conduct. Physical wellness covers vitality, healthy living and nutritional value. Finally, Wellness theory scholars have reached similar conclusions, noting that overall wellness is realised when there is a conducive atmosphere between the individual and his surroundings (Allison, 1999; Zwetsloot and Pot, 2004). The Wellness model provides useful theoretical constructs that aided analysis in the present study, such as job satisfaction, income generation, access to career support services, promotions, staff development, and employability skills. Together, these dimensions provided an ideal lens for understanding the role of correctional libraries and stakeholders in addressing functional literacy, skills development, and career transition needs of offenders in Mpumalanga Province.

A holistic understanding of wellness factors is significant as these variables impact directly offenders' ability and capacity to engage meaningfully in both theoretical and experiential learning activities. Upon entering the custodial environment, offenders are deprived of their personal freedoms and life privileges, resulting in low self-esteem, poor wellbeing, and high stress levels. In punitive correctional cultures, this may lead to the deterioration of all wellness capital, including academic, social, spiritual, cognitive, and physical wellbeing as a result of pain, trauma and suffering. This could be worse in situations where there is a high prevalence of illicit drugs.

Scicluna and Calafato (2022) insinuate that the very nature of correctional design and the prevailing climate conditions deprive officials and offenders of social, psychological and emotional wellbeing, resulting in tensions and poor relational outcomes. In many instances, the constraining effect of correctional regimes tends to reverse gains in both educational and psychosocial support programmes intended to rehabilitate and integrate offenders socially. Magano (2016) posits that achieving academic performance in the custodial environment requires intense social networks with various stakeholders to bring knowledge and expertise on how to serve learners in correctional centres. However, in more nurturing and accommodating correctional environments with positive and inclusive

cultures, offenders tend to experience high positive wellbeing, especially where there is visible support, health care and respectable relationships.

Despite its high emphasis on holistic rehabilitation practices, Hettler's Wellness Model lacks rigour and clarity on pragmatic strategies necessary to maintain equilibrium in all six dimensions of wellness, for example, social, psychological, emotional, academic and spiritual wellness. In addition, Hettler's model also assumes that all individuals go through a linear process of wellness spanning all six dimensions. In reality, offenders have varied and complex personalities that are not always compatible with routine rehabilitation interventions. And this explains why some offenders have a strong disposition towards reoffending behaviours despite having received counselling and assistance in all six dimensions of wellness.

3.2.7 Transformative Learning theory

Historically advanced by Mezirow (1991, 1994, 1997) and subsequently expanded by Taylor and Cranton (2013), the Transformative Learning theory posits that critical learning has the potential to change a person's life, especially if it draws on their past experience. Transformative learning is the process of effecting change in a frame of reference (Mezirow, 1997:7). People generally have embedded frames of reference, which they use to interpret the world before them. These include personal values, beliefs, assumptions and feelings. Together, these shape and condition our thoughts and behaviours towards others. We can transform our frame of reference through critical reflection on our deeply held assumptions, which shape our interpretations of reality (Mezirow, 1997, and Fleming, 2018).

The study conducted by Grund, Singer-Brodowski and Bussing (2023) revealed that theories of emotion and transformative learning are rare, as reviewed in Mezirow's (1998) earlier writings. The findings of the study revealed that diverse emotions enable sustainability-related transformative learning processes.

We can learn by transforming our viewpoints. This can be achieved by observing other cultures and using lessons from that experience to change our misconceptions about other people. As a result of such learnings, we may become more tolerant of different cultures. In addition, critical reflection can be realised through several strategies, including reading, group discussions, empathetic listening, self-assessment, and engaging in problem-solving tasks (Mezirow, 1998). As an important theoretical construct in the study, reflective teaching and learning practices are therefore critical in building self-awareness, self-confidence and interpersonal skills among offenders. This theory helped address the research question on functional literacy, skills development, and career transition programmes. Transformational theory advances several outcomes that can be used to measure the effectiveness of correctional education, namely, a paradigm shift in how people perceive the world around them; a shift in consciousness and positive change in interpersonal relationships and openness towards change and a new focus on life, work, and social life (Tonseth and Bergsland, 2019:5-6).

In summary, the Transformative Learning theory propagates critical pedagogy, the primary goal of which is to help offenders discover their inner selves, regain self-esteem and internalise self-regulation (Gray and Ward, 2019). Roth, Asbjornsen and Manger (2016) observed that offenders with self-efficacy in self-regulated learning and mathematics were more likely to partake in education programmes than those who exhibited generally low self-efficacy levels. In this study, transformative pedagogy provided a critical lens for exploring not just the personal transformation that occurs in offenders but also the wider transformation that occurs in correctional institutions tasked with the rehabilitation of offenders (Croates, 2016 and Gauke, 2018 in Gray and Ward, 2019). Transformative learning transcends classroom practices to encompass the wider partnerships that deliver library and skills training services to offenders.

A recent study by Pike and Hopkins (2019) involving the application of the Transformative Learning theory in correctional education contexts has positive psychological outcomes among participants, including improved self-awareness, positive self-image, optimism, resilience and optimistic aspirations about a brighter future after rehabilitation. Schnitzler,

Holzberger, and Seidel 2020:627) and Degtjarjova, Lapina and Freidenfelds (2018) argue that learner participation in cognitive and emotional engagement learning activities are indispensable in academic achievement and are driven by motivational traits such as academic self-concept. Swanepoel, Beukes, and Yu (2021) found that consistent learner attendance correlates positively with high academic achievement and this was corroborated by the studies of Akkus and Cinkir (2022) and Sekiwu, Sempala and Frances (2020). These latter studies found that teacher quality and effectiveness are critical in curbing absenteeism and providing early warnings about learner disengagement from learning activities. McNeil and Weaver (2010) opine that building motivation by educators is likely to awaken the internal drive within individuals to recognise the possibilities of a self-hood and lifestyle that is meaningful and desirable. Bond, Buntins, Bedenlier, Zawacki- Richter and Kerres (2020) perceive learner disengagement as a negative trend in offenders' knowledge and skills acquisition as compared to learner engagement, which contributes to learner achievement, cognitive development, and improved retention and dropout rates in learning programmes.

Mezirow and Taylor (2009) and Wals (2020) argue that transformative pedagogy is about promoting change, where teachers give their learners complex and challenging but achievable assignments to help them sharpen their critical thinking skills. Furthermore, this is demonstrated in active participation, performance and achievement in the learning programme (Perez-Salas, Parra, Saez-Delgado and Olivares, 2021). These outcomes provide the impetus for probing the role of correctional libraries in supporting functional literacy, skills training, and career transition for offenders. Transformative learning theory advances a critical approach to correctional education; which is necessary to foster personal reflection; self-renewal and a sense of self-discovery among offenders. Unfortunately, this theory fails to provide nuanced explanations of the processes that offenders can follow to achieve self-actualisation in their rehabilitation journey.

Table 3.1 below depicts the theories' principles, constructs, and research questions they are aligned with. As can be seen, all seven of the theories outlined above were relevant to the study. However, as mentioned, four were identified to serve as an interpretive

framework for this mixed-methods study. These were the Information Behaviour theory, the Desistance theory, the CMO theory, and the Transformative Learning theory (and are depicted in bold in the table). While the Information Behaviour theory was applied to identify the information needs of offenders, the Desistance theory provided flexibility in examining the impact of social context on rehabilitation services. The CMO theory was particularly useful in establishing the extent to which programme characteristics influenced outcomes in functional literacy, skills development, and career transition interventions. Finally, the Transformative Learning theory was used to establish whether offenders are assisted in acquiring practical knowledge and skills that empower them to participate in employment and business opportunities in the economy, as well as their integration into society.

Table 3.1: Theoretical constructs and their relevance to the study

Theory	Principles	Constructs	Research questions
Desistance theory	Holistic development focusing on individual strengths and limitations Human rights-based approach to correctional education	Equality Human dignity Respect Empathy Restoration Support	To what extent do correctional libraries and stakeholders meet the development needs of offenders in terms of functional literacy, skills development, and career transition to the workplace?
Context-Mechanism-Outcome (CMO) theory	Contextual factors shape programming decisions	Programme implementation is impacted by social, economic, political, legal and ecological factors	What specific programmes are currently provided by correctional libraries and stakeholders to promote functional literacy, skills development and career transition, and what strategies are used to deliver these interventions?
Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystem theory	Individual learning and development are influenced by microsystem, exosystem and macrosystem level factors	Family and peers School and community Societal norms and values Support structures	What are the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in facilitating functional literacy, skills development, and career transition for offenders in correctional centres?
Human Capital theory	Acquisition of skills and competencies Investment in education and training	Competency-based training interventions Employability skills Career orientation	What mechanisms, if any, are used to track and measure the quality of functional literacy, skills development and career transition programs offered to offenders in correctional centres?
Hettler's Wellness Model (2000)	A holistic approach to correctional education	Academic wellness Spiritual wellness Physical wellness Psychological wellness	What specific programmes are currently provided by correctional libraries and stakeholders to promote functional literacy, skills development and career transition, and what strategies are used to deliver these interventions?
Transformative Learning theory	Critical reflection enables individuals to question and redefine their values and beliefs in relation to others	Self-awareness Self-evaluation Empathy Reflective teaching and learning Relational competence	What specific programmes are currently provided by correctional libraries and stakeholders to promote functional literacy, skills development and career transition, and what strategies are used to deliver these interventions?
Information Behaviour theory	How offenders identify and satisfy their information needs	Information search Information processing Information context Learning needs Knowledge production	What specific programmes are currently provided by correctional libraries and stakeholders to promote functional literacy, skills development and career transition, and what strategies are used to deliver these interventions?

Source: Researcher's creation (2024)

As shown in Table 3.1, all seven theories were considered and integrated in the analysis and interpretation of the results. While the Desistance theory offers a humanitarian perspective on offender rehabilitation, the CMO theory draws our attention to situational factors that may limit the provision of correctional education programmes. The Information Behaviour theory stresses the need for library establishments to provide information resources that are relevant and responsive to the needs and expectations of learners and/or end users. Finally, the Transformative Learning theory calls for critical reflection to inform correctional education programmes. Together, these theoretical constructs provide a robust analytical framework for understanding the role of correctional libraries in supporting functional literacy and skills development for inmates in Mpumalanga Province.

3.3 SUMMARY

From an LIS perspective, Chapter 3 argued that understanding the complex and evolving role of correctional libraries in functional literacy, skills development, and career transition requires an integrated theoretical framework to derive multiple perspectives on the phenomenon of interest. The four selected theories discussed above were considered relevant and provided the interpretive framework for the study.

Chapter 4, the research design and methodology adopted for the study, follows.

CHAPTER 4 : RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter demonstrated how a triangulated theoretical framework consisting of the Information Behaviour theory, the CMO model, the Desistance theory, Bronfenbrenner's ecosystem theory, Human Capital theory, Hettler's wellness model and the Transformative Learning model could be used to provide a nuanced interpretation of offender rehabilitation practices in correctional facilities. Using this as a point of departure, Chapter 4 elucidates and justifies the methodological instruments and strategies that were utilised to assess the contribution of correctional libraries to the development of offenders in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. In essence, the chapter reflects the systematic process followed by the researcher to achieve the objectives of the study. It elucidates the philosophical framework and ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions of the study; the population and sampling strategies used to derive the stratified random and purposive samples used to extract data from the participants; methods of data collection, that is, semi-structured interviews and questionnaire; pre-testing of the questionnaire, and data analysis techniques; and finally, the issue of trustworthiness and the ethical standards that guided this study.

4.2 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research philosophy that guided this research is pragmatism. A key advantage of the pragmatist approach in this study is that it permitted the integration of quantitative and qualitative research methods to address research phenomena comprehensively (Creswell, 2014). Pragmatism allows the application of multiple research techniques to address complex research questions (Maarouf, 2019). While quantitative research enabled the infusion of numeric data into the analysis, qualitative research permitted the use of textual data to accentuate results from the quantitative study to enhance meaning and conclusions. This is further elaborated on below.

4.2.1 Ontological, epistemological, and axiological principles

Brinks (2018:224) states that ontology examines how we make sense of the phenomena under investigation. From a pragmatist viewpoint, the researcher in this study was interested in understanding phenomena from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective rather than relying on a single methodological application. By combining numbers and textual data, pragmatism offers a unique opportunity to solve real-world problems (Creswell, 2014). Mixing these methods effectively mitigates the methodological limitations resulting from the application of single research methods. Under pragmatism, quantitative and qualitative research methods complement each other (Miraarouf, 2019). In this study, a pragmatist paradigm enabled the researcher to explore the role of correctional libraries in promoting and supporting functional literacy and skills development for offenders in correctional facilities (Brinks, 2018:224).

From a qualitative perspective, exploring the role of correctional libraries meant tapping into the diverse experiences of the participants, such as librarians, library managers, facilitators of learning (trainers), employers, former offenders, and community representatives. The epistemological orientation of pragmatism research is that multiple approaches can be applied to derive the “truth” or “what works” (Creswell, 2014; Hall, 2013). In reality, this implies that epistemologically, pragmatism is focused on action (that is problem-solving) rather than theory-building.

The principle of axiology in pragmatism challenges researchers to be mindful of how their own norms and values could potentially affect and/or taint the interpretation of results (Morgan, 2007). Having served in the LIS profession for more than 15 years, the researcher is aware of how her professional status, personal value system, and managerial prerogative might impact the conduct of interviews and focus groups in the 12 correctional centres surveyed. Being part of management in the library sector affected power relations with participants, especially librarians, making it difficult for them to express their views freely and openly. To “level the playing field”, the researcher assured participants before the study that their participation was voluntary, that their right to privacy and freedom of expression would be respected, and that their identities would not

be disclosed. The researcher believes that this helped increase trust and cooperation among the participants (Mirza, Bellalem and Mirza, 2023). To mitigate the risk of bias, the researcher used the reflexivity technique to guard against misrepresentation of the truth during data analysis. Reflexivity is helpful in that it builds an understanding of how to handle interactions with the participants, limitations in knowledge production, and the unexpected challenges that may arise from the social context in which the phenomenon occurs (Morrison, 2015).

4.3 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

The study adopted a multiple case study design and a sequential explanatory approach. The multiple case study design provides flexibility and a versatile tool for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon (Zach 2006:4), while the sequential explanatory approach allows the application of both numeric and non-numeric data to explain social phenomena (Creswell, 2014 and Tashakkori, 2007). Through this approach, the researcher was able to integrate quantitative and qualitative applications at the data collection and data analysis levels.

4.3.1 Multiple case study design

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not evident (Yin, 2018). The case study method aims to understand social phenomena within a single or a small number of naturally occurring settings. In this research, the case studies comprised 12 correctional centres spread across three district municipalities of Mpumalanga, namely, Ehlanzeni, Nkangala and Gert Sibande. Triangulation of methods is often used to draw on the strengths of specific methods to best explore a phenomenon from multiple perspectives (Given, Winkler and Wilson, 2014). Case study research permits the integration and application of different data-gathering techniques, such as questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and observation (Vohra, 2014). As Guba and Lincoln (1994:8) point out, case study research yields multiple sources of data, leading to a deeper comprehensive and robust analysis of the social phenomenon under study.

From an LIS perspective, Zach (2006:4) postulates that multiple case study design provides flexibility and a versatile tool for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon in its bounded context. Case study design has been preferred especially because it permits the exploration of a phenomenon using replication and comparison techniques to identify, confirm and/or disconfirm similarities and differences across the designated cases (Yin, 2001). In this study, for example, it was possible to draw comparisons on how the 12 correctional centres provide LIS to support functional literacy, skills development and employability of offenders.

Besides the contextualised exploration of phenomena, multiple case study design has also been extensively applied to provide a multi-faced understanding of highly complex interventions in their natural setting (Crowe, Creswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery and Sheik, 2011). In this study, a multiple case design enabled the researcher to probe the human experience in a socially diverse correctional population that reflects South Africa's demographics (for example, Africans, Indians, Coloureds and vulnerable groups, that is, women, youth and the disabled). In this way, case study design provides flexibility to explore the attitudes and behaviours of participants towards a given phenomenon (Vohra, 2014) such as, for example, correctional education and training services rendered to offenders.

In terms of this study and a multiple case study design, the phenomenon was approached from an LIS perspective within the context of correctional services in Mpumalanga Province. This Province (or case) was prioritised over other provinces as it has seen a spike in both violent and organised criminal incidents that threaten social cohesion in the province (South African Police Service: Annual Crime Statistics Report, 2022-2023) The 12 correctional centres targeted by the study were: Barberton, Belfast, Bethal, Carolina, Ermelo, Lydenburg, Middleburg, Mbombela, Piet Retief, Standerton, Volksrust, and Witbank. By incorporating the perspectives of all provincial correctional centres into the analysis, the study aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of how education and training services in correctional libraries could be used to advance restorative justice

imperatives in Mpumalanga. The goal was to ensure the safety and security of communities while transferring critical skills to help offenders reclaim their place in society.

4.3.2 Sequential explanatory approach

Within mixed-methods research, the study adopted the sequential explanatory approach. Through this sequential explanatory approach, quantitative data were collected and analysed first as descriptive statistics or percentages (Hughes, 2016). Following this, qualitative data were transcribed and subsequently used to substantiate quantitative results to provide a holistic picture of how libraries and stakeholders contribute to functional literacy, skills development, and career transition of offenders. In essence, this approach allowed the application of both numeric and non-numeric data to explain social phenomena (Creswell, 2014; Tashakkori, 2007). In this study, it was vital to gain insight into the multiple variables impacting the contribution of correctional libraries to the rehabilitation and integration of offenders into their communities (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011:6). Through the sequential explanatory approach, the researcher was able to integrate (consolidate) quantitative and qualitative data was achieved at the level of data analysis which is accomplished in chapter 6 of the thesis. Practically this means that quantitative data is corroborated with evidence from semi-structured interviewed throughout chapter 6. This enabled a detailed interpretation of how offenders experience functional literacy, skills development and career support programmes in the 12 correctional facilities surveyed by the study.

4.3.3 Rationale for using mixed methods

As indicated in the preceding paragraphs, the study triangulated statistical analytical methods with qualitatively oriented techniques to enhance the interpretation of the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2014; Tashakkori, 2007). Combining quantitative and qualitative methods mitigated the bias and subjectivity generally associated with the application of a single research method or approach (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). In addition, applying mixed-methods research enabled variation of data collection and data analysis techniques, thus helping to improve the credibility of both the research findings

and conclusions (Fetters, Curry and Cresswell, 2013). Qualitative analysis is appropriate in situations where the researcher is looking to generate theoretical insights that may aid understanding of the research problem, as it focuses on human actions in a naturally occurring context through the eyes of the actors themselves (Pickard, 2013; Babbie and Mouton, 2001).

4.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:174), a study population is the aggregation of elements from which the sample is selected. As shown in Table 4.1 below, the population for this study comprised 9 863 offenders in 12 correctional centres of Mpumalanga Province. Sampling is the process of selecting a portion, piece or segment that is representative of a whole to inform the quality of inferences made by the researcher that stem from the underlying findings (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007:285). The study population for this research was framed as follows:

Table 4.1: Study population

Correctional centre	Unsentenced	Sentenced	Total
Barberton	110	2622	2732
Belfast	14	78	92
Bethal	414	1011	1425
Carolina	80	112	192
Ermelo	373	247	620
Lydenburg	24	114	138
Middelburg	181	242	423
Nelspruit	729	510	1239
Piet Retief	168	156	324
Standerton	114	667	781
Volkstrust	128	155	283
Witbank	363	1252	1615
Total = 9864 (male = 9667, female = 197)			9864

Source: Correctional Services, Mpumalanga Province (2022)

4.4.1 Sampling methods

In line with the sequential explanatory approach, the study adopted two complementary sampling methods to extract sufficient data from the research subjects in correctional facilities. For example, while stratified random sampling enabled the selection of offenders for the quantitative component of the study, purposive sampling was used to identify participants for the qualitative component. The following section explains how these two sampling methods were used to select participants.

4.4.1.1 Stratified random sampling

The researcher employed stratified random sampling to select respondents for the quantitative component of the study. As defined by Taherdoost (2016:21), stratified sampling is “where the population is divided into strata or subgroups and a random sample is taken from each subgroup.” The fundamental aim of stratified sampling is to ensure that all subgroups in the target population are fairly represented in the final sample. Given the diverse nature of the correctional population, key variables such as age, gender, diversity, location type, education level and social background were considered in constructing the stratified random sample (Hilson, Alejandre, Jacobson, Ansumana, Bockarie, Bangura, Lamin and Stenger, 2019). The stratified random sample size for this study comprised a total of 367 offenders and was developed using the calculation procedures suggested by Krejcie and Morgan (1970:607). In constructing this sample, the researcher also considered a representation of the various social groups, for example, juveniles, youth, adults, and older persons from different social backgrounds. Participants in this stratified random sample were between the ages of 18 and 55 years. No participant below the age of 18 years was considered for the study. Table 4.2 specifies the participants for the quantitative dimension of the study.

Table 4.2: Stratified random sample: Quantitative study

Correctional centres	Population size	% From total population
Barberton	2732 (102)	27.7%
Belfast	92 (3)	0.8%
Bethal	1425 (53)	14.4%
Carolina	192 (7)	1.9%
Ermelo	620 (23)	6.2%
Lydenburg	138 (5)	1.3%
Middleburg	423 (16)	4.3%
Nelspruit	1239(46)	12.5%
Piet Retief	324 (12)	3.2%
Standerton	781 (29)	7.9%
Volksrust	283 (11)	2.9%
Witbank	1615 (60)	16,3%
Total sample size	9864 (367)	100%

4.4.1.2 Purposive sampling

As mentioned earlier, purposive sampling was applied to identify participants for the qualitative component of the study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that relies on the researcher's prior knowledge or experience of the target population and participants' familiarity with the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2013). Participants in this category included library managers, librarians, facilitators/teachers, current and former offenders not involved in the random sample, employers and community members. Table 4.3 shows how the purposive sample was constructed.

Table 4.3: Purposive sample: Qualitative study

Correctional centre	Participants						
	Offenders	Library managers	Librarians	Facilitators/trainers	Former offenders	Employers	Community members
Barberton	5	1	2	2	2	2	6
Belfast	5	1	2	2	2	2	6
Bethal	5	1	2	2	2	2	6
Carolina	5	1	2	2	2	2	6
Ermelo	5	1	2	2	2	2	6
Lydenburg	5	1	2	2	2	2	6
Middleburg	5	1	2	2	2	2	6
Mbombela	5	1	2	2	2	2	6
Piet Retief	5	1	2	2	2	2	6
Standerton	5	1	2	2	2	2	6
Volksrust	5	1	2	2	2	2	6
Witbank	5	1	2	2	2	2	6
Total number of participants					240		

The general criteria used to identify participants for the qualitative leg of the study; including community members, were involvement, participation in correctional education and training programmes, list of parolees, teaching and library experience, locality or proximity of community members to development projects run by the Department of Correctional Services such as renovation of schools and manufacturing of school furniture, and community members' familiarity with parolees. Librarians, library managers, facilitators, employers, and current and ex-offenders participated in semi-structured interviews, while community members contributed to focus group discussions. Former offenders included parolees and released offenders who were either involved in community work or entrepreneurial activities to earn a living. Based on the figures from table 4.2 and table 4.3 a combined total of 607 respondents was derived by using stratified

random sampling and purposive sampling. This figure represents the total number of respondents who participated in the entire study.

4.4.1.3 Justifying stakeholder involvement in the study

The Department of Correctional Services provides and delivers skills programmes through partnerships comprising sector education and training authorities, libraries, Department of Higher Education, Quality Council for Trades and Occupations, Employers, community-based organisations, teachers, offenders and local communities. A multi-stakeholder approach to capacitation and rehabilitation of offenders is consistent with the spirit of the White Paper on Corrections (1997:39), which posits that restoration of trust requires reconciliation between the offender, the community and the victims. The White Paper further notes that non-reconciliation with the community increases the risk of recidivism and alienation of the offender from the community. It is in this context that the researcher enlisted stakeholders as respondents in this study.

4.5 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

In quantitative research, data collection involves eliciting data from the respondents that can be numerically quantified and entails the application of instruments and methods such as questionnaires, experiments, and checklists (Neuman, 2011). In qualitative research, data gathering entails the extraction of textual data, which is devoid of numbers and relates mostly to the social setting where the participants experience the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). These data relate to the social world and the concepts and behaviours of people within it. Commonly used methods of qualitative research are in-depth interviews, participant observation, written records, and discussion or focus groups (Vermeire, 2002). Given that the study adopted a sequential explanatory approach, data collection methods were triangulated to enhance the quality of data collected. These methods comprised a self-administered questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and observation. The next section explains how each of these methods was used to generate data.

4.5.1 Questionnaire

A self-administered questionnaire was used to elicit quantitative data from current offenders in the 12 correctional facilities of Mpumalanga. Aligned with quantitative research, a questionnaire consists of a series of questions asked to individuals to obtain statistically useful information about a given topic (Roopa and Rani, 2012:273). Properly constructed and administered, questionnaires are an effective tool for generating scientific evidence that can fairly be generalised to the population of interest. Questionnaires enable the quick generation of vast sums of numeric data from a large number of respondents. Appropriate questions, correct ordering of questions, correct scaling, and a good questionnaire format can make the survey worthwhile (Roopa and Rani, 2012). Nkunda (2010) in Teadlie and Yu (2007:136) explain that questionnaires are commonly used to collect information about people's beliefs, feelings and experiences.

The questionnaire used in the study is presented in Appendix 3. The types of questions asked were mainly closed-ended, in line with the quantitative nature of this component of the study. Closed questions include ones in which respondents were provided with a range of responses and asked to select or indicate the one (or ones) that most reflected their views. For example:

- (a) *Have you been informed about the library? (Yes or No) (Question 2.1)*
- (b) *Which of the following best describes the type of services that you get from your library? Textbooks, Learning support materials, Computers, Internet, Study Skills, Study area, Library research skills, All of the above. (Section 3)*
- (c) *How often do you get career counselling from the library? Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly, Not at all. (Question 4.2)*

In terms of structure of the questionnaire comprised six sections, namely, demographic information, access to library services, types of library services received, training and career support services, learner support services, and level of satisfaction with library and training services. The results from the quantitative component of the study were presented in accordance with these six items or measures.

4.5.1.1 Reliability measures

As defined by Bujang, Omar and Baharum (2018), “Cronbach’s alpha is of the internal consistency or reliability between several items, measurements or ratings. In other words, it estimates how reliable the responses of a questionnaire, or domain of a questionnaire, instrumentation or rating evaluated by subjects, which will indicate the stability of the tools.” Tavakol and Dennick (2011) concur with this logic by stating that Cronbach alpha is essential in determining the internal consistency and validity of a quantitative research instrument such as a standard questionnaire which was employed by this study to assess the contribution of correctional libraries to functional literacy and skills development for offenders in Mpumalanga Province. Guided by these explanations, the researcher used the Cronbach alpha technique to measure the reliability of the questionnaire in terms of demographic data of the respondents, access to library services, type of library services, training and career support services, learner support services, as well as the level of satisfaction with library and training services.

4.5.1.1.1 PILOT STUDY

As defined by Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2002: 2), a pilot study is a mini version of a full study and involves testing the feasibility, relevance, suitability and applicability of a research instrument prior to the execution of the actual study. In the present study, piloting the questionnaire was helpful in providing valuable insights on design and feasibility of the questionnaire instrument. A major advantage of using pilot study in this questionnaire was that it highlighted areas that needed improvement in the questionnaire, such spelling and grammatical errors, and complex questions that require refinement and simplification to make it easy and quicker for the respondents to answer the intended research questions. Feedback and insights from this pilot was used to fine tune and align the research questions in the questionnaire with the research objectives to ensure congruence and consistency in data collection and analysis (Cleave, 2021). The pilot study was intended to establish how the respondents interpreted the questions, and the time required to complete the research questions. Piloting the questionnaire and the interview schedule enabled the researcher to reflect and learn more about the research

environment and use this experience to inform the main research study to increase the likelihood of success (Brooks, Reed, and Savage, 2016). Five respondents tested the quantitative instrument and a further five tested the qualitative instruments. The five respondents who tested the quantitative instrument (survey questionnaire) comprised two individuals with a matric and a formal qualification and received no assistance from the researcher. The remaining three respondents had low educational levels (that is, they were still in the basic education band) and the questionnaire was administered via a face-to-face interview. The same procedures were followed in the full study.

4.5.1.2 Administration of the questionnaire

As alluded to above, the survey questionnaire was administered verbally in a face-to-face encounter with the offenders in the basic education band. Offenders in the higher education band completed the questionnaire themselves. However, the researcher was present and, to overcome any literacy challenges, the offenders were encouraged to ask questions for clarity where they encountered difficulties in the questionnaire. This ensured the smooth running of the survey in all the 12 correctional centres targeted.

4.5.2 Semi-structured interviews

An interview, whether unstructured or semi-structured, involves direct personal contact with the participant and he or she is asked to answer questions relating to the research problem (Bless, Higson-Smith, and Sithole, 2013:193). “Semi-structured interviews are those in-depth interviews where the respondents have to answer open-ended questions and thus are widely employed by different healthcare professionals in their research” (Jamshed, 2014:87). Semi-structured interviews are an effective instrument for generating data that portrays the phenomenon from the practical and lived experiences of the participants rather than the researcher’s value-laden interpretation (Adhabi and Anozie, 2017:88).

In semi-structured interviews, the research questions are framed in a research instrument called an interview guide which is a schematic presentation of questions or topics that need to be explored by the interviewer. To achieve optimum use of interview time,

interview guides serve the useful purpose of exploring many respondents more systematically and comprehensively as well as keeping the interview focused on the desired line of action. Because they allow verbal prompts and follow-up questions, semi-structured interviews can be a good source of rich verbatim data that enhances the credibility and transferability of the research findings.

Semi structures interviews with Library managers, librarians, Facilitators, former offenders, employers and community members. Each interview meeting took 60 minutes in order to collect sufficient data from the participants. The entire study was conducted between 27 January 2023 to January 2024. There were major language barriers during interviews with community members as the researcher is fluent in all local languages, namely, Siswati, IsiNdebele, Xitsonga and Sepedi. The researcher was able to clarify meaning of the research questions using both English and applicable local languages. Practically, this means that translation of the questionnaire was done verbally during the administration of the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

The interview sessions were as follows:

- a) Library managers: 1 interview per correctional centres
- b) Librarians: 2 interviews per correctional centre
- c) Facilitators: 2 interviews per correctional centre
- d) Community members: 6 interviews per area
- e) Employers: 2 interviews per area
- f) Former offenders: 2 Interviews per area
- g) Current offenders: 5 interviews per centre

4.5.3 Focus groups

Neuman (2011:459) defines a focus group as a special qualitative research technique. People are informally interviewed in a group discussion setting facilitated by a moderator to discuss issues, generally for approximately 90 minutes. Focus groups were conducted with six library staff members in each participating correctional library to get their views and experiences on what they do to satisfy offenders' information and learning needs in their centres. The focus group themes were (i) the information/learning needs of

offenders, (ii) steps taken to meet offenders' information and learning needs, (iii) opportunities and constraints, and (iv) improving service delivery in correctional libraries. Grounded in qualitative research, focus groups are a useful method for allowing plurality and diversity of explanations of a phenomenon by the participants in their own natural setting. Focus groups are defined as "group discussions exploring a set of specific issues that are focused because the process involves some collective activity" (Flynn, Albrecht, and Scott 2018:1). They can be used to understand peoples' beliefs, opinions and attitudes about the topic of interest (Vermeier, 2009:104). As noted, focus groups were conducted with library staff, facilitators, current offenders, former offenders and community members in each of the 12 correctional centres to get their views and experiences on what they do to satisfy offenders' information and learning needs. Data was captured as field notes in manual transcripts and laptop. Security challenges were mitigated by the fact that DCS protocol requires only a minimum of five offenders per focus group meeting. The focus group's themes applicable to this study are summarised in Table 4.5 below:

Table 4.4: Focus group topics/themes

Topic/theme	Purpose
Information/learning needs of offenders	Derived from the Information behaviour theory, this theme aims to establish how offenders access and use information to support their learning and development needs in each of the case studies.
Steps taken to meet offenders' information and learning needs	This theme explores the perspectives and experiences of library managers and librarians on how LIS are provided to offenders.
Opportunities and constraints in meeting the information and learning needs of offenders	This theme seeks to identify opportunities and challenges that impact the library's ability to contribute to the functional literacy and employability skills needs of offenders in the participating correctional centres.
Improving service delivery in correctional libraries	This theme is aimed at eliciting the views and contributions of library managers and librarians on how best to reposition and improve the provision of LIS necessary to facilitate the development of functional literacy and employability skills among offenders.

Source: Researcher's creation (2024)

The focus groups were moderated in accordance with the guidelines suggested by McDaniel and Gates (2006) in Dube and Roberts-Lombard (2013). These include preparation for the focus group entailing recruitment of the participants, selecting a group moderator, and creating a discussion guide; moderation of the focus groups; recording of the focus group discussions; and analysis of the focus group data. The focus groups were conducted using both traditional face-to-face meetings and virtual meetings, and were undertaken once approval to conduct the study had been obtained from the Correctional Services authorities. Details of the focus group meetings conducted during the study were as follow:

- a) Barberton: 1 Focus group with 5 participants.
- b) Mbombela: 1 Focus group with 5 participants.
- c) Caroline: 1 Focus group with 5 participants
- d) Ermelo: 1 Focus group with 5 participants.
- e) Bethal: 1 Focus group with 5 participants
- f) Standerton: 1 Focus group with 5 participants
- g) Volkrust: 1 Focus group with 5 participants
- h) Piet Retief: 1 Focus group with 5 participants
- i) Middelburg: 1 Focus group with 5 participants
- j) Witbank :1 Focus group with 5 participants
- k) Lydenburg :1 Focus group with 5 participants
- l) Belfast :1 Focus group with 5 participants

4.5.4 Observation

“Observation as a qualitative data gathering technique refers to fieldwork descriptions of activities, behaviours, actions, conversations, interpersonal interactions, organisational or community processes, or any other activity of observable human experience” (Patton, 2002:4). Observation was preferred because it facilitates understanding of what people do and how their behaviours change over time as a result of the intervention, that is, training (Walshe, Ewig, and Griffiths, 2011). In the study, it was essential to establish the methodologies used to deliver skills programmes to offenders, how offenders learn, what they learn, and how they transfer acquired knowledge and skills to work settings.

A key benefit of the observation technique in this study is that the researcher can gain first-hand experience of what actually happens when offenders apply (practice) acquired knowledge and skills in real job situations. During observation, the researcher also took field notes to show “a chronological log of what occurs in the research setting, a detailed description of what is being observed; a record of conversations with the participants and a lucid account of the impressions derived from observation experience” (Barrett and Twycross, 2018:64). Observational data were integrated and used to confirm findings from the quantitative part of the study (Jamshed, 2014:88). Based on this explanation,

Table 4.5 provides a summary of the specific activities that were observed and why they are important in the study.

Table 4.5: Observation schedule

Activity observed	Reason for observation
Facilitation of learning activities	To establish whether the teaching and training methods used in correctional centres are sufficiently effective to help offenders acquire practical job skills.
Learning process	To establish how offenders learn in each of the participating correctional centres. The aim is to determine if innovative learning methods such as technology-assisted learning, collaborative learning, and peer learning are used to help offenders achieve their learning goals.
Practice/application	To determine whether offenders, after learning, are able to successfully apply acquired knowledge and skills in the workplace. The intention is to establish whether there is a balance between theory and practice in the skills development programmes that are offered to offenders.
Coaching and mentoring (Workplace learning support services)	To determine whether offenders are given the necessary support and guidance to be able to improve their knowledge, job skills, performance, and professional development on the job.
Feedback	To determine whether offenders are provided with instant feedback on their learning/training and whether they are encouraged to regularly discuss their learning and development needs with their facilitators in each of the participating correctional centres.

Source: Researcher's creation (2024)

4.6 REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The study commenced on 27 January 2023 with interviews and a survey at the Barberton Correctional Services. Fieldwork coincided with the DCS Skills Directorate Performance Review Meeting in the same facility, which was attended by school managers and facilitators from the Nkangala District which consists of three correctional facilities (Barberton, Lydenburg, and Mbombela). The researcher was invited to attend this

meeting as part of the data collection process. Owing to security protocols, the interviews (semi-structured) and the self-administered questionnaires were administered concurrently with observation as it is impermissible for maximum security offenders to leave holding cells without security escorts. With permission from DCS officials, interviews in each facility were conducted in the administration block adjacent to the holding cells. Library escorts were advised as libraries are located inside the area where offenders live. This was standard procedure in all the correctional facilities visited. All interactions with the participants and observations in workshop areas were closely monitored by officials in line with correctional facilities' requirements and the researcher was advised on these security requirements.

As alluded to earlier, the researcher observed workplace learning in correctional facilities as part of the study. Specific skills transfer activities that were observed were: (a) school renovations in Mariti, Bushbuckridge; (b) bakery and sewing workshops in Mbombela; (c) electricity, carpentry, and welding workshops in the Barberton Juvenile Section; (d) an information technology class in the same section; (e) TVET sewing workshop and library facility in Witbank; (f) agriculture/food gardens in Carolina; and (g) bricklaying and welding workshops in Bethal. The only exceptions were pre-release facilities, namely, Piet Retief, Lydenburg, Carolina, and Belfast which did not have school sections and used the referral system to transfer their learners to either Standerton or Bethal for training. These centres were primarily designated as holding cells for awaiting release offenders and only focused on the pre-release programme, gardening programme, and literacy programme in the library. This meant using online research methods and follow-up telephonic interviews with DCS officials to obtain data on the pre-release programme. A similar procedure was applied in Standerton, which, at the time of reporting, had suspended TVET skills programmes due to the withdrawal of training providers as a result of COVID-19 regulations earlier. In all instances, the DCS officials were highly cooperative and assisted with the administration of the survey and email interviews.

4.7 DATA ANALYSIS

As explained by Annink (2015), “rigorous data analysis can be achieved by explaining to the reader clearly the process by which the raw data is generated, collated, converted, and organised to create meaning.” Central to the data analysis process is the need for integrity, which implies sincerity and transparency about the researcher’s biases, goals, assumptions, and beliefs and how these impact the overall conduct of the study. Based on this understanding, data analysis procedures were structured in accordance with the sequential explanatory approach and in line with the mixed-methods research strategy. Thus, the first data analysis approach involved descriptive statistical analysis, which included calculating and converting numeric data into percentages. Graphs were then used to derive meaning from data, either through tabular or graphical representation, by a comparative analysis of the datasets obtained from the questionnaire (Larson, 2006). Relatedly, Loeb, Dynarski, Mcfarland, Morris, Reardon and Reber, S (2017) explain that descriptive quantitative analysis helps address what, when, and to what extent questions.

Within the quantitative approach, deductive reasoning entails “moving from the general to the particular, as in starting from a theory, deriving hypothesis from it, testing those hypotheses, and revisiting the theory” (Locke, 2007; Nola and Sankey, 2007, in Woiceshyn and Daellenbach, 2018:5). Figure 4.1 illustrates the complementary nature of inductive and deductive analysis as applied to the present study.

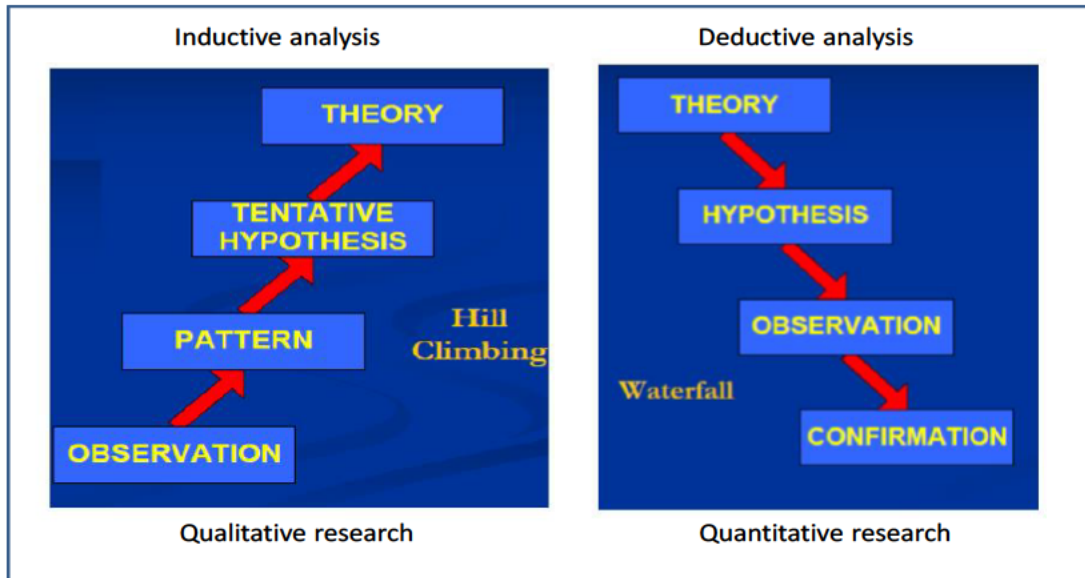


Figure 4.1: Inductive and deductive analysis

Source: Malhotra (2017:175)

According to Malhotra (2017:175), “deductive reasoning begins explicitly with a tentative hypothesis or set of hypotheses that form a theory which could provide a possible answer or explanation for a particular problem, then proceeds to use observations to rigorously test the hypotheses.” What this means, therefore, is that deductive reasoning allows the derivation of abstract meaning from numerical data. In this study, quantitative data were generated through a self-administered questionnaire that was completed by current inmates in the 12 correctional centres.

The second data analysis approach employed by the study involved thematic analysis which is aligned to qualitative research. Qualitative research employs inductive reasoning to yield a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon. Here, inductive analysis is used to draw linkages and parallels between qualitative data and the research questions and objectives. It provides a systematic framework for building a theory or model in line with the purpose of the study and using the narrative from textual data to illuminate and support the interpretation of the research findings (Thomas, 2006). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) reflect that as a qualitative analytical tool, inductive reasoning, along with coding, helps researchers reduce large chunks of data into logical themes to enable

robust interpretation of results. Through inductive analysis, the researcher in this study was able to engage in an iterative process where transcripts and materials were continuously reviewed and rearranged to provide a holistic picture of how the phenomenon was understood from the perspectives of the participants (Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark and Smith 2013). As noted, qualitative data were obtained from semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Also as noted, the interview questions were answered by library managers, librarians, facilitators, former offenders, current offenders, employers and community members.

4.7.1 Use of quantizing in data analysis

Within the context of mixed methods research, quantising is the process of assigning or assimilating numerical meaning to textual data in order to derive statistical interpretation, usually of a descriptive nature, such as percentages (Sandelowski, Voils and Knafli, 2009:2). In practice, quantising entails transforming or changing qualitative data from interviews and focus groups into assimilated statistical evidence to corroborate findings from the quantitative leg of the study. The overriding principle in quantising is that the two data sets are mutually reinforcing and therefore susceptible to integration (Collins and Dressler (2008). The principle of quantising was used to determine the frequency of variables such as library partnerships, books loaned to offenders and learner satisfaction with the quality of library and training services.

4.8 RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

From my position and experience as a public librarian and practitioner, I had to acquaint myself with correctional library protocols and rekindle my assumptions and beliefs with the fact that I was dealing with offenders in both medium and maximum-security establishments. This was not easy. However, my preliminary engagements with officials from the DCS Skills Development Directorate were very helpful in preparing me for fieldwork. Admittedly, my first encounter with offenders was filled with anxiety and curiosity arising from gender differences and the rule-based culture of correctional facilities. A related challenge was how to engage participants suffering from trauma who

had just arrived in some of the correctional centres after sentencing. A further challenge is the stigmatisation that parolees suffer in their communities and the labour market.

What struck me most was the courage of some offenders to share their experiences on learning and development opportunities in their correctional facilities despite strict correctional protocols. However, as the frequency of meetings increased over time, I managed to adjust to correctional protocols and this made it easier for me to administer the survey and interviews in the participating correctional facilities. As a librarian, I had to refrain from using my insider position to influence participants' thinking and responses to the survey and interviews. Instead, I directed participants' attention to the importance of the study and the purpose of doing the research not just in their corrective facilities but in the entire province. In mitigating power relations, I clarified that although I was a librarian by profession, the study was conducted in my capacity as a student and researcher. By reflecting on my assumptions and positionality upfront, I believe that I managed to prevent subjectivity in the data collection and analysis processes of the study.

4.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Reliability is the extent to which results are consistent over time and accurately represent the total population under study and if the study can be reproduced under a similar methodology (Golafshani, 2003:5). Validity determines whether the research truly measures what it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 276). Four qualitative research criteria suggested by Merriam (2002) were applied to enhance the validity and reliability of the study, namely, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

4.9.1 Credibility

Patton (2002:552) explains that the credibility criterion in qualitative research is used to determine the rigour of data gathering methods and procedures in capturing the actual experiences of participants; the depth and richness of the data collected; the research skills of the investigator as well clear articulation of the philosophical foundation of the study. Simply put, credibility is the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the

research findings. It ascertains whether the results reflect plausible information derived from the research subjects' original data and is a correct interpretation of their version. In this study, credibility for the qualitative component of the study was ensured through prolonged and varied field experience; reflection on data collected from the field; disclosure of the researcher's dispositions and biases; contextualising data analysis; triangulation; member checking; and finally, peer examination.

4.9.2 Transferability

Transferability means the degree to which the results can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents. Since transferability concerns the applicability of the research findings in other contexts, it is essential for the researcher to provide thick descriptions of the participants and the research process to enable the reader to assess whether the research findings are transferable to their own setting (Korstjens and Moser, 2017:122). In this study, transferability was improved through thick descriptions, which were used to validate quantitative results. Thick description involves not just the behaviour and experiences of the participants but also the research context, so an outsider can judge whether the research findings are transferable or not.

4.9.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to having sufficient details and documentation of the methods employed so that the study can be scrutinised and replicated in other research settings (Cameron, 2011:6). Techniques employed to enhance dependability in this study involved comparisons of quantitative and qualitative responses to establish links and confirmations; cross-case analysis to identify patterns and variations in the datasets derived from the participants in the 12 correctional facilities; and, finally, testing the conclusions of the study against the research objectives to derive consistency.

4.9.4 Confirmability

The fourth quality criterion that was used by the researcher to enhance trustworthiness in the study is confirmability. According to Ahmed (2024:2), "Confirmability pertains to the impartiality and objectivity of the findings, guaranteeing that they remain unaffected by

biases or preferences of the research.” Confirmability in this study was achieved through triangulation of data sources, reflection and reflexivity, member checking, peer examination, interview technique, establishing the authority of the researcher, and structural coherence. As defined by Mckim (2023:41), member-checking is a qualitative technique that is used to enhance the credibility of the data. In the present study, member checking involved post-interview debriefing meetings with the participants to obtain feedback on their experiences with the entire research project. In this way, the researcher was able to follow up and verify answers obtained earlier during the interviews.

4.10 RESEARCH ETHICS

Adherence to research ethics is achieved by balancing the needs of research beneficiaries against respondents’ right to safety and privacy (Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden, 2000:93). The process followed to secure permission to conduct the study entailed the following: First, a letter requesting permission to conduct the study was dispatched to the DCS Head Office in Pretoria. Approval was subsequently given on 11 January 2023. This was followed by institutional approval granted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethics Committee on 16 January 2023. Participant Consent Forms were signed by the participants before the study in accordance with both institutional and correctional rules and procedures.

The researcher first briefed participants about the intentions and benefits of the study to secure their consent. Additionally, participants were also assured that their participation was voluntary and that they had a right to withdraw from the research at any stage of the research process. Participants’ anonymity and confidentiality are central to ethical research practice in social research (Crow and Wiles, 2008:1) and need to be discussed with participants prior to the research (Wiles, Crow, Health and Charles, 2006:1). Accordingly, the study was executed within the parameters of the ethical clearance as sanctioned by the University of KwaZulu-Natal and took place between 16 January 2023 and 16 January 2024.

4.10.1 Avoiding harm

Avoiding harm to the participants means that the autonomy of participants is respected and that individuals with diminished autonomy are protected. The safety and wellbeing of informants must be maximised, ensuring that justice is done for all participants. This includes protecting vulnerable groups against exploitation and deception, as well as ensuring a fair distribution of costs (Vanclay, Baines, and Taylor, 2013:245). A core ethical principle of research is that researchers should never cause physical or emotional harm to participants. This means anticipating potential risks before the commencement of the study (Neuman, 2011:146). The researcher adhered to the COVID-19 regulations of social distancing and wearing masks to reduce the health risks associated with the pandemic. This also meant using both traditional face-to-face research methods, such as semi-structured interviews, and virtual research methods, such as email interviews and surveys, to reduce health risks for the participants (McGuire and London, 2020).

4.10.2 Consent from participants

“Informed consent is an ethical and legal requirement for research involving human participants. It is the process where a participant is informed about all aspects of the trial, which are important for the participant to make a decision and after studying all aspects of the trial the participant voluntarily confirms his or her willingness to participate in a research project” (Nijhawan, Janodia, Muddukrishna, Bhat, Bairy, Udupa, and Musmade, 2013:134). It involves the documents signed and dated by participants, setting forth the purpose, benefits, risks and other study information necessary to allow the participants to make an informed and voluntary decision to participate in the study. Securing the express consent of the research subjects was paramount in this study, given the stringent correctional protocols. To this end, consent forms were issued to participants before conducting the study to secure their consent. Only participants who signed the consent forms participated in the study. There was no inherent risk or harm in the study as all the participants were either between the ages of 18 and 35 years (the official definition of “youth” in South Africa) or “adult”, that is, between the ages of 36 and 55 years. In line with this, in the Juvenile Corrections Facility, only people between the ages of 18 and 35 years were selected for inclusion in the study.

Although in principle, education and training opportunities were generally conceived as a fundamental right of all offenders within the correctional system, access and participation hinged on a wide variety of protocol issues. Generally, the DCS prioritised youth for basic education, hence the significant investment in juvenile education and training facilities in the Barberton Correctional Services. Consequently, basic education was compulsory for young people, although participation depended on individual sentence plans and parole conditions. Generally, few offenders over the age of 50 years are interested in learning but those who are, are mostly interested in occupationally directed qualifications and/or trades and these were accessed through the DCS' referral system. Briefly, the referral system means that adult learners seeking to enrol in skills programmes had to apply for a referral to the relevant correctional centre, for example, Witbank, Standerton, Barberton or Bethal. If approved, the applicant would then be transferred to the desired correctional centre in accordance with their sentence plan and parole conditions. None of the participants surveyed were in the 60-65 years age range. In part, this explains why learner participation in the senior age bracket (50-55) was relatively marginal across the 12 correctional centres surveyed by the study.

4.10.3 Voluntary participation

As conceived in the research literature, voluntary participation refers to participants' ability to exercise free will in deciding whether to participate or not to participate in a research study (Lavrakas, 2008). It is the fundamental right of participants to take part, withhold information or withdraw completely from the research activities if they feel the need to do so without any fear of reprimand or intimidation. In practice, this means that researchers should never force anyone to participate in research (Neuman, 2011: 149). Participants were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they would not be coerced or compelled to provide the required information. They were free to withdraw from the research activities at any time to avoid any perceived harm or reputational damage. None of the 340 participants was compelled to take part in this mixed-methods study.

4.10.4 Anonymity and confidentiality

According to Hoft (2021:3), “anonymity and confidentiality are used to protect the privacy of human subjects participating in a study during data collection, analysis and reporting data associated with the data derived from the participants. In this, the principles of anonymity and confidentiality were applied/observed by (1) using generic terms such as “respondent” and “participants” and centre name without revealing the actual names and surnames of the participants. To limit access to participants’ information, the researcher utilised pass word-protected laptop to store confidential data. Additionally, all revealing information was subsequently removed during the data collection, analysis and reporting process. Through the principle of anonymity, the researcher was able to delink responses from the real source or participants during the data presentation and analysis process (Saunders, Kitzinger and Kitzinger, 2015). Except for the names of the correctional centres, participant’s personal information was not revealed in the presentation and discussion of findings. Revealing data excerpts were carefully removed and pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of the research subjects (Wiles, Crown, Heath, and Charles, 2006). As mentioned by Kaiser (2009), removing identifiers enables a researcher to create a clean dataset, thus reducing the possibility of harm to participants.

4.11 SUMMARY

Chapter 4 focused exclusively on the research methodology that guided this study. Through a multiple case study design and sequential explanatory approach within mixed-methods research, this study assessed the contribution of correctional libraries to the rehabilitation of offenders by focusing on functional literacy and employability skills. The study setting comprised 12 correctional facilities spread across Gert Sibande, Ehlanzeni, and Nkangala district municipalities. A unique strength of this research was the integration of quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a detailed interpretation and understanding of the phenomenon. While numeric data measured perceptions towards library and skills training services, textual data provided rich descriptions of participants’ experiences regarding the role of correctional libraries in the rehabilitation and integration of offenders.

Chapter 5 follows; it presents the research findings derived from the participants in the 12 correctional facilities surveyed by the study between January and June 2023.

CHAPTER 5 : RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 4, attention was given to the mixed-methods research strategy that guided this study. To reiterate, the purpose of the study was to assess the contribution of correctional libraries to the development of offenders in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. To this end, the study triangulated quantitative and qualitative techniques, that is, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and observation. The findings presented below are in response to the four research questions underpinning the study:

- To what extent do correctional libraries and stakeholders meet the development needs of offenders in terms of functional literacy, skills development, and career transition to the workplace?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in facilitating functional literacy, skills development, and career transition for offenders in correctional centres?
- What specific programmes are currently provided by correctional libraries and stakeholders to promote functional literacy, skills development and career transition, and what strategies are used to deliver these interventions?
- What mechanisms, if any, are used to track and measure the quality of functional literacy, skills development and career transition programs offered to offenders in correctional centres?

The research findings comprise two sets of primary data – the first set consists of quantitative data obtained from offenders utilising a questionnaire, and the second consists of qualitative data obtained from Library managers, librarians, employers, former offenders, employers and community members utilising qualitative data collection techniques. Quantitative data are presented in the current chapter while qualitative data are presented in Chapter 6. Chapter 6, by incorporating qualitative data from the interviews, focus groups and observation, thus provides an integrated analysis and discussion of the research findings. The findings in the current chapter are presented in accordance with the sequential explanatory approach which dictates that survey data are supported with qualitative data at the end of the discussion.

Consistent with the principle of anonymity and confidentiality articulated in subsection 4.10.4, participants' personal details are not revealed when reporting the data. Instead, general pseudonyms such as "participants" and "respondents" are used to describe the research subjects throughout the data presentation process.

This chapter begins with a description of the sample and the response rate. It then presents the findings of the quantitative study utilising both tables and figures. The chapter concludes with a summary.

5.2 SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

As indicated previously in Table 4.1, the total population for this study was 9 864 offenders spread across 12 correctional services centres in Mpumalanga Province. Of this total, 367 offenders were randomly selected for the quantitative component of the study. Of these, 84% were male and 16% female. The qualitative component of the study consisted of 240 participants comprising library managers, librarians, facilitators, former offenders, and employers (all of whom were interviewed) and community members (who participated in the focus group discussions).

5.2.1 Response rate

There is general convergence in the research literature that for any systematic inquiry to be credible and acceptable in the eyes of scholars, sponsors and end users, it must have a sufficiently and fairly representative sample size to enable generalisability and transferability of the results to the original population and other research contexts. According to Wu, Zhao and Fils-Aime (2022), this requires a respectable response rate from which to judge the validity and quality of survey results. Simply put, the response rate yields the benchmark against which the quality of the study is determined (Holton, Baruch, Aguinis, and Ballinger, 2022). In the present study, a response rate of 100% was achieved as all the issued questionnaires were successfully completed and returned by all 367 randomly selected offenders who were enrolled on DCS skills programmes in the correctional service facilities surveyed. Scientifically, this enhanced not only the generalisability of the survey results but also the validity and reliability of the study.

5.3 SURVEY RESULTS (QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT)

Survey data were derived from the quantitative research instrument which comprised a standard self-administered questionnaire completed by current offenders in the 12 correctional centres targeted by the study. The demographic characteristics of the 367 respondents are provided below.

5.3.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

To begin with, respondents were asked to indicate their age and Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1 reflect the findings.

5.3.1.1 Age of respondents

Table 5.1: Age distribution in skills programmes

N=367

Age range	Frequency	Percent
18 - 25 years	51	13,9
26 - 30 years	51	13,9
31 - 35 years	84	22,9
36 - 40 years	75	20,4
41 - 55 years	106	28,9
Total	367	100

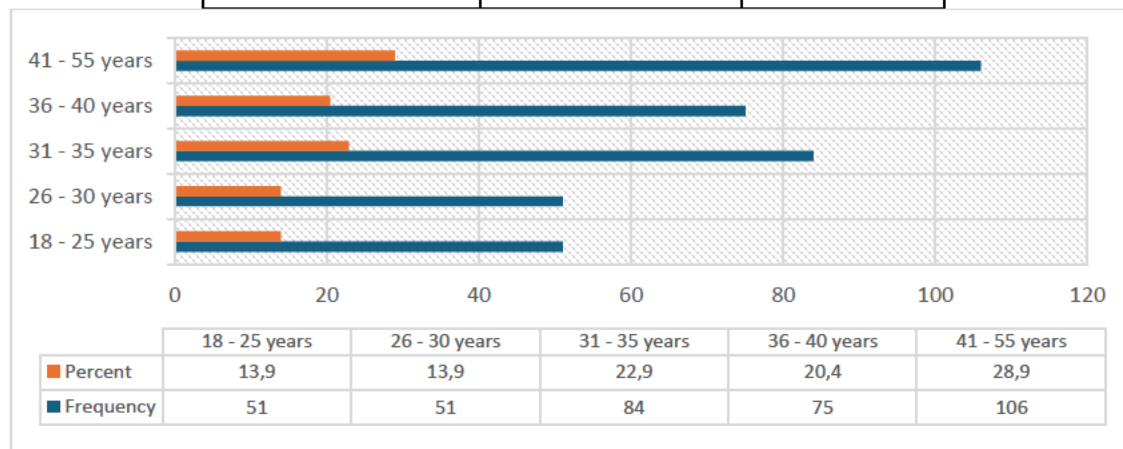


Figure 5.1: Age distribution in skills programmes

N=367

As can be seen in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1 above, offenders in the 18 - 25 and 26 - 30 years age range comprised 13,9% each. Offenders between the ages of 31 - 35 years comprised 22,9% of the sample followed by 20,4% between the ages of 36 - 40 years. By contrast, enrolment figures for middle-aged learners (41 - 55 years) were slightly higher at 28,9%, suggesting that learning opportunities were also extended to the adult offender population. Overall, it is worth noting that youth participation (35 years and younger) was higher than that of adult participation. This can be attributed to the DCS policy to prioritise youth skills development to reduce recidivism and youth unemployment in Mpumalanga Province.

Table 5.2 and Figure 5.2 below reflect the gender distribution of the 367 respondents.

5.3.1.2 Gender distribution of respondents in skills programmes

In terms of the gender of the 367 respondents enrolled in skills development programmes, Table 5.2 and Figure 5.2 indicate that males constituted 84,2% of the sample while the number of females enrolled in learning programmes was significantly lower at 15,8% overall. These negative outcomes were generally attributed to a wide range of institutional barriers, including correctional protocols which prohibited women's participation in physical work outside the correctional system and limited access to male-dominated occupational learning programmes such as welding, construction, electricity, and carpentry.

Table 5.2: Gender distribution in skills programmes

N=367

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	309	84,2
Female	58	15,8
Total	367	100

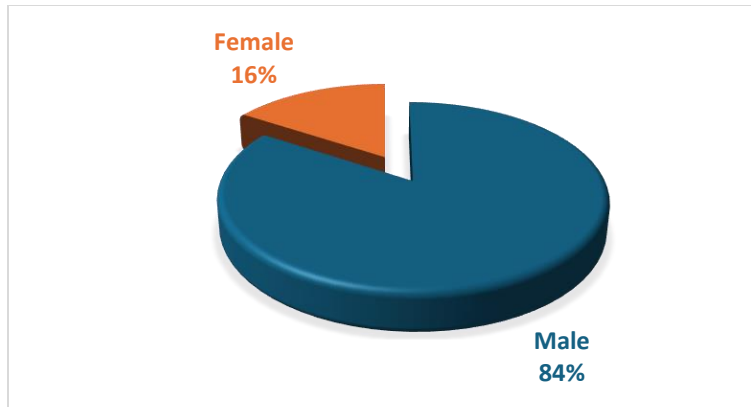


Figure 5.2: Gender distribution in skills programmes

N=367

Inclusive education is at the heart of South Africa’s OBE system. In particular, White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education and the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 make it imperative for employers such as the DCS to promote gender equity in the workplace. Judging by the results in the table and figure above, it appears that gender equity goals have not been effectively addressed in occupational learning programmes. Simply put, there is still a significant gap in terms of women’s access to learning opportunities. This could be linked to a range of dynamics within the correctional service system, such as the relatively low number of women in Mpumalanga’s correctional centres, for example, only three of the 12 correctional centres in Mpumalanga Province accommodates female offenders; short correctional sentence plans for women offenders; and, as alluded to above, cultural barriers that confine women offenders to general occupational learning programmes such as fashion, hairdressing, catering, and clothing and textiles. The overall impression from these results is that there are discrepancies in gender equality policy outcomes, which requires urgent attention from the DCS to avoid violation of section 9 (right to equality) and section 29 (right to education) of the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) and related statutory requirements.

5.3.1.3 Educational levels of respondents

Table 5.3 and Figure 5.3 below provide a descriptive summary of the respondents’ educational levels.

Table 5.3: Respondents' educational levels

N=367

Educational level	Frequency	Percent
Grades 1-8	27	7,4
Grades 9-12	200	54,5
General certificate	74	20,2
Diploma	44	12
Degree	22	6
Total	367	100

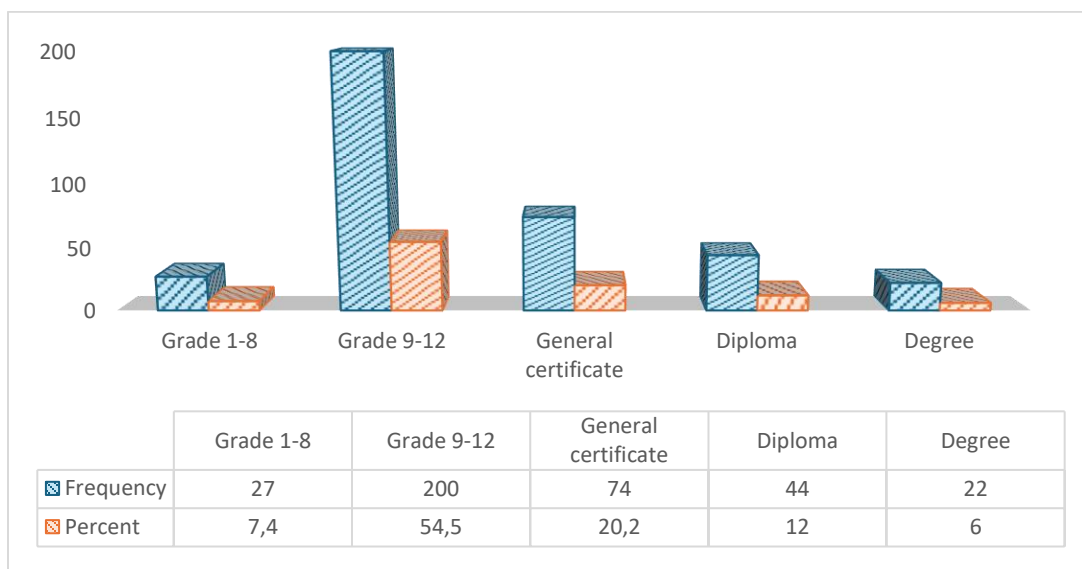


Figure 5.3: Respondents' educational levels

N=367

Table 5.3 and Figure 5.3 show that only 7,4% of respondents fell within the Grade 1 -8 band; compared to 54,5% in Grade 9 - 12. Additionally, 20,2% of the respondents had attained a General certificate, mostly in short courses or work-related refresher courses. Twelve percent of the respondents had a diploma qualification, compared to only 6% who had obtained a degree. These latter findings suggest a gradual improvement in the participation of offenders in formal education programmes.

Overall, the results regarding educational levels indicate that all respondents had some level of formal education, with a majority (54,5%) having some or completed secondary

education (Grades 9 - 12) either before being incarcerated or during their incarceration. When including those respondents with a diploma (12%) or a degree (6%) a significant 72,5% of respondents had a Grade 9 educational level or higher. However, it is evident that the formal educational levels of the respondents are generally low (just 62% falling in the range of Grade 1 - Grade 12), and this may be partly responsible for the escalation of recidivism not just in Mpumalanga Province but throughout the country.

5.3.1.4 Respondents' work experience

Table 5.4 and Figure 5.4 depict the respondents' work experience (in years).

Table 5.4: Respondents' work experience

N=367

Work experience	Frequency	Percent
Never worked	103	28,1
1-2 years	104	28,3
3-5 years	76	20,7
6-7 years	22	6
8-10 years	27	7,4
11-20 years	35	9,5
Total	367	100

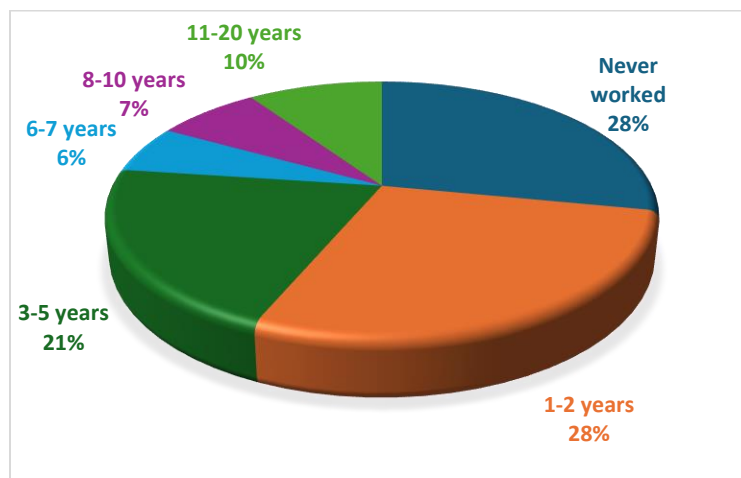


Figure 5.4: Respondents' work experience

N=367

As evident in the table and the figure, 28,1% of the respondents had never worked. This was followed by 28,3% of respondents who had work experience of between 1 - 2 years, 20,7% between 3 - 5 years, 6% between 6 - 7 years, 7,4% between 8 - 10 years, and finally, 9.5% of respondents having work experience of 11 - 20 years. Notably, the large percentage (77%) of respondents who had either never worked or had five years or less work experience highlights the challenges that Mpumalanga Province and the rest of South Africa face in youth unemployment and social exclusion, which exacerbates criminal behaviour and recidivism rates.

Having dealt with participants' demographic data, attention is now focused on access to library services, as reported by survey respondents. As articulated in Chapter 1, one of the objectives of this study was to determine whether correctional libraries fulfil their legal mandate in terms of the LIS Transformation Charter (2014).

5.3.2 Access to library services

Given the centrality of education in the rehabilitation and restoration of offenders in the South African Constitution (1996) and the Mandela Rules (2015), respondents were asked several questions regarding their access to LIS in their respective learning programmes. In the first question, respondents were asked whether they had been informed about the library. The results of depicted in Table 5.5 and Figure 5.5 below.

5.3.2.1 Informed about the library

Table 5.5: Informed about the library

N=367

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	331	90,2
No	36	9,8
Total	367	100

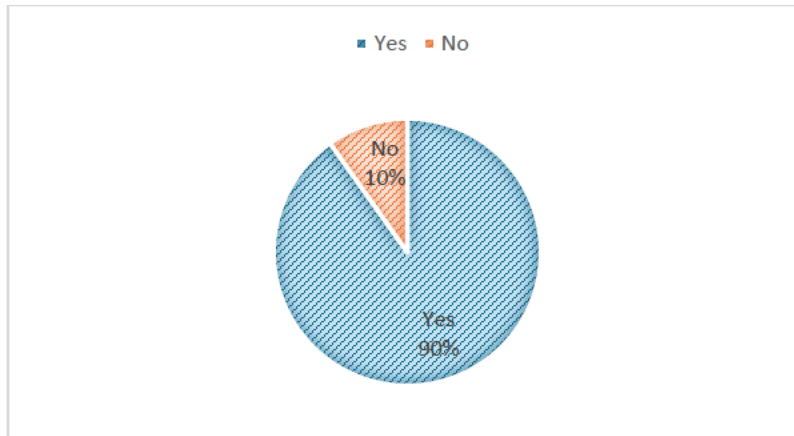


Figure 5.5: Informed about the library
N=367

Overwhelmingly, the statistical evidence affirms that the vast majority of respondents (90,2%) were informed about the library in their correctional centres (and thus, by extension, had access to library services). On the contrary, only 9,8% of the learners indicated that they had not been informed about the library (and thus, by extension, did not have access to library services in their learning programmes). This discrepancy in access could be ascribed to a range of factors, such as the differences in parole conditions and sentence plans of the learners in each correctional facility.

On the whole, the results in Table 5.5 and Figure 5.5 above validate the role of correctional libraries in meeting their statutory mandate in terms of sections 29 and 32 of the Constitution (1996). The significant number of respondents having access to library services can be partly attributed to the popularity of the Funda Mzansi Programme, which promoted literacy in correctional services nationally. The effectiveness of this programme is discussed in the analysis in Chapter 6.

5.3.2.2 Sufficiency of provision of textbooks for studies

Access to learning resources is fundamental to improving teaching and learning processes and outcomes in any instructional programme. Given this imperative, survey respondents were asked if they received enough textbooks for their studies. Their responses are depicted in Table 5.6 and Figure 5.6 below.

Table 5.6: Sufficiency of provision of textbooks

N=367

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	141	38,4
No	203	55,3
Not indicated	23	6,3
Total	367	100

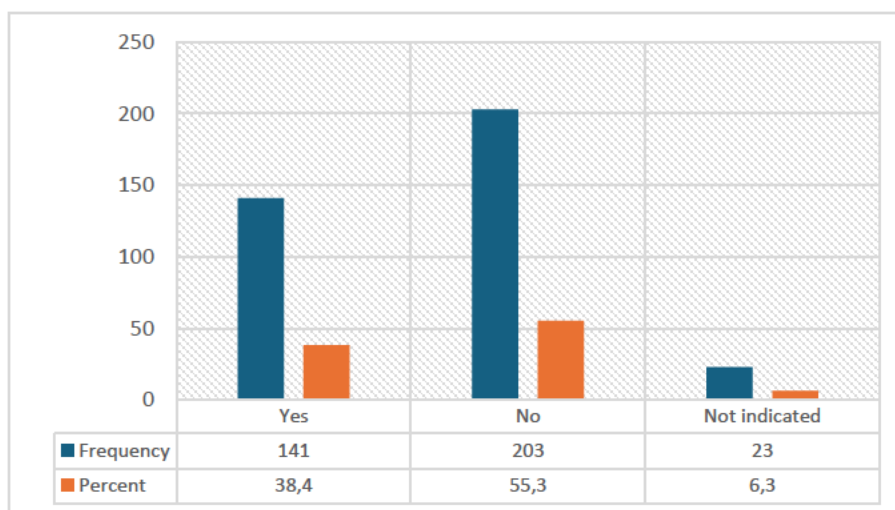


Figure 5.6: Sufficiency of provision of textbooks

N=367

As evident in the table and figure above, there were some respondents (38%) who opined that they did get enough textbooks for their studies, while a small majority (55,3%) considered that textbook provision was insufficient for their learning programmes. Surprisingly, 6,3% of the respondents surveyed could not recall whether textbooks were adequate or inadequate in their learning centres. The latter findings suggest a need for the escalation of programme communications to raise awareness of the available resources in correctional libraries.

Crucially, White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (2001) stresses the primacy of learning resources in enhancing access and provision in all educational settings. Given this imperative, the adequacy of library books (Figure 5.6) is paramount for effective teaching

and learning in correctional facilities. The fact that only 38,4% of the 367 respondents had sufficient learning resources (in the form of textbooks) compared to 55,3% who did not, suggests discrepancies in both the mobilisation and allocation of learning resources in some correctional centres. In response, the study advances a collaborative approach to librarianship to help resuscitate under-resourced schools within the DCS's training system (see Chapter 7).

5.3.2.3 Sufficient books (learning resources) for studies

Besides textbooks in the library, the respondents were also asked whether they had enough books (learning resources) for their studies. The primary objective of this question was to ascertain whether learners had made any effort to acquire their own books given that they received a stipend for the services rendered to the DCS as part of their parole conditions or sentence plans. This question was particularly important given the plurality and diversity of skills programmes within the DCS training system Table 5.7 and Figure 5.7 below depict the findings.

Table 5.7: Sufficient books (learning resources) for studies

N=367

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	131	35,7
No	211	57,3
Not indicated	25	6,8
Total	367	100

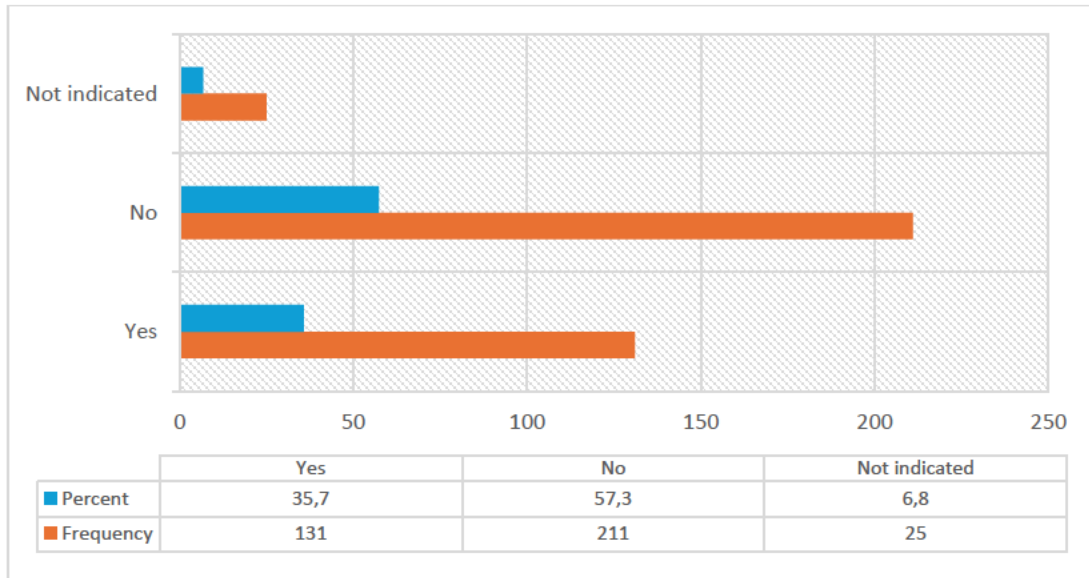


Figure 5.7: Sufficient books (learning resources) for studies
N=367

As can be seen in the table and figure above, only 35,7% of the learners indicated that they had enough books for their studies while over half (57,3%) indicated that this was not the case. Several factors are responsible for this discrepancy and include the limited supply of learning resources, especially in small correctional facilities without formal school sections. Under-resourced learning programmes (in terms of insufficient books in particular) are likely to have a negative impact on learner motivation, participation, and achievement.

5.3.2.4 *Loaning of books for homework purposes*

The study determined whether respondents were allowed to loan library books to meet their homework study needs. Table 5.8 and Figure 5.8 below provide the results of this question.

Table 5.8: Loan library books for homework

N=367

	Frequency	Percent
Always	210	57,2
Sometimes	77	21
Occasionally	12	3,3
Seldom	6	1,6
Not at all	40	10,9
Not indicated	22	6
Total	367	100

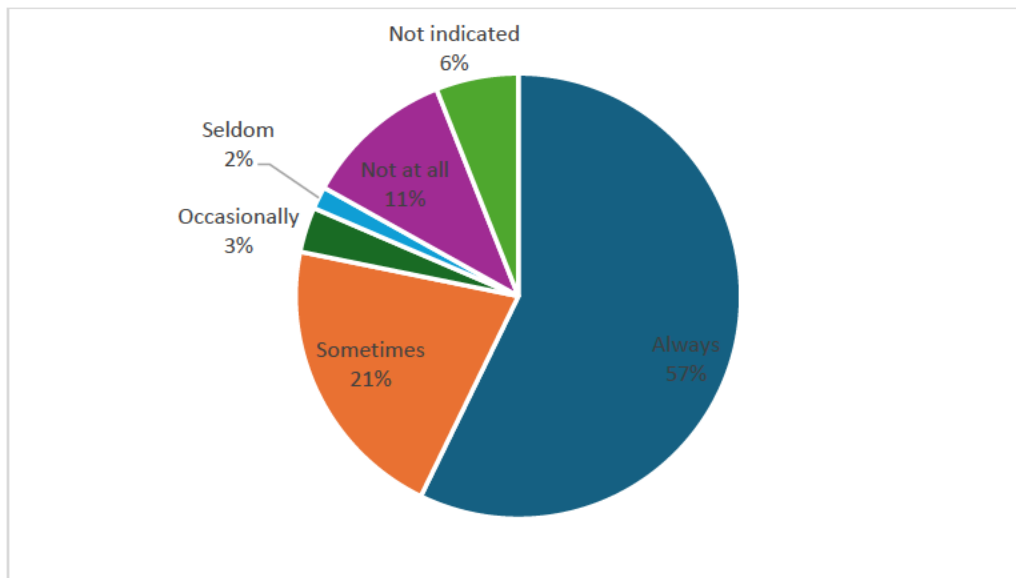


Figure 5.8: Loan library books for homework

N=367

The table and figure above indicate that respondents had varied experiences with the library book loan system. On the positive side, 57,2% of the respondents confirmed that they were always allowed to take out or loan books for homework purposes. However, 21% of respondents said that this was “sometimes” the case, 3,3% “occasionally” and 1,6% “seldom”. Other learners got library books sometimes (21%), occasionally (3,3%) or seldom (1,6%). Just under 11% of respondents indicated that they were not allowed to

loan books for homework purposes while the remaining 6% did not respond to the question.

Significantly, the results confirm that the library book loan system is, to some extent, effective and responsive to learners' needs. That some respondents were not allowed to loan books can be attributed to factors such as a lack of motivation to learn and varied parole conditions and sentence plans; the latter rendered some learners a high-security risk and, therefore, ineligible for library services. These discrepancies can also be ascribed to the fact that smaller correctional facilities did not have formal schooling sections.

5.3.2.5 Assistance in choosing textbooks to align with careers

One of the objectives of this study was to determine whether correctional facilities realised the strategic role of career management; especially for learners such as offenders who face a complete ban from the outside world throughout their period of incarceration. Respondents were asked if they had received assistance or guidance (from their correctional librarians) in selecting textbooks that were consistent with their career goals and aspirations. Table 5.9 and Figure 5.9 below depict the results.

Table 5.9: Helped to choose career-related textbooks
N=367

	Frequency	Percent
Always	119	32,4
Sometimes	88	24
Occasionally	18	4,9
Seldom	13	3,5
Not at all	106	28,9
Not indicated	23	6,3
Total	367	100

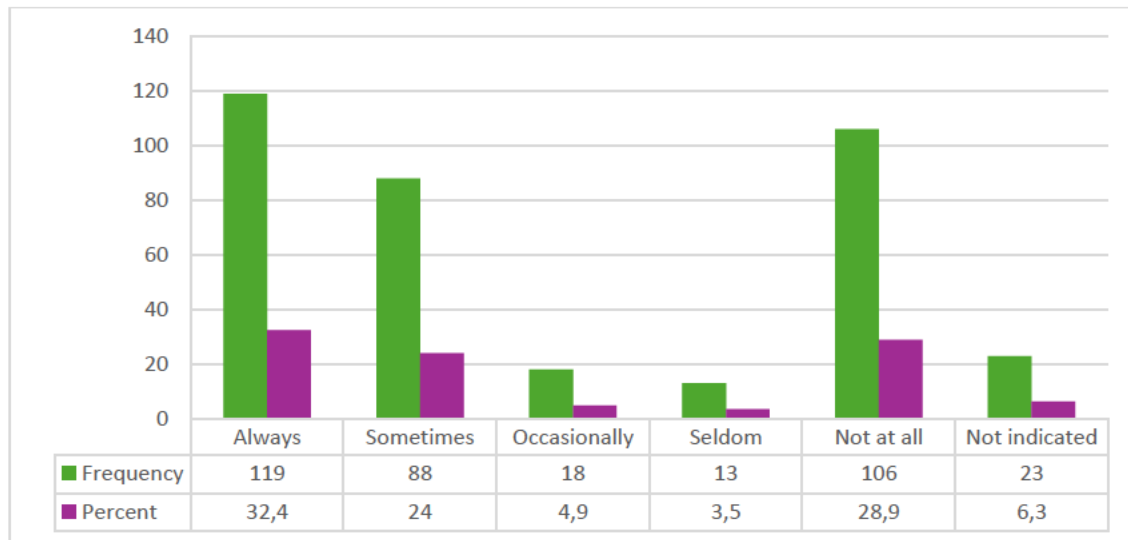


Figure 5.9: Helped to choose career-related textbooks
N=367

The results in Table 5.9 and Figure 5.9 suggest that respondents had different experiences regarding assistance or help in choosing career-related textbooks in their learning programmes. For example, while 32,4% of the respondents always received assistance this is in contrast to the 28,9% who had never received assistance. The percentages of the respondents who sometimes, occasionally or seldom received assistance from the correctional librarians were 24%, 4,9% and 3,5% respectively. The wide variations in learner experiences suggest a need for more library communications to encourage learners to utilise available career information services and materials in their correctional libraries. Encouragingly, the evidence in the table and figure suggests that despite capacity constraints, librarians and facilitators in the centres assisted learners with career guidance. However, the 28,9% of respondents who never received these services underscores the importance of inclusive learning practices in educational settings with diverse learner populations such as correctional centres. Briefly, inclusive learning implies that educators should proactively identify learners at risk, that is, vulnerable learners who are experiencing difficulties in their subjects and provide personalised support to help them learn better (White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education, 2001).

5.3.2.6 Perceived barriers to the use of library services

White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (2001) makes a clarion call on educators and stakeholders to proactively identify and address barriers to learning, including personalised assistance to learners who experience difficulties in their learning programmes. In this context, respondents were asked to rate what they perceived as the barriers to their use of library services on a five-point scale with 1 = strongly agree and 5 = strongly disagree. Table 5.10 and Figure 5.10 summarise the results.

Table 5.10: Perceived barriers to library services use

N=367

Barriers	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not at all	Not indicated	Total
Lack of advice and relevant information	45%	13%	28%	3%	7%	5%	100%
Lack of support from library staff	22%	12%	49%	9%	5%	2%	100%
Lack of guidance from teachers	17%	7%	56%	8%	6%	7%	100%
Shortage of resources e.g. textbooks	62%	30%	3%	1%	4%	1%	100%
Lack of time	67%	27%	4%	0%	2%	0%	100%
Strict correctional rules and procedures	49%	42%	5%	1%	2%	1%	100%
Shortage of teachers/facilitators	46%	12%	26%	3%	7%	5%	100%

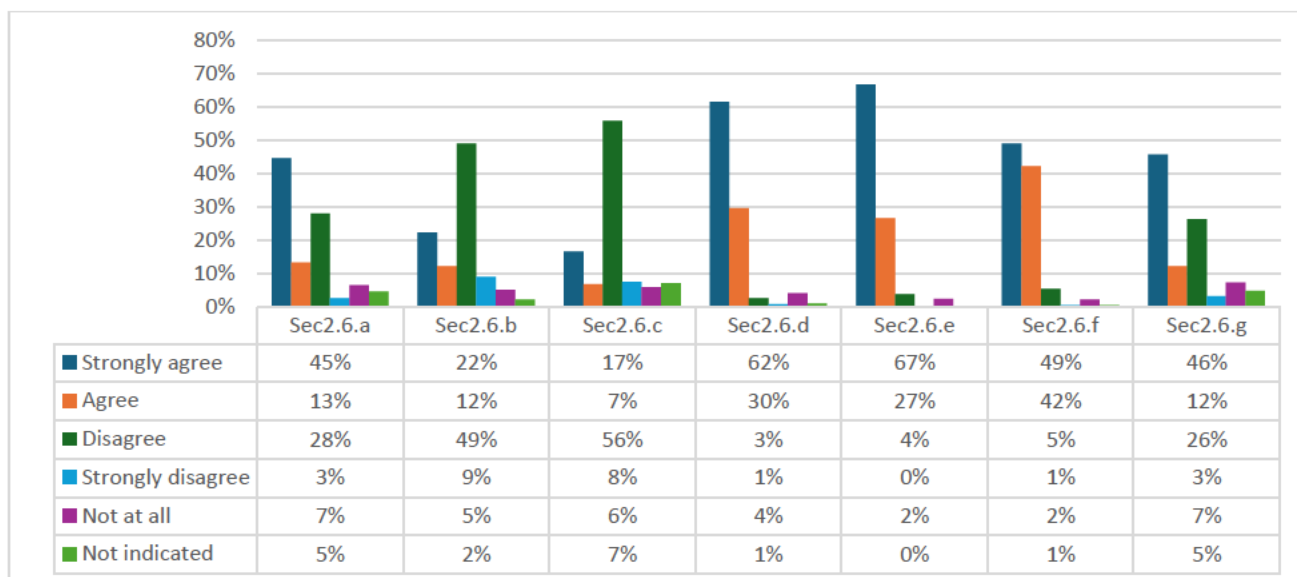


Figure 5.10: Perceived barriers to library services use

N=367

Of the seven barriers listed, the lack of (study) time was one of the major impediments to learning across aboard with 67% of respondents strongly agreeing. Other significant barriers were a shortage of resources such as textbooks (62%), followed by strict correctional protocols (49%), a shortage of teachers/facilitators (49%), and the lack of advice and relevant information (on their chosen learning programmes) (45%). The latter finding suggests gaps in programme communications in some of the learning centres surveyed. The only two barriers not mentioned as an impediment by more than 50% of respondents were the lack of support from library staff (34%) and the lack of guidance from teachers (24%) indicating that respondents were generally satisfied with these two service components.

Improving both access and provision is one of the key tenets of section 29 of the Constitution (1996) on the right to education. This means that librarians and facilitators are constitutionally obligated to address obstacles that prevent learners from achieving their learning goals. And, judging by the evidence in Table 5.10 and Figure 5.10 it is apparent that major barriers in library services use still remain in the education and training system under review. In particular, there is a dire need to prioritise the review of resourcing decisions and security management systems to ensure that these do not

impede teaching and learning processes in correctional centres. This point receives further attention in Chapter 7.

5.3.3 Type of library services received

Notwithstanding barriers to learning, the respondents were asked in section 3 of the questionnaire to describe the type of services that they probably received from their respective libraries. As with the previous question, respondents were asked to rate the services on a five-point scale. Table 5.11 and Figure 5.11 summarise the responses.

Table 5.11: Types of library services received

N=367

Service	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not at all	Not indicated	Total
Textbooks	65%	10%	10%	4%	8%	4%	100%
Learning support materials	22%	4%	42%	9%	12%	10%	100%
Computers	21%	2%	22%	28%	25%	2%	100%
Internet	2%	1%	9%	45%	41%	2%	100%
Study skills	23%	8%	38%	10%	16%	4%	100%
Study area	54%	8%	18%	6%	11%	3%	100%
Library research skills	22%	6%	42%	11%	17%	3%	100%
All of the above	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%	98%	100%

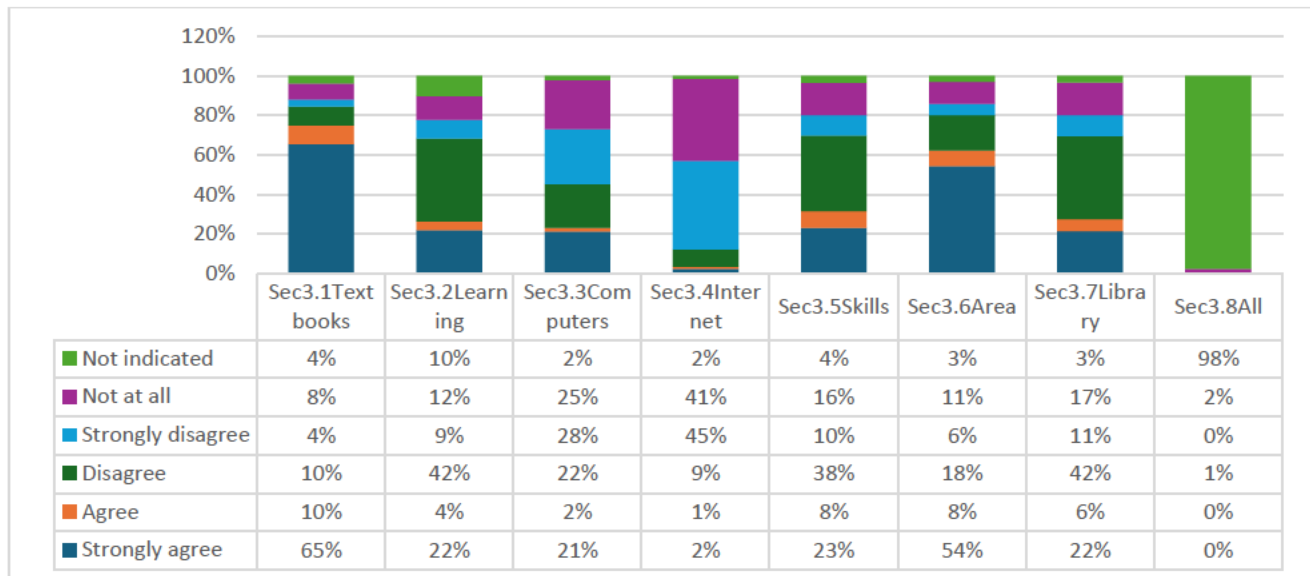


Figure 5.11: Types of library services received

N=367

Significantly, as reflected in the table and figure above, 65% of the learners surveyed strongly affirmed that they received textbooks from their respective libraries compared to the 4% who strongly disagreed with the statement. Perhaps the most promising service in these results is the inclusion of the internet (2%) and research skills (22%) as services provided by the library (albeit at a very low to low level). Also significant was the provision of study space in the libraries with 62% of respondents either strongly agreeing or agreeing with the statement. This suggests that such space has been prioritised in some of the correctional centres surveyed by the study. Effective capacity building is one of the fundamental requirements under the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), which is primarily responsible for accreditation of the occupational qualifications in South Africa's skills development system, including DCS learning programmes.

Computers (28%) and the internet (45%), registered the highest negative outcomes (strongly disagree). Although the empirical literature (Chapter 2) notes that restrictions to ICT facilities in correctional centres are a global phenomenon, the approach adopted by Norway, however, has shown that innovative approaches to curriculum design can mitigate the risks generally associated with the application of ICT-based teaching and learning strategies in such centres. Given this imperative, the present study advocates a

learner-centred approach to digitisation of the curriculum in correctional facilities so that every learner receives ICT content that is tailored to their learning programmes to minimise cybercrime risks.

5.3.3.1 Assistance in preparing for tests, assignments and exams

Thorough preparation of learners for assessments is one of the fundamental requirements under the QCTO Curriculum and Assessment Policy (2011). This is particularly true for occupational qualifications such as construction, welding, professional cooking, as well as clothing and textiles. Respondents were asked whether they had received help when preparing for exams. Table 5.12 and Figure 5.12 report the survey results in this regard.

Table 5.12: Assistance with exam preparations

N=367

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	235	64
No	97	26,5
Not indicated	35	9,5
Total	367	100

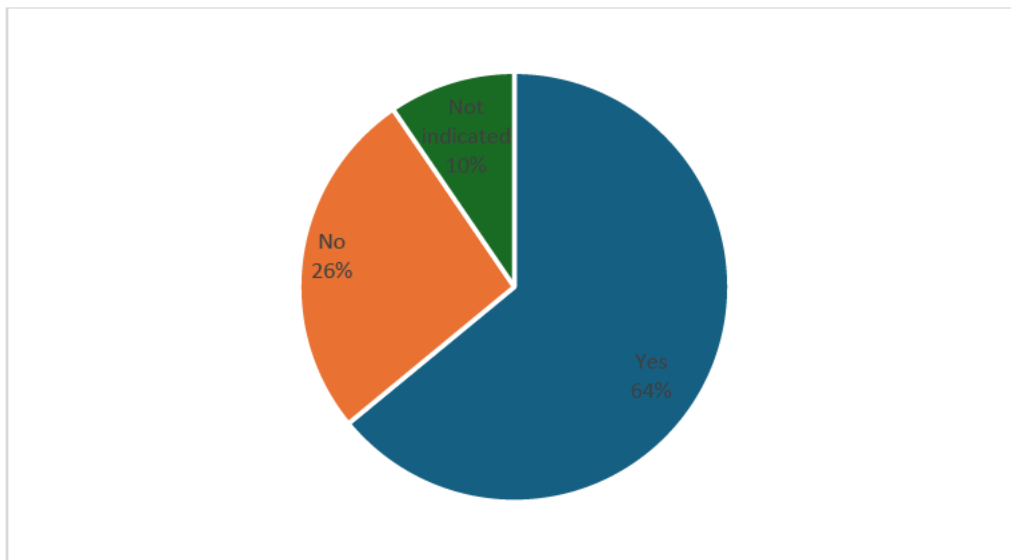


Figure 5.12: Assistance with exam preparations

N=367

As evident in the table and figure above, 64% of the respondents confirmed receiving assistance with exam preparations. In contrast, 26,5% of the respondents surveyed indicated that they had not received any help in preparing for assessments in their learning programmes. The inaccessibility of learner support services is contrary to the spirit of the NQF (2008) which sees learner support as integral to improving learner participation and achievement. Interestingly, 10% of respondents were unable to indicate whether assistance during their learning programmes had been provided or not.

One of the central objectives of the NQF (2008:6) is to “facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within, education, training and career paths, and most importantly, to accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities.” It is evident that the positive outcome (64% of respondents receiving assistance in examination preparation) is consistent with the spirit of the NQF on the centrality of learner support in curriculum interventions, particularly in disadvantaged social contexts where learners are faced with formidable learning difficulties, such as correctional centres.

5.3.4 Training and Career Support Services

One of the objectives of the survey was to determine if the respondents in the 12 correctional centres had received proper training and career support from the library to be able to achieve their learning goals. In this regard, section four of the questionnaire contained several questions concerning the training and career support services received by respondents in their learning programmes.

5.3.4.1 Kind of support received from the library

The first question (4.1) asked respondents about the kind of support they received from the library to help them better plan their careers. Responses were again reflected on a five-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Table 5.13 and Figure 5.13 below reflect the results.

Table 5.13: Kind of support received from the library

N=367

Support	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not at all	Not indicated	Total
Helps me to set my career goals	37%	8%	16%	5%	15%	20%	100%
Helps me to choose the right subjects/courses	31%	9%	20%	5%	15%	20%	100%
Helps me to choose the right job	13%	5%	32%	20%	16%	14%	100%
Helps me to identify work opportunities	15%	7%	30%	19%	14%	14%	100%
None of the above	1%	0%	0%	0%	8%	91%	100%

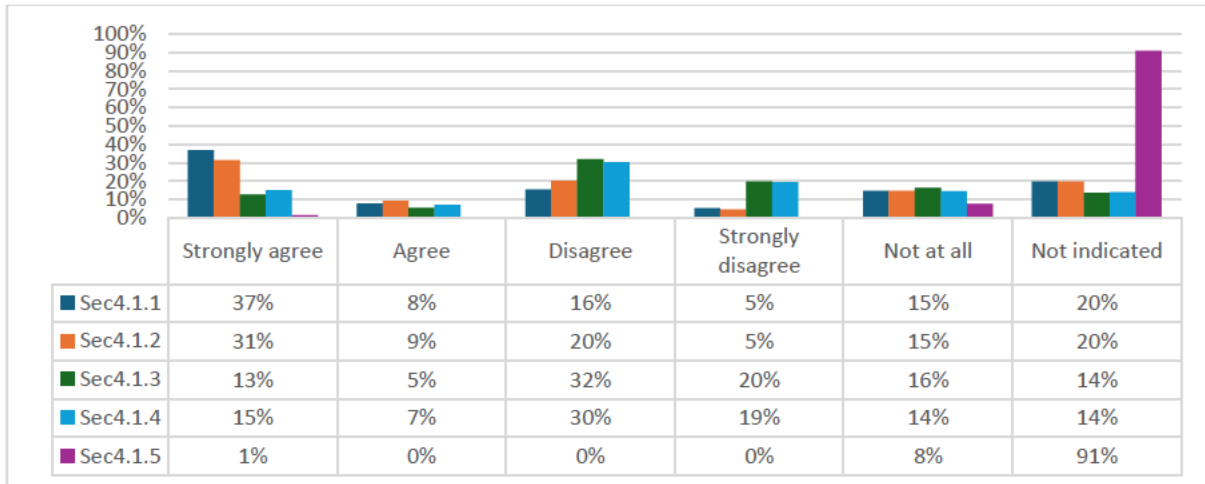


Figure 5.13: Kind of support received from the library

N=367

As evident in the table and figure above, there were marked differences among survey respondents. For instance, while 37% of the respondents strongly agreed that they had received support on career goal setting, 21% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, followed by 15% who had never received such support from their libraries. Two instances where the lack of support was low concern help in choosing the right job and in identifying work opportunities, with only 13% and 15% of respondents strongly

agreeing with each statement, respectively. These findings point to a significant gap in career transition preparation practices in correctional centres, particularly concerning assistance in choosing the right job and identifying work opportunities. Job search skills are increasingly becoming essential for prospective trainees looking to find employment opportunities in the highly competitive digital economy. Validating this point, Van Hooft, Kammeyer-Mueller, and Wanberg (2023:674) state that “job search is a goal-directed, motivational and self-regulatory process that is crucially important during the school-to-work transition.”

The high level of disagreement with the various statements suggests that many of the respondents probably had negative experiences regarding the training and career support services received from the library in their learning programmes. Similarly, the number of learners who were completely uncertain about training and career support services in their respective centres ranged from 14% to 20% across the board. The significant variations in the training and career support provided highlight discrepancies in policy practice, especially in career management services which is contrary to the White Paper on Inclusive Education (2001).

5.3.4.2 Frequency of career counselling from the library

Question 4.2 asked respondents how often they got career counselling from the library. Table 5.14 and Figure 5.14 indicate the results of the question.

Table 5.14: Career counselling frequency from the library

N=367

	Frequency	Percent
Daily	33	9
Weekly	74	20,2
Monthly	24	6,5
Quarterly	26	7,1
Not at all	168	45,8
Not indicated	42	11,4
Total	367	100

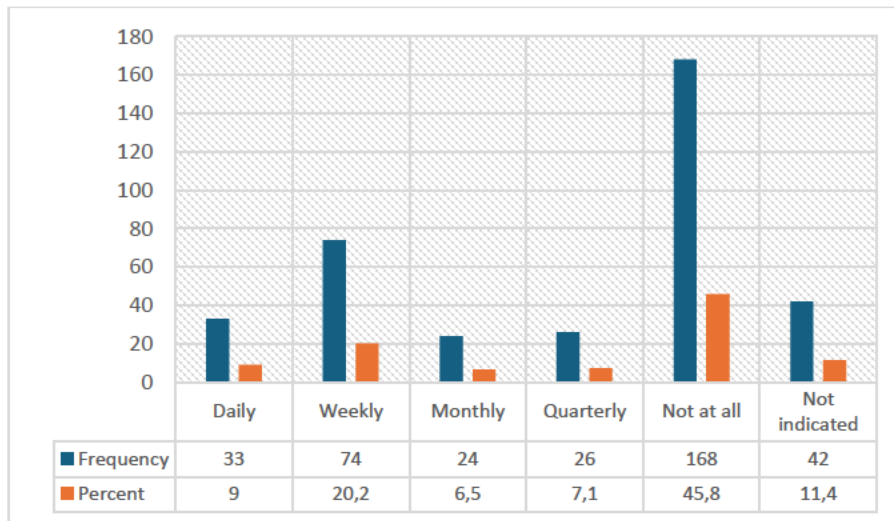


Figure 5.14: Career counselling frequency from the library

N=367

As evident from the results, only 9% of the respondents received career counselling on a daily basis, compared to 20,2% who did so weekly, 6,5% monthly, and 7,1% quarterly. In contrast, 45,8% of the respondents indicated that they had not received career counselling at all, suggesting a need to prioritise career management services in some of the correctional centres. This suggestion is further reinforced by the 11,4% of respondents who did not respond to the question (and were thus unlikely to have received such counselling). These latter findings are of concern, given the extremely difficult conditions under which most offenders in correctional centres learn. The results call for a renewed focus on accessibility and provision of career management and career transition programmes in correctional centres. As highlighted in Chapter 1, the ultimate goal of correctional education is to reform, empower, and integrate offenders back into their communities to reduce recidivism and violence in society. As noted in Chapter 2, Germany has institutionalised career management services to ensure that released offenders gain quick access to employment to prevent reoffending. Similarly, the USA has formalised the career transition pipeline so that outgoing offenders are linked with potential employees before their release from the correctional service system.

5.3.4.3 Frequency of career counselling from facilitator or teacher

Apart from career guidance received from the library, the respondents were also asked about the frequency of career counselling received from their teachers or facilitators.

Table 5.15 and Figure 5.15 provide a summary of the results of the question.

Table 5.15: Career counselling frequency from the teachers/facilitators

N=367

	Frequency	Percent
Daily	158	43,1
Weekly	33	9
Monthly	29	7,9
Quarterly	24	6,5
Not at all	94	25,6
Not indicated	29	7,9
Total	367	100

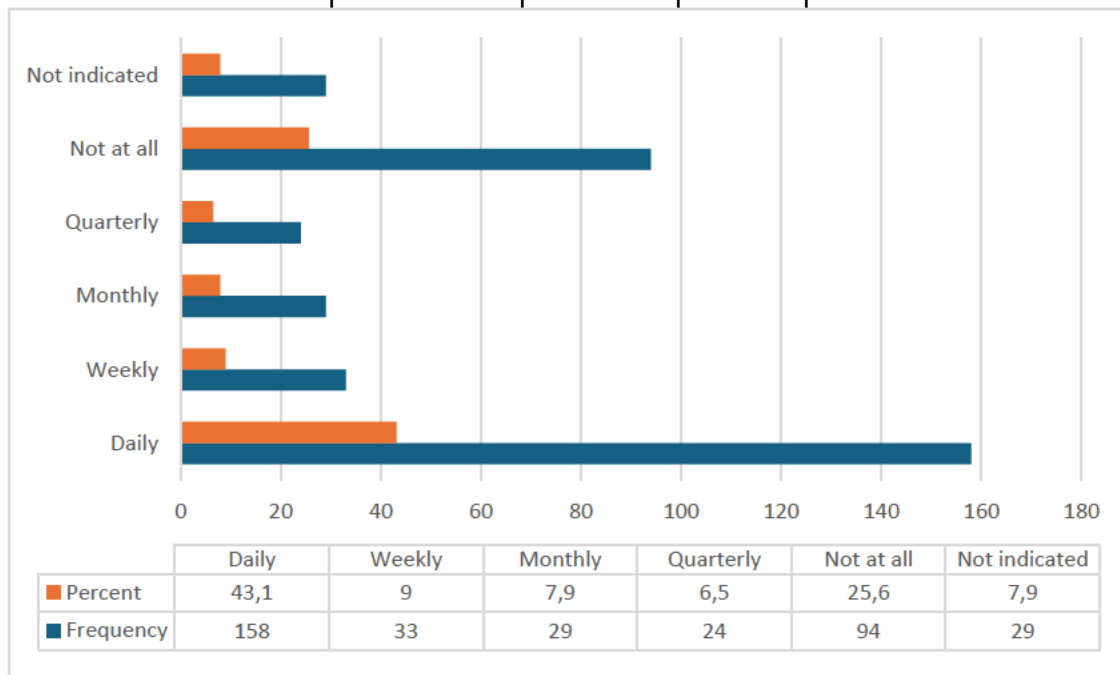


Figure 5.15: Career counselling frequency from the teachers/facilitators.

N=367

The highest percentage of respondents (43,1%) received career support from their teachers daily; 9% weekly, 7,9% monthly, and 6,5% quarterly. However, a significant

percentage of respondents (25,6%) indicated that they had not received career guidance from their teachers or facilitators at all and 7.9% did not respond to the question. That just over a quarter of respondents never received career counselling is unacceptable, given that teachers/facilitators have daily interactions with offenders in most correctional centres, including remedial programmes. As will be seen in Chapter 6, some learners are forced to rely heavily on their peers for support, suggesting a need for institutionalisation of career support services in correctional centres. More is said on this point under the conclusions of the study in Chapter 7.

5.3.4.4 Preferred career choices

In question 4.4 respondents were presented with a list of areas/occupations and asked which best describes their career choice. Once again a five-point scale was used for respondents to reflect their answers. Table 5.16 and Figure 5.16 summarise the results.

Table 5.16: Preferred career choice

N=367

Career choice	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not at all	Not indicated	Total
Engineering	28%	3%	0%	0%	1%	67%	100%
Agriculture	44%	2%	1%	1%	0%	53%	100%
Information technology	22%	3%	0%	0%	0%	75%	100%
Building and construction	15%	1%	1%	0%	0%	84%	100%
Welding	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%	84%	100%
Carpentry	9%	0%	0%	1%	0%	90%	100%
Woodwork	10%	0%	0%	1%	0%	89%	100%
Painting	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	89%	100%
Catering – baking, cooking	12%	0%	0%	1%	0%	87%	100%
Plumbing	15%	1%	0%	1%	0%	83%	100%
Electrical	19%	1%	0%	0%	1%	78%	100%

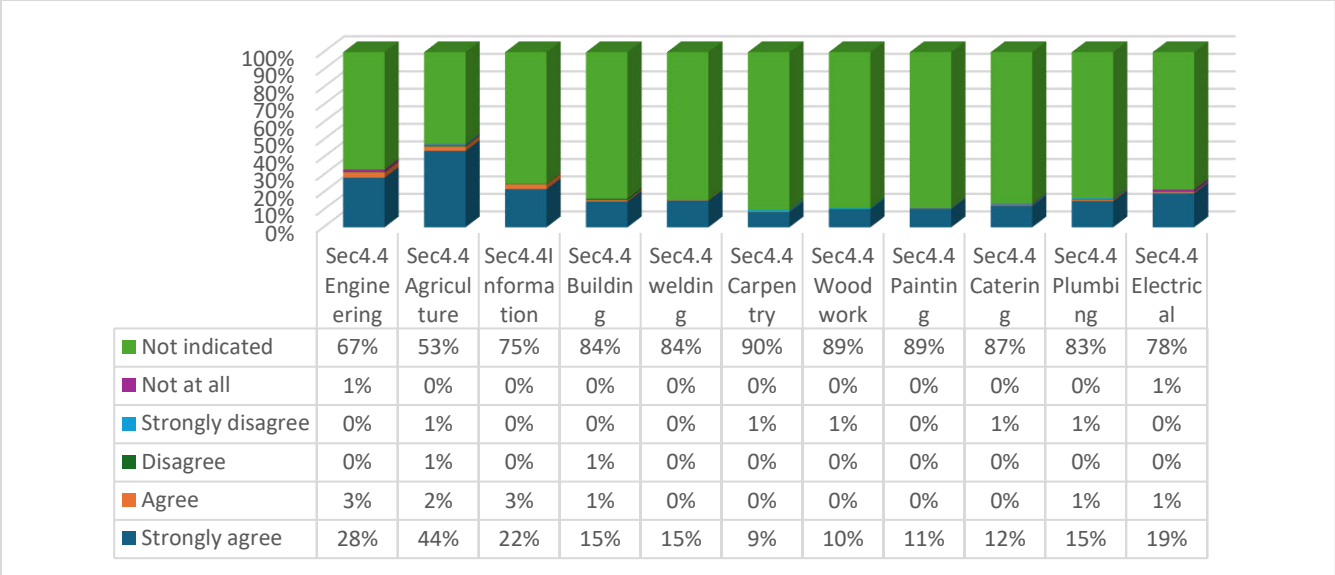


Figure 5.16: Participation rates per learning programme

N=367

It is evident that the most popular career choices (and by extension occupational skills programmes) rated 10% or more as strongly agreed, were agriculture (44%), engineering (28%), information technology (22%), electrical (19%) building and construction (15%), welding (15%), plumbing (15%), catering (12%), painting (11%) and woodworking and carpentry (10%). The wide spread of learners across different skills programmes suggests that there is a wide variety of career choices in the learning programmes offered by the DCS. A very significant percentage of respondents (just 80%), however, did not respond to the question. This very high percentage can be attributed to the fact that a large number of the respondents were engaged in general literacy self-study activities in the library as opposed to formal learning programmes. Simply put, the majority of learners were either in the Funda Mzansi Programme or informal learning activities as part of their routine correctional instruction in terms of their sentence plans.

5.3.4.5 Skills programmes attended

In the first of the two open-ended questions in the questionnaire, respondents were asked to list the specific skill programmes that they had attended. An overview of the findings is presented below.

There were marked differences among the respondents in terms of the skills programmes they had attended. For example, agricultural learning programmes dominated and this was followed by plumbing courses. There was also a high concentration of respondents having done courses in hairdressing, nail technician, catering, welding, clothing and textiles, and carpentry. Some of the female respondents felt strongly that their participation in male-dominated courses had been severely curtailed, making it difficult for them to enrol for courses such as building and construction, among others. Thus, there was a strong feeling that the DCS needs to address gender-based barriers that prevent female offenders from accessing skills programmes of their choice. They are in effect being forced to do courses that confine them to traditional roles in the workplace, such as fashion design and hairdressing.

5.3.4.6 Courses or subjects to include in future skills programmes

In the second open-ended question, respondents were asked “What other useful courses or subjects do you think should be included in the skills programmes to benefit other offenders in future?” Findings indicated that many of the learners were keen to enrol in courses in the following subject areas: business, electrical engineering, information and communications technology, agri-business, diesel mechanics, plumbing, welding, building and construction, cooking, boiler making, law, and political science. Crucially, the diverse inputs from the respondents provide the DCS training team with information when designing new courses that are suitable and responsive to learners' needs in the future. This is also an opportunity for librarians and facilitators to explore new ways of increasing women's participation in occupationally-directed qualifications as the DCS is now accredited by the QCTO.

5.3.5 Learner support services

Several questions were asked concerning the support respondents received in their skills programmes (see section 5 of the questionnaire)

5.3.5.1 Kind of support received from teachers or facilitators

This question sought to determine the kinds of support the respondents received in instructional contexts rather than with regard to general career information services. The focus was on the kind of support that enables learners to learn better. A five-point scale was used to record the responses ranging from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree. Table 5.17 and Figure 5.17 present the findings of the question.

Table 5.17: Kind of support received from teachers/facilitators

N=367

Support	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not at all	Not indicated	Total
They help me with homework	34%	12%	17%	4%	15%	18%	100%
They help me with study skills	43%	11%	14%	3%	13%	16%	100%
They help with career information, counselling and advice	43%	14%	11%	4%	13%	15%	100%
They help me with assignments	39%	10%	18%	3%	12%	18%	100%
They help me with practical work e.g. internships/ learnerships	35%	5%	15%	11%	17%	16%	100%
They help me prepare for examinations or assessments	57%	17%	3%	2%	9%	12%	100%

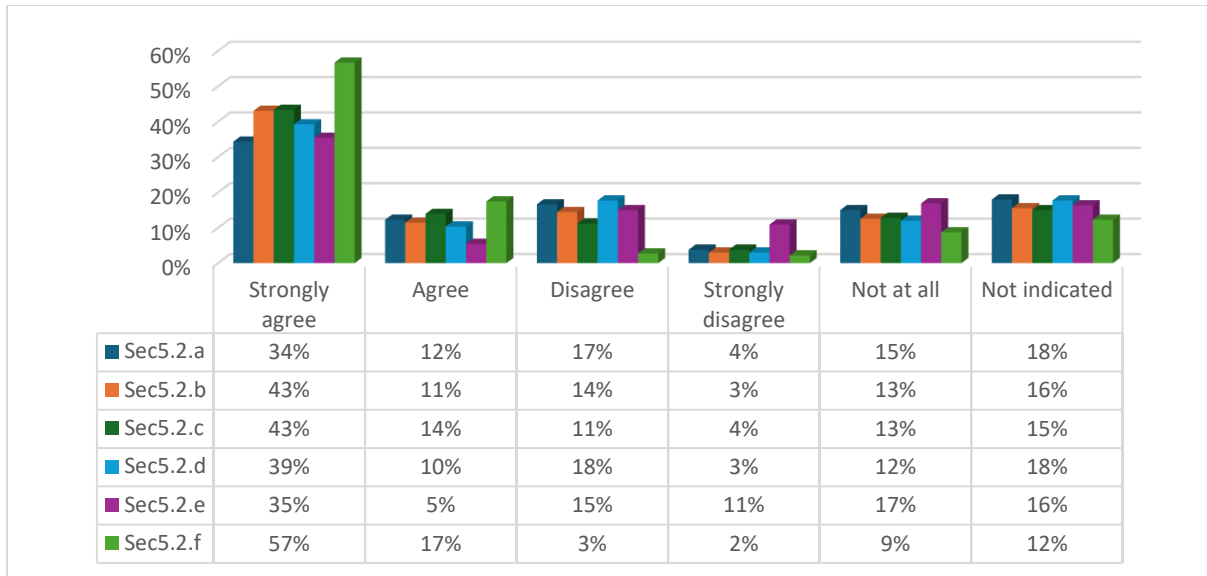


Figure 5.17: Kind of support received from teachers/facilitators

N=367

According to the respondents, most support (57% in strong agreement) is concerned with helping prepare for examinations or assessments. This was followed by assistance with study skills (43%); career information, counselling and advice (43%); and assignments (39%). However, some respondents strongly disagreed with these statements ranging between 2% and 11% overall. The non-response to the question was also relatively high, ranging between 12% and 18% overall.

Given these results, it is evident that several kinds of learning support are provided by the teachers or facilitators to the respondents and this is acknowledged, in most instances (agree and strongly agree), by a majority of the respondents. At times, significant variations in teacher or facilitator support are indicative of the widespread discrepancies in policy practice across the centres surveyed. In response, this study advocates a collaborative approach to teaching and learning processes, where librarians, teachers and facilitators can pool their skills, talents and expertise to improve learner participation, performance and labour market outcomes for released offenders.

5.3.5.2 Frequency of instructional support from teachers or facilitators

A key objective of this question was to measure the frequency of the above-mentioned support that respondents received from their teachers or facilitators. Table 5.18 and Figure 5.18 provide the results of this question.

Table 5.18: Frequency of support from teachers/facilitators
N=367

	Frequency	Percent
Daily	209	56,9
Weekly	50	13,6
Monthly	20	5,4
Quarterly	13	3,5
Not at all	42	11,4
Not indicated	33	9
Total	367	100

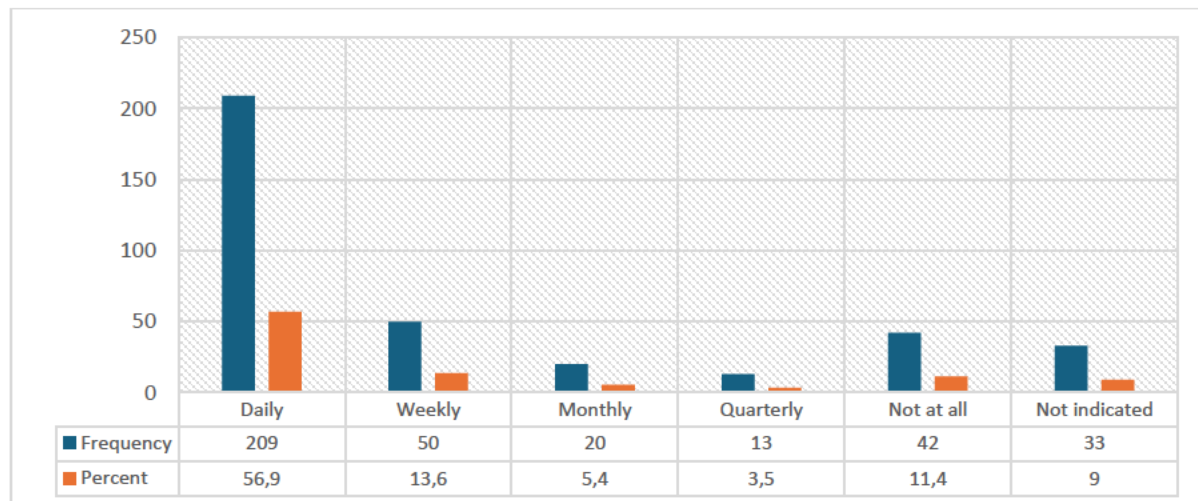


Figure 5.18: Frequency of support from teachers/facilitators
N=367

As indicated in the table and figure above, a majority of respondents (56%) got instructional support on a daily basis, 13,6% weekly, 5,4% monthly, and 3,5% quarterly. Thus, the majority of respondents (70,5%) received pedagogical support from their teachers or facilitators at least once a week or more. However, given that 11.4% of

respondents indicated not receiving any support at all, 5.4% and 3.5% only receiving support on a monthly or quarterly basis respectively, and 9% not responding to the question at all, it can be argued that significant improvements are required to increase awareness on available learner support services within the DCS skills development system.

As already pointed out in previous parts of the thesis correctional pedagogy needs to be structured in such a way that it responds appropriately to the vast career needs and expectations of offenders. As alluded to above, it is evident that improvements are required to make the DCS skills development system more efficient and responsive to the diverse learning needs of offenders across the learning centres. The results concerning the frequency of support also have direct implications for both the design and scheduling of learner support services in these correctional institutions. More specifically, each occupational skills programme needs to be augmented with appropriate learner support services to enhance learner engagement.

5.3.5.3 Coaching and mentoring during workshops/classes

Question 5.4 in the survey questionnaire asked respondents about the coaching and mentoring they received during workshops/classes. The responses are summarised in Table 5.19 and Figure 5.19 below.

Table 5.19: Coaching and mentoring in workshops/classes

N=367

	Frequency	Percent
Daily	145	39,5
Weekly	102	27,8
Monthly	14	3,8
Quarterly	7	1,9
Not at all	66	18
Not indicated	33	9
Total	367	100

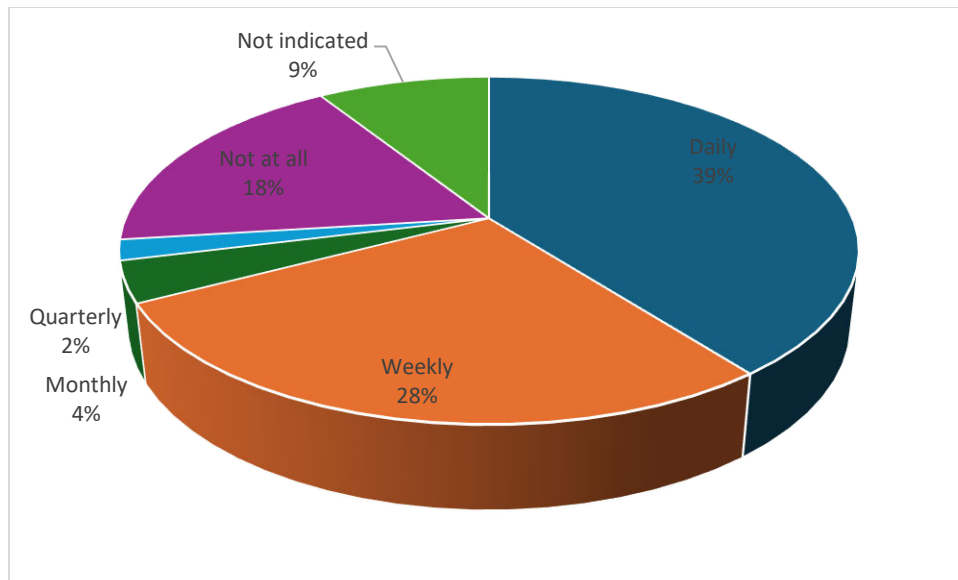


Figure 5.19: Coaching and mentoring in workshops/classes
N=367

Just under 40% of respondents indicated that coaching and mentoring during workshops/classes took place daily. This was followed by 27,8% of respondents weekly, 3,8% monthly, and 1,9% quarterly. However, a substantial 18% of respondents had never received these educational services, while 9% did not respond to the question – the latter finding could suggest that some learners may have had negative experiences with coaching and mentoring in their correctional centres.

Under the QCTO Policy Framework, coaching and mentoring are central to both classroom-based instruction (theory) and workplace-based learning (practice). Considering this imperative, the study determined the frequency of these services in helping offenders meet their career transition needs. The evidence in Table 5.19 and Figure 5.19 above suggests that significant strides have been made by teachers and facilitators in using coaching and mentoring to improve occupational readiness among learners, although the frequency of these services varied significantly across the centres due to differences in curriculum delivery requirements.

5.3.5.4 Coaching and mentoring during workplace practice

Respondents were asked about the coaching and mentoring they received during their workplace practice. The results are summarised in Table 5.20 and Figure 5.20 below.

Table 5.20: Coaching and mentoring during workplace practice
N=367

	Frequency	Percent
Daily	207	56,4
Weekly	119	32,4
Monthly	4	1,1
Quarterly	1	0,3
Not at all	3	0,8
Not indicated	33	9
Total	367	100

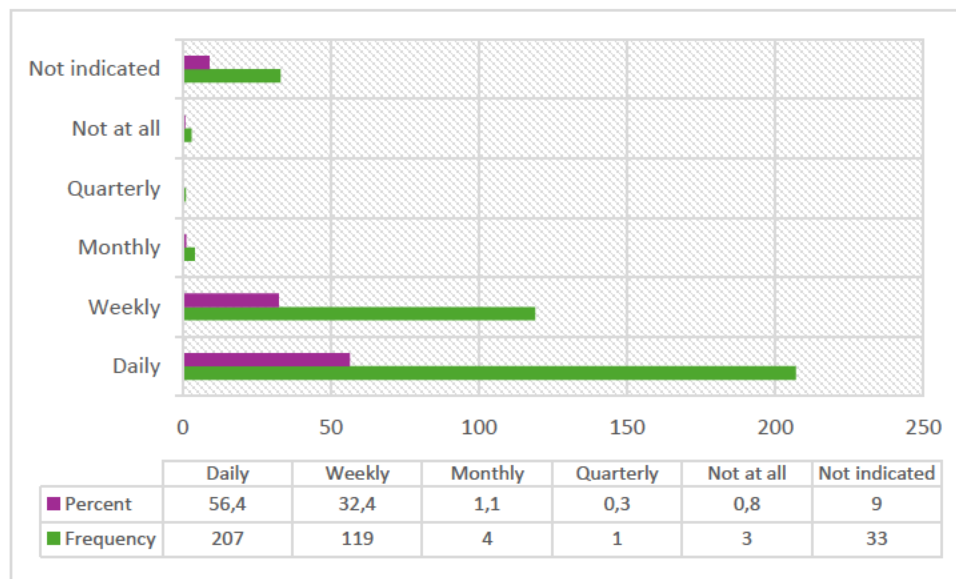


Figure 5.20: Coaching and mentoring during workplace practice
N=367

Table 5.20 and Figure 5.20 report the respondents' perceptions of the coaching and mentoring they received during workplace practice. It is evident that except for a small proportion (0,8%) of respondents (and 9% who did not respond to the question), all remaining respondents received coaching and mentoring during their workplace practice.

More than half (56,4%) of the respondents indicated that these educational services were provided in their workplace learning programmes daily. Just under a third (32,4%) of the respondents confirmed receipt of coaching and mentoring services on a weekly basis. The number of respondents who received monthly coaching and mentoring was significantly low at 1,1%, followed by 0,3% who did so on a quarterly basis.

In general, these results suggest that respondents are adequately catered for in terms of the provision of coaching and mentoring services in DCS skills programmes. It is also a clear indication that facilitators and teachers are aware of the importance of exposing offenders to employability skills before their release from the correctional services system. However, despite the generally positive findings, it is evident that there is room for improvement in this regard.

5.3.5.5 Working relationship between respondents and their teachers

Respondents were asked to describe the working relationship between themselves and their teachers. Five response categories were provided ranging from poor to excellent, including a “Not sure” option. The results are depicted in Table 5.21 and Figure 5.21 below.

Table 5.21: Working relationship with teachers

N=367

	Frequency	Percent
Poor	17	4,6
Average	35	9,5
Good	171	46,6
Excellent	97	26,4
Not sure	16	4,4
Not indicated	31	8,4
Total	367	100



Figure 5.21: Working relationship with teachers
N=367

As evident in the table and figure above, the majority of respondents (73%) had either a “good” (46,6%) or “excellent” (26,4%) working relationship with their teachers. By contrast, 9,5% of the respondents described their relationship with their teachers as “average”, while 4,6% perceived such relationships as poor. Interestingly, 4,4% of respondents were “not sure” of their relationship and 8,4% did not respond to the question. From these results, it is clear that the majority of learners (73%) were generally happy with their interactions with their teachers across the 12 correctional centres surveyed.

Cordial and professional teacher-learner relationships are central to all four learning outcomes, namely, learner participation, performance, achievement, and employment. The positive findings reflected above affirm that most respondents found their working relationship with their teachers productive and helpful in their studies. Overall, the results validate teachers’ claims that they see offenders as their “children” who need constant support to be able to embrace social change and personal transformation.

5.3.5.6 Description of teacher's facilitation style or training method

The study determined how respondents (offenders enrolled on the DCS skills programmes) felt about their teacher's facilitation style or training method. As with the preceding question, five response categories were provided ranging from poor to excellent, including a "not sure" option. The findings are depicted in Table 5.22 and Figure 5.22 below.

Table 5.22: Description of teacher's facilitation style or training method

N=367

	Frequency	Percent
Poor	15	4,1
Average	41	11,2
Good	175	47,7
Excellent	92	25,1
Not sure	13	3,5
Not indicated	31	8,4
Total	367	100

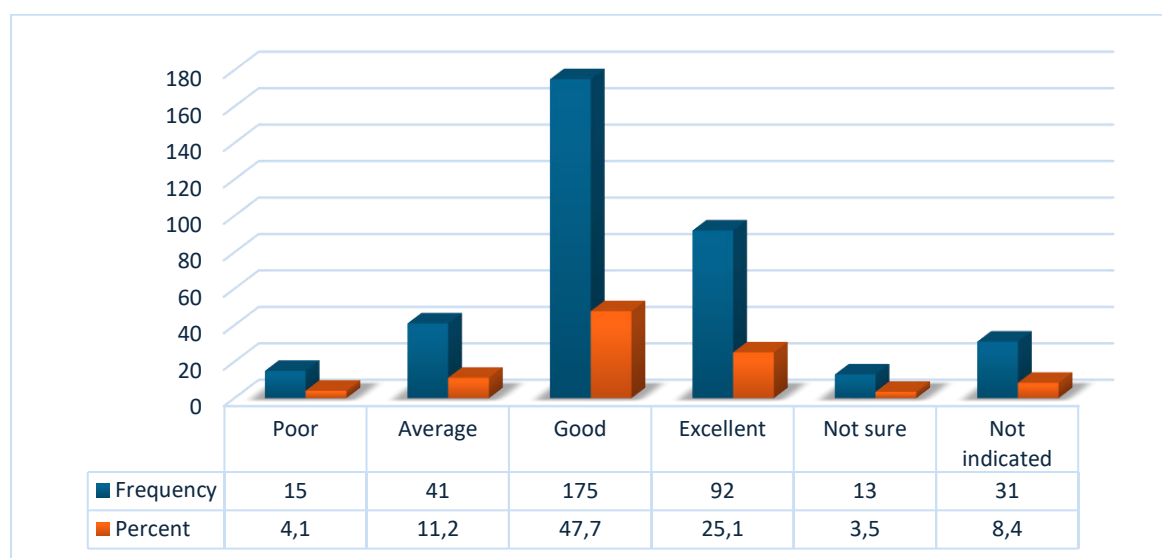


Figure 5.22: Description of teacher's facilitation style or training method

N=367

One of the fundamental principles of Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning theory is that instructors need to accommodate the increasingly diverse learning styles of learners in their pedagogical practices. According to Kolb (1984), instructors can achieve this by varying their teaching methods and learning activities to ensure that all learners benefit from the learning experience. Crucially, Figure 5.22 reveals that 47,7% of the learners described their teacher's facilitation style or training method as good while just over a quarter (25,1%) described them as excellent. A small minority (4,1%) perceived them as poor, 3,5% were not sure and 8,4% did not respond to the question. Taken together, these results indicate that the majority of respondents (just under 73%) were generally positive regarding the facilitation styles or training methods adopted by their teachers. However, as noted in the findings of the previous question above, there is room for improvement.

5.3.5.7 Description of the working relationship between respondents and fellow learners or offenders in the classroom

Respondents were asked how they felt about their relationship with their fellow learners or offenders. This question was particularly significant given the centrality of learner participation in the NQF. Table 5.23 and Figure 5.23 below indicate the findings of the question.

Table 5.23: Description of working relationship with fellow learners or offenders

N=367

	Frequency	Percent
Poor	10	2,7
Average	33	9
Good	190	51,8
Excellent	89	24,3
Not sure	14	3,8
Not indicated	31	8,4
Total	367	100

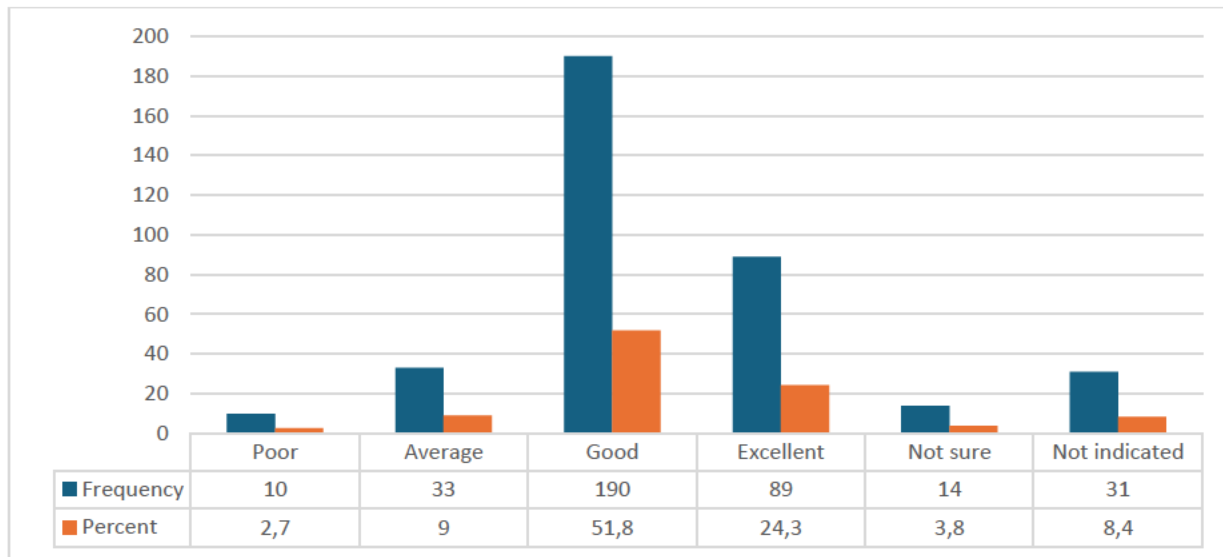


Figure 5.23: Description of working relationship with fellow learners or offenders

N=367

Findings, once again, were generally positive with just over half of the respondents (51,8%) describing their relationship with their fellow learners as good while just under a quarter (24,3%) described it as excellent. At the other extreme, a small minority of respondents (2,7%) described the relationship as poor while 9% used the term average, 3,8% were not sure, and 8,4% did not respond to the question.

5.3.5.8 Experience of group learning in class

Effective group learning is consistent with the OBE model adopted in South Africa's education and training system. In this context, survey respondents were presented with five statements and asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with each statement on a five-point scale which included a not sure option. The question aimed to determine whether group learning activities were used to improve respondents' participation and performance in their respective learning programmes. Table 5.24 and Figure 5.24 report the findings of the question.

Table 5.24: Experience of group learning in class

N=367

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure	Not indicated	Total
We work as a team and help each other most of the time	53%	24%	5%	3%	2%	14%	100%
We only work together during exams, tests or practical work	18%	5%	47%	11%	5%	14%	100%
There is no cooperation among members	9%	3%	54%	14%	4%	15%	100%
Most of the time we do not support each other	13%	4%	52%	12%	3%	15%	100%
There are no opportunities for group learning	41%	4%	24%	12%	5%	15%	100%

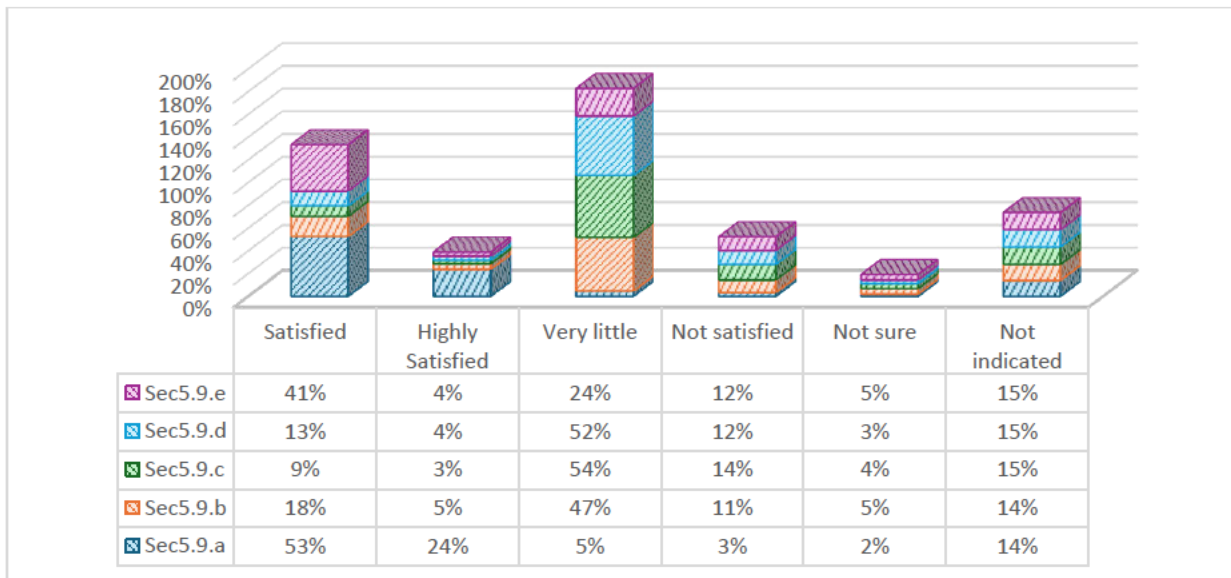


Figure 5.24: Experience of group learning in class

N=367

Active and sustained learner engagement is one of the hallmarks of OBE under the NQF (2008). Taking this into consideration, the study determined respondents' experience of group-based learning in the classroom. According to Table 5.24, more than half (53%) of

the respondents strongly agreed and 24% agreed with the statement: “We work as a team and help each other most of the time”. The responses to the subsequent three statements (which were all phrased in the negative) all reflect this initial response (that is, the majority of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with each of the three statements). Of concern, however, was the 41% of respondents who strongly agreed and the 4% who agreed with the statement: “There are no opportunities for group learning”. This contradicts the positive findings regarding the initial statement above. Should the latter findings be correct, they have serious implications for teachers’ pedagogical strategies and practices. More directly, there would be an urgent need for DCS instructors to utilise learner-based teaching practices and activities that encourage learner engagement, as opposed to the traditional, top-down instructional methods.

5.3.6 Level of satisfaction with library and training services

The final section of the questionnaire (section 6) sought to determine the respondents' satisfaction with the level of library and training services provided in the 12 correctional service facilities surveyed by the study. This section was particularly significant given the centrality of education in the rehabilitation of offenders.

5.3.6.1 Level of satisfaction with library services

In the first of the two questions in this final section, respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the services provided by their libraries. Nine services (or statements) were provided and respondents were asked to rate each on a five-point scale ranging from “satisfied” and “highly satisfied” to “very little satisfied” and “not satisfied”. A “not sure” option was also included. Table 5.25 and Figure 5.25 indicate the findings.

Table 5.25: Satisfaction with library services

N=367

Statement	Satisfied	Highly satisfied	Very little	Not satisfied	Not sure	Not indicated	Total
Relevant information and advice on available library services	19%	5%	41%	22%	3%	10%	100%
Learning materials e.g. textbooks and supporting materials	12%	4%	47%	24%	2%	11%	100%
Guidance on how to use library services	39%	11%	16%	20%	3%	11%	100%
Information technology e.g. computers/internet	6%	1%	15%	58%	7%	12%	100%
Study rooms and exam preparations	26%	7%	22%	31%	3%	12%	100%
Discussion rooms for group work	12%	4%	34%	33%	4%	13%	100%
Water & sanitation services in the library	34%	5%	15%	29%	4%	13%	100%
Time for reading and relaxing in the library	15%	7%	31%	31%	4%	12%	100%
Peace and order during study hours	18%	8%	37%	22%	4%	12%	100%

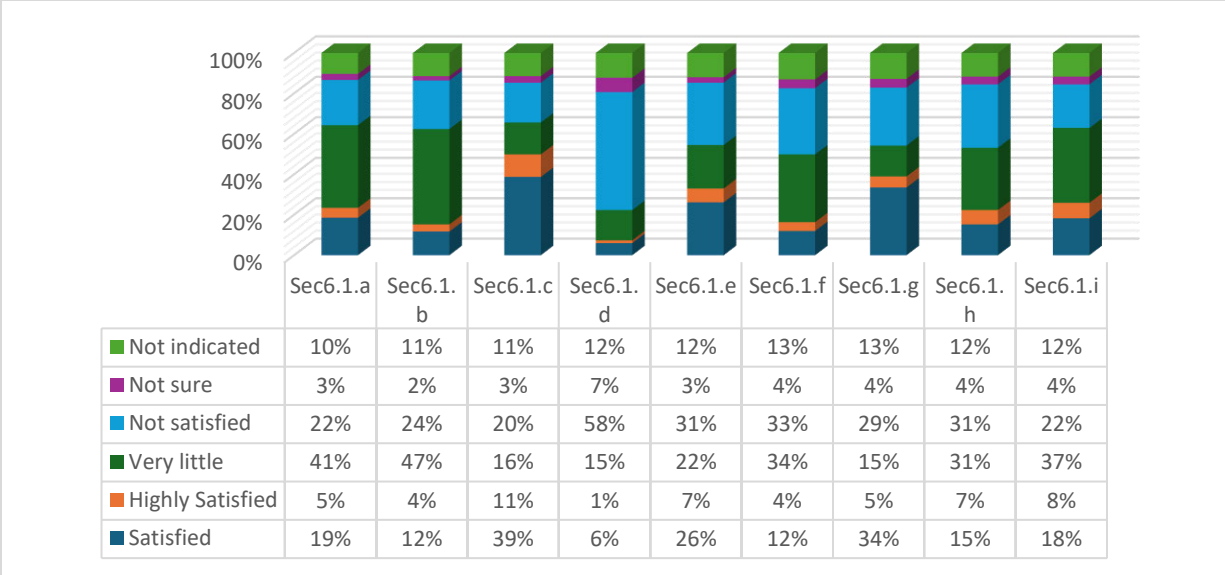


Figure 5.25: Satisfaction with library services

N=367

Apart from the 11.8% (on average) of respondents who did not answer the question, what is immediately apparent in the table and figure above is the number of services (seven of the nine listed), provided by the library that were rated as “Very little satisfied” or “Not satisfied” by a majority of respondents. In particular, respondents were very little or not satisfied with information technology (73%), learning materials (71%), discussion rooms (67%), and “Relevant information and advice on available library services” (63%). The only service provided by the libraries with which half (50%) of the respondents were satisfied (“Satisfied” and “Highly satisfied”) was “Guidance on how to use library services”.

It is thus evident that improvements are necessary will all the services offered but, most importantly, with the provision of information technology such as computers and internet access. However, as alluded to in earlier parts of this thesis, security protocols on the adoption and application of ICT-driven learning methods in correctional facilities have been and remain very stringent due to the vulnerability of these systems to cybercrime, such as hacking, phishing, virus infections, and fraudulent financial transactions. Given the above findings, it can be argued that inadequate library services (as perceived by the respondents) are making it difficult for many respondents (learners) to realise their career goals. Based on these findings it is apparent that both librarians and instructors need to

explore new and innovative ways to improve the services offered and, in particular, to deploy information technology in the teaching and learning processes employed in correctional centres.

5.3.6.2 Satisfaction with training services

In the final question of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction or not with the training services provided (as received from facilitators and workplace mentors). As with the previous question a five-point scale was provided. Table 5.26 provides a descriptive summary of the results.

Table 5.26: Satisfaction with training services

N=367

Statements	Satisfied	Highly Satisfied	Very little	Not satisfied	Not sure	Not indicated	Total
Career guidance	30%	5%	27%	20%	5%	13%	100%
Training methods	39%	8%	14%	21%	6%	13%	100%
Training time	39%	8%	17%	18%	5%	13%	100%
Training rooms	39%	5%	13%	25%	4%	14%	100%
Internships	3%	2%	19%	51%	13%	13%	100%
Learnerships	26%	6%	9%	34%	13%	13%	100%
Coaching/mentoring	42%	11%	8%	19%	8%	13%	100%
Referral/contacts with employers	7%	3%	18%	44%	15%	13%	100%
Advice/tips on how to prepare your CV	23%	8%	23%	23%	10%	13%	100%
Advice on how to prepare for a job Interview	18%	8%	24%	28%	10%	13%	100%

As evident from Table 5.26 above, apart from the relatively high percentage of respondents who did not answer the question (13% average overall) and who were not sure (9% average overall), less than half the respondents, with one exception, were satisfied (including highly satisfied) with the various curriculum activities in the skills programmes listed. The exception was the 53% of respondents who were satisfied (including highly satisfied) with the “Coaching/mentoring” service offered. However, there

were three instances where more than 50% of respondents were either not satisfied or very little satisfied. Seventy percent of respondents were not satisfied with “Internships”, 62% were not satisfied with “Referrals/contacts with employers”, and 52% were not satisfied with “Advice on how to prepare for a job interview”. While it is evident that improvements are needed across all training services, it is the ones highlighted above that teachers and facilitators need to initially focus on.

5.4 SUMMARY

Following an explanatory sequential approach and case study design within a mixed-methods research approach, this chapter presented numeric data from the quantitative dimension of the study (that is, the survey) as reported by the offenders. Findings were presented via tables and figures. To some extent, these findings confirm that correctional libraries contributed to functional literacy, skills development, and career transition to help offenders acquire employability skills and competencies.

Chapter 6 follows in which the qualitative findings of the study are presented. An integrated analysis and discussion of the two datasets is done.

CHAPTER 6 : DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the quantitative findings from the survey with 367 current offenders in 12 correctional service facilities involved in the study. Descriptive statistics on the perceptions of offenders regarding library services, skills training, and career transition that they received from their correctional facilities were presented. This chapter provides an integrated analysis of the research findings based on the datasets from the self-administered questionnaire and qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews, focus groups and observation in line with the sequential explanatory approach adopted by the study. Thus, the quantitative results are corroborated with thick descriptions (qualitative results) which means “Combining numbers with storytelling” to address the research problem (Fetters, Curry and Creswell, 2013). Evaluative studies investigate social programmes to determine their conceptualisation, design, implementation, effectiveness, utility performance, impact or outcomes (Bachman and Schutt, 2015:227). This study assessed the role of correctional libraries in supporting functional literacy, skills development, and career transition for offenders.

6.2 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

In terms of Figure 5.1, there were more young people aged 18-25 (45%), 26-30 (17%) and 31-35 (23%) years in the skills programmes than adult learners. For example, only 7% of the adult learners in the sample were in the 36-40 years age bracket, followed by 8% in the 41-55 years age group. Figure 5.2 reports participation in skills programmes by gender. Overall, male learners in the skills programmes dominated (64%) and this is possibly a reflection of the gender split in the DCS skills programmes generally. Insights from the qualitative findings confirm that the majority of educators/facilitators were suitably qualified to teach, although some needed further assistance, especially in continuing professional development programmes to improve their qualifications and teaching experience, including underqualified librarians.

What follows is a discussion of the results in line with the triangulated theoretical framework underpinning the study.

6.3 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

As indicated in Chapter 4 this inquiry blended quantitative and qualitative datasets to yield a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon under investigation. To ensure coherence and focus, the discussion below is accomplished in terms of four themes logically connected to the research questions.

6.3.1 Correctional libraries and stakeholders' role in functional literacy, skills development and career transition for offenders in correctional centres

This theme derives from the first question that guided this inquiry, namely: To what extent do correctional libraries and stakeholders (for example, library managers, librarians, facilitators of learning, employers, and communities) meet the development needs of offenders in terms of functional literacy, skills development and career transition to the workplace? From an information behaviour perspective, as advocated by Wilson (1994), individuals constantly seek information to satisfy multiple development needs (see subsection 3.2.1). Individual information needs are not static, they change over time and encompass a wide spectrum of issues, such as education, research, professional, vocational, cultural, personal development, and spiritual and physical needs (Shirley, 2003 and Hjørland, 2015). Using these theoretical insights as a departure point, theme 1 assesses the role of correctional libraries and stakeholders in addressing the learning and development needs of offenders. The assessment covers the following sub-themes: provision of LIS, career support programmes, skills programmes, opportunities and barriers.

6.3.1.1 Provision of library and information services

As reflected in Chapter 1, affordable and equitable access to LIS is critical in fulfilling offenders' rights to quality education (section 29 of the Constitution) and the legal mandate of the library in terms of section 32(1) of the Constitution and the LIS Transformation Charter (2014) on the right of access to information. Citing the Standard

Minimal Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (1955), Sambo, Usman, and Rabi (2017:6) assert that all correctional libraries should have sufficient supplies of reading materials within reach. In this inquiry, survey results confirmed that offenders are provided with library services, although the quality and scale of these services varied considerably across the 12 correctional centres due to a lack of teamwork and collaboration between librarians. The quantitative results in Table 5.5 confirm that the vast majority of learners had been informed about the LIS in their respective centres:

- 90,2% of the learners had been informed about library services
- Only 9,8% of the learners surveyed were unaware of library services.

This was validated by one TVET trainee as follows:

“The officials I work with at the library and the Sports, Recreation, Arts, Culture and Library (SRACL) office mentor me and give me information on the reality outside so that I stay informed and stay ready to tackle life after release” (Witbank Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

Confirming the provision of library services in his centre, one librarian in Standerton remarked:

“Inmates acquire textbooks, study materials and playing materials such as in-door game boards ... Every offender has access to the library as it is everyone’s right to education” (Standerton Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). By contrast, pre-release centres did not have fully resourced libraries, given the systemic challenges in their funding. Instead, they provided basic reading materials such as fiction (novels) that were generally dated, and occasionally some local newspapers. An interviewee at the management level explained the variations in library services as follows: *“No, we do not have a dedicated skills development centre because we are a holding facility. We only focus on the pre-release programme to prepare them for the outside world. Those who want to study... we refer them to Standerton”* (Piet Retief Correctional Services, 8 February 2023).

What is evident from these results is that offenders in medium to maximum security correctional facilities generally had positive experiences with library services compared

to those kept in smaller correctional centres. Notwithstanding this dichotomy, some offenders in pre-release centres did access library services when they were transferred to medium to maximum-security detention facilities. However, this applied only to offenders who met parole conditions and those who were motivated and willing to learn and acquire employability or entrepreneurial skills. In Volksrust, a teacher (facilitator) described the provision of career support services by the library as follows: “*We have a library that has got pamphlets which talk about different careers as the offenders are coming to source information such information is provided to them*” (Volksrust Correctional Services, 13 June 2023). Access to quality correctional library programmes can greatly benefit offenders suffering from low literacy and educational levels (Garner, 2017).

6.3.1.2 Type of library services offered to learners

Building on the preceding analysis, it is possible to classify the types of learning resources that librarians provide to their learners. Notably, resource allocation was prioritised according to learners’ needs, sentence plans, and budget considerations. Figure 5.11 reports the type of learning resources/services received in the correctional libraries from the perspectives of the sampled offenders.

- 65% of respondents strongly agreed that they were provided with textbooks
- 22% strongly agreed that learning support materials were provided compared to 42% of respondents who disagreed
- 21% strongly agreed with having access to computers as opposed to 75% who either disagreed or strongly disagreed (and did not have access to computers at all)
- Only 2% of the learners had access to the internet, compared to 54% who disagreed or strongly disagreed and 41% who never had such services
- 23% strongly agreed that they received study skills support, while 64% either disagreed or did not receive support at all
- 62% agreed or strongly agreed that they had access to study areas while 24% disagreed

- Finally, 22% of the respondents strongly agreed with receiving library research skills, compared to 42% who disagreed with receiving such skills.

When discussing resources, a facilitator in Ermelo stated:

“Our school lacks learning resources...To help learners, I borrow books from [private] individuals in the community who are doing the same courses... I use professional networks outside to get books for registered learners... I also get newspapers from local stores to help them [learners] improve their reading skills” (Ermelo Correctional Services, 6 February 2023).

Observation data from the Witbank Correctional Service library confirmed the availability of learning resources in numerous subjects, for example, finance, accounting, mathematics, management, economics, science, engineering, project management, engineering, commerce, education, management, law, ICT, electricity, welding, plumbing, and English and Indigenous languages; and in several formats, for example, books, accredited journals, encyclopaedias (Britannica) edition, TVET learner guides and instruction manuals, adult basic education and training (ABET) study guides, magazines (both business and social), quarterly bulletins, and finally, daily and weekly newspapers. From this analysis, it is evident that the DCS is taking steps to progressively address learners’ rights to education in the AET, TVET, and HET streams.

6.3.1.3 LIS strategies deployed by librarians to meet learners’ needs

One of the major objectives of the study was to establish whether correctional libraries employed any strategies to address the learning and skills needs of offenders. This question is particularly important as prior research on correctional pedagogy acknowledges the centrality of the library in shaping the educational experiences of offenders (McCormick, 1931; Foster 1981, as cited in Finlay and Bates, 2018:120). Evidence from the interviews with the librarians confirmed that some used a wide range of strategies to identify and mobilise learning resources to:

- Network to secure learning resources
- Partner with public libraries to secure loan agreements and book exchange services

- Participate in book exchanges
- Collaborate with local municipal libraries to acquire more resources for offenders in ABET and HET learning programmes.

Validating these achievements, one librarian in Standerton stated:

“Supplying offenders with textbooks and support material makes the work of a tutor/teacher much easier because they can be able to go through them easily” (Standerton Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). A facilitator in the same facility added: *“We give them in-service training, especially those who want to be librarians”* (Standerton Correctional Services, 6 February 2023).

Notably, Witbank Correctional Services librarians used a wide range of innovative strategies to acquire teaching and learning resources, including writing and presenting proposals to attract funding and donations, and establishing donor partnerships with private companies and media establishments to ensure that enough resources are mobilised for their learners. Consequently, they were able to canvass support in government departments, corporates, non-government organisations (NGOs) and in the LIS field. Innovative practices included scheduling internal exhibitions to encourage offenders to showcase their skills and talents in a wide variety of fields, such as arts and culture, clothing and textile manufacturing, and agriculture. Despite differences in terms of the strategies adopted to mobilise resources, there were some commonalities, for example, the commitment and willingness of librarians to organise learning and study materials for AET learners to help them prepare for continuous assessment and examinations. These results are consistent with contemporary corrections education literature which states that “the corrections library should provide individuals with the opportunity to develop literacy skills, pursue personal and cultural interests, as well as life-long learning” (Lehman and Locke, 2005 as cited in Finlay and Bates, 2018:122).

Importantly, these achievements demonstrate that librarians, despite constraints in resources, made significant strides in achieving the goals of the LIS Transformation Charter (2014). By providing information to offenders, librarians contributed to addressing

several important development goals, such as poverty reduction, career development, functional literacy, and social cohesion (LIS Transformation Charter, 2014).

Crucially, these results complement the Desistance theory that correctional education and library services should be aimed at supporting offenders' potential for positive change and the capacity to take control over their own lives. The practical implication of this principle is that library services should be packaged with a clear understanding of learners' development needs and expectations, thus helping them realise their strengths and career aspirations (Maruna, 2015; Finlay and Bates, 2018).

From an information behaviour perspective, blended learning equipment such as computers and Web-based communications have been found to facilitate constructive learning and personalised learning (Godbold, 2006). Similarly, Sun and Cheng (2007) have noted the growing importance of applying information and communications technology and media-rich learning resources such as video and animation, which have a profound positive impact on learning effectiveness and retention rates, especially in learning experiences characterised by complexity. This was further corroborated by Becker-Pestka (2022) in their study on the provision of education in Norway correctional centres and the use of the Internet solely for learning purposes. Contemporary information behaviour perspectives underline the growing importance of the quality of information products and services rather than the process that individuals follow to locate need-satisfying information in the library. This shifts attention away from the routine information search process to the type and quality of the information and technology resources that librarians provide to learners (Godbold, 2006).

6.3.1.4 Challenges in library and information services

Consistent with the spirit of the LIS Transformation Charter (2014), the study also examined some of the impediments limiting learners' ability to utilise available library services. As reported in Figure 5.10 challenges included the following:

- Lack of advice and relevant information: 45% of respondents agreed while 28% disagreed
- Lack of support from the library: 22% agreed, 49% disagreed
- Lack of guidance from teachers: 17% agreed, 56% disagreed
- Shortage of resources: 62% agreed, 3% disagreed
- Lack of time: 67% agreed, 4% disagreed
- Strict correctional rules: 49% agreed, 5% disagreed
- Shortage of teachers/facilitators: 46% agreed, disagreed 26%.

The challenges above are supported by comments from interview participants. A librarian in Volksrust explained:

“There is one educator who is available to help learners in the library” (Volksrust Correctional Services, 13 June 2023). One learner in the ABET class described the situation in his library as follows: *“The library is way outdated... The infrastructure is old. Lighting is poor. Ventilation is poor”* (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023). Another learner from the same correctional facility added: *“We do have a library but it contains outdated books, which makes it difficult to do research for study purposes”* (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023).

These results are consistent with the empirical literature in Chapter 2 which identified challenges such as overcrowding due to limited institutional capacity (Nguyen, 2012); limited access to information (Khumalo, Mugwisi and Jiyane, 2018); deteriorating health conditions (Agboola, 2016); shortage of teaching and learning resources (Emasealu, 2018); and slow implementation of prison policy reforms. In a study of correctional colleges in South Africa, Mkosi and Mahlangu (2015:503-504) observed that “managing a full-time school within correctional environment was challenging due to lack of support from management.” Added to this was the high emphasis on punishment rather than rehabilitation, which marginalised the role of education as a rehabilitative tool. As regards the impact of security protocols on attendance and participation in learning programmes, a senior management representative in Middleburg admitted that tighter security measures harmed teaching and learning processes stating that:

“Yes, I do, although I feel that there is not enough time to change rules at this stage. It is unlike outside schools. Inside there is limited time. No extra classes, they are attending from 09:00 to 13h00 Monday to Friday, depending on the availability of security officials to escort them and other unforeseen circumstances” (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

Compounding these challenges is the limited budget allocation, which was confirmed by some facilitators and school managers during interviews. One facilitator remarked: *“There is no budget allocated for the libraries we depend on donations from other libraries and outside sources”* (Bethal Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). However, a senior official in Middleburg remarked: *“Libraries, together with sports, recreation, arts and culture programmes are allocated a budget to buy items such as books, magazines and others. Donations are also sought where possible”* (Middleburg Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). In Mbombela, it was reported that: *“Budget is allocated for buying recreational items, sports, equipment and arts”* (Mbombela Correctional Service, 30 January 2023). Resource constraints were also confirmed in pre-release correctional facilities. In this regard, a facilitator in the Carolina Correctional Services commented that *“It is difficult to teach offenders in... research skills because of the minimal resources we have in farming”* (Carolina Correctional Services, 6 February 2023).

The adverse findings on human resources in correctional libraries conflict with the spirit of the LIS Transformation Charter (2014), which envisions “LIS staff that are appropriately qualified and remunerated...that are engaged in continuous professional education and development.” The LIS Transformation Charter further envisions an integrated funding model necessary to redress past imbalances in both human and information resources to achieve equity in the provision of information resources for all. Crucially, Finlay's (2022) study of correctional library staff in the UK underlines the importance of empowering those who are often overlooked within their workplace and their wider profession.

In their empirical analysis, Gama, Chipeta, Phiri and Chawinga (2020) found that the Mzimba Correctional Library in Malawi could not adequately perform its role of meeting

the information needs of offenders as a result of deficiencies in information resources, limited time available for offenders to search for information, poor services, and lack of funding for the school and the library. Similarly, Akirapa and Yawe's (2022) analysis of the management of education services in Uganda's Luzira Upper Prison stressed the need for the government to effectively increase finances to mitigate shortages affecting the provision of education services to offenders. They also emphasised the importance of reconfiguring the correctional environment to permit learning. Obiano (2020) in Nigeria, reported that while library resources were generally available, there was a need to employ more librarians to enable effective service delivery and to mitigate job stress arising from staff shortages. In terms of the UN SDGs, achieving Goal 4, that is, quality education, requires that libraries provide a wide variety of learning resources; remove barriers that undermine citizens' ability to use LIS; and, most importantly, review and update their collections to meet the development needs of citizens.

From an information behaviour perspective, Wilson (1999) and Yang and Yuan (2022) stress that effective and meaningful information-seeking processes are underpinned by a strong feedback mechanism since progression towards fulfilling one's information needs hinges on the availability of instant feedback from those in charge of information resources, for example, librarians. This calls for a more responsive approach to addressing the information needs of learners in correctional education.

6.3.2 Stakeholder roles and responsibilities in skills development

This theme addresses the second research question: What are the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in facilitating functional literacy, skills development and career transition for offenders in correctional centres? The analysis here focuses primarily on the partnerships that librarians and teaching staff formed to scale up the provision of library and training services to their learners. The intention was to establish whether these partnerships were leveraged by librarians in correctional centres to drive implementation of the LIS Transformation Charter in line with the library mandate in terms of section 29 of the Constitution. These are considered in more detail below.

6.3.2.1 Training delivery partnerships

The second research question probed the roles and responsibilities of correctional libraries and the various stakeholders in the DCS skills development system. Both the White Paper on Correctional Service (2005) and the White Paper on Inclusive Education (2004) call for a collaborative approach to the provision and delivery of correctional education programmes. Considering this imperative, the study examined the nature of existing partnerships between the DCS centres and external stakeholders. This was done via qualitative evidence drawn from interviews with officials and learners in some of the correctional facilities. For example, in Belfast, a high-ranking official with 14 years of experience in correctional services described LIS partnerships as follows:

“We are relying on the local library to support us and engagements are carried through with external stakeholders” (Belfast Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). In Carolina, a librarian described his experience of partnerships as follows: *“The centre does not have a facility [school] to assist offenders who are willing to study, it relies on other correctional centres to assist offenders to further their studies”* (Carolina Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). Similarly, an official in charge of education services in Belfast commented: *“SETAs are one of our stakeholders together with the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Higher Education and Training... the quality of education to offenders is the same as that provided to normal citizens in the country as a whole”* (Belfast Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). The existence of LIS partnerships was also confirmed by an official in Middleburg: *“Educators make efforts to attend workshops conducted by the Department of Higher Education at Head Office (DCS)... Accredited courses are conducted by external service providers”* (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

In Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystems theory (1975), educating and preparing offenders for the world of work requires a collective effort from all stakeholders in the exosystem, which includes other people and institutions, such as recruitment agencies, workplace mentors, professionals, practitioners, and volunteers from the community. It has been argued that for correctional education partnerships to be effective, they must embrace transformative

pedagogic practices at their heart, ensuring the “how we teach” is as important, and deliberately considered, as the “what” we teach (Gray, Ward and Fogarty, 2019).

In Standerton, a facilitator affirmed partnerships with stakeholders:

“Most of our courses are offered by SETA accredited training providers and learners are certificated for every training completed” (Standerton Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). Thus, as noted in the NSDS 3, the real value added by SETAs is their understanding of labour market issues in their respective industrial and economic sector. SETAs must ensure that they are backed by employers and workers and are acknowledged as a credible and authoritative voice on skills, create interventions and shape solutions that address skills needs within their sectors.”

As articulated in the CMO theory, a collaborative approach to the implementation of correctional programmes is most likely to yield positive outcomes when compared with practitioners working in silos. According to this model, collaborative networks provide opportunities for referrals, resource sharing, and professional learning opportunities so that there is a shared understanding of the service delivery systems and quality standards. This makes it imperative for practitioners in corrections to forge professional relationships both within and outside of the service delivery system to improve their knowledge and expertise (Ludlow, Amstrong and Bartels, 2019). Encouragingly, the study established strong evidence of collaborations between security officials, school managers, librarians, facilitators, and peer educators. For instance, in the Skills Directorate Performance Review Meeting of 27 January 2023 in Barberton, which was attended by the researcher, management and teachers declared their commitment to improving both the quality and diversity of skills programmes to benefit offenders across its 12 correctional centres in Mpumalanga Province. Skills development officials present in this meeting reported significant improvements in ABET outcomes and the bakery section, which achieved a 100% positive rating in Barberton and Mbombela respectively. These results disprove the “nothing works” doctrine articulated by Wilson (1975), Martinson (1974) and Adams (1976) by showing that correctional libraries contribute immensely to the personal transformation of offenders.

From the Wellness theoretical perspective, Magano (2016) argues that achieving academic performance in correctional education requires strong ties with various stakeholders who bring rich knowledge and experience on how to serve learners in custodial environments. These partnerships should span societal organisations, and business and public sector agencies responsible for social and economic development. In a similar vein, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Berlin Declaration (2021) advocates a multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary approach to delivering education for sustainable development in correctional centres. Strengthening institutional networks and social capital are key to improving the quality of education in such centres. Finlay (2022) stresses the importance of intensifying interlibrary engagements and collaborations to improve the value of correctional library services.

6.3.2.2 Human resource management issues

One of the fundamental quality standards contemplated by the NQF and the QCTO is that training providers must have adequate and suitably qualified academic staff. While there is a clear commitment by the DCS to provide high-quality education, participants conceded that the school section requires additional human resources to improve the delivery of LIS in correctional centres. Evidence from the interviews with officials confirmed staff shortages in the library and school sections of most of the 12 correctional centres surveyed by the study. The following evidence from the interviews with facilitators and school managers confirmed the prevalence of the following challenges that impeded skills development in the correctional centres:

- Limited staff development opportunities
- Limited human resource budgets
- Limited career opportunities
- Lack of incentives, especially for peer educators
- High staff turnover.

Confirming these challenges, a senior management representative in Belfast described human resource challenges in education as follows:

“We are lacking in providing technical support within our centre... We do not have theoretical training due to structural challenges and post establishments is the reason we adopted on-the-job training” (Belfast Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

Section 8.7 of the White Paper on Correctional Services (2004) requires effective provisioning and efficient utilisation of staff to improve service delivery outcomes. Section 8.8 calls for continuous upskilling of DCS members in line with the new restorative justice paradigm that shapes correctional education. Most importantly, section 8.9 of the White Paper provides for effective career management and ongoing development of staff not just in terms of numbers but also in terms of transformation outcomes to realise equity between men and women and vulnerable groups. Equally, the UNESCO Berlin Declaration recognises the role of teachers and the importance of investing in the capacity development of teachers and educational personnel at all levels to ensure a whole-sector approach to the transformation of education (UNESCO: Berlin Declaration, 2030:3).

Collectively, these challenges reflect the assertion in the CMO theory that conditions in the organisational context have a profound impact on the morale and commitment of practitioners and stakeholders. In terms of the CMO theory, the organisational context spans a wide variety of factors that may either facilitate or constrain the ability of librarians and educators to achieve their goals; these include peer relationships, management philosophy, human resource development opportunities, talent retention practices, and the presence of a teamwork culture (Pawson and Tilley, 2004). According to these authors, Nielsen, Lemire and Tangsig (2021) sustained staff losses may have a devastating impact on the ability of an organisation to serve its clients, resulting in low staff morale, widespread skills shortages due to the departure of qualified personnel, and declining service standards. A cross-cutting challenge identified in the current study was the lack of finance to hire additional staff and support the continuing professional development of existing employees in the school section. Researchers such as Finlay

(2022), have emphasised the need to increase access to continuing professional development for correctional services librarians to improve the quality of library services and their acceptance in the wider LIS profession so that they can be part of a community of practice.

6.3.2.3 Peer educators

A cross-cutting theme in all 12 correctional centres was the critical role played by peer educators in the education and development of offenders. The willingness and commitment of peer educators were remarkably high in all the correctional facilities surveyed by the study. Their contributions spanned a wide range of curriculum streams, including ABET, TVET, and HET bands. Significantly, peer educators played a central role in tutorials, remedial work, teaching, and workplace learning. The benefits of deploying and utilising peer educators were confirmed by interviews in Barberton where one facilitator remarked as follows:

“Yes, revision on Saturday or extra lessons during school holidays. Revision and extra lessons are helpful because this year [2023] we managed to produce a 100% pass rate and [some] learners got six distinctions in Grade 12 (Barberton Correctional Services Juvenile Section, 27 January 2023).

These results were corroborated by a media release by the Minister of Correctional Services, Mr Ronald Lamola, who stated that out of 147 learners registered for the National Senior Certificate, the basic education class of 2023 obtained a 93.2% pass rate, while part-time candidates registered an 84% pass rate in the same period (Correctional Services: SA News, 24 January 2024).

Crucially, Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystems model sees the micro-environment (comprising the individual’s immediate family, peers, and school) as having a profound impact on an individual’s early development and their subsequent progression through the other stages of life, such as work and business. Equally, the Transformative Learning theory posits that critical reflection can be realised through several strategies, including reading, group discussions, empathetic listening, self-assessment, and engaging in problem-solving

tasks (Mezirow, 1997,1998). However, the contribution of peer educators was hampered by several factors, with the lack of support and regular mentoring emerging as major limitations in the performance of peer educators. Consequently, this affected the quality of tutoring that peer educators provided to their fellow learners. Articulating the challenges faced by peer educators in his correctional centre (Ermelo), one offender said:

“When you teach, you just use the general knowledge that you got from school on what teachers normally do when they get to class. But you are not sure if your methods are right or wrong because you are not guided. There are many of us who want to help with teaching, but they [management] are not supporting us (Ermelo Correctional Services, 6 February 2023).

These results dispel the view by Addae (2020) that educators in many correctional centres do not share a deep appreciation of the profound learning difficulties that offenders from disadvantaged backgrounds face in the classroom. Offenders realised the need to utilise their own expertise to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their correctional centres. The involvement of peer educators helped mitigate the shortage of qualified teachers in most of the correctional facilities surveyed. Admittedly, some facilitators were concerned about their workloads and wanted to be compensated for extra efforts in their skills programmes, citing Westville Correctional Services in KwaZulu-Natal as a leading example where educators/facilitators were incentivised for their good performance. Although LIS teamwork was prevalent in some centres (for example, Mbombela, Middleburg, and Witbank), cross-sector collaboration in resource sharing was limited, and that which did take place was largely limited to events organised by the National Library as opposed to inter-agency networking. Duwe (2018) emphasises that correctional educators should be able to work closely with state agencies and community-based organisations to address the challenges affecting the development and well-being of offenders in correctional facilities; in this regard, social capital networks play a vital role in accentuating rehabilitation practices and outcomes.

Bagnall et al (2015) study affirms that peer support schemes have become a common feature of correctional education in Wales and England. Peer education efforts span a

wide variety of services, including abstinence from substance abuse, career planning and employment advice, and mentoring schemes. Bagnall et al. (2015) conclude that peer-based education efforts might be more cost-effective to administer than professionally driven interventions. A recent study by Topping (2022) also reported similar results on the efficacy of peer education initiatives, noting that they have the potential to reach where professionals cannot. Thus, when offenders become agents of change, they increase the prospects of changing their own personal value systems and become role models to their peers in and out of the classroom. Peer education programmes provide offenders with ample opportunities to learn and master different skill sets in practical job situations, including tutoring, office administration, machine operator and teaching roles (Deville, Sorbello, Eccleston and Ward, 2005). In the same vein, a study by Trechsel, Diebold, and Zimmermann (2023) discovered that exposing learners to self-led informal learning experiences not only deepened their understanding but also improved other essential capabilities such as self-efficacy, self-empowerment, trust, and social cohesion.

6.3.2.4 Sector education and training authorities (SETAs)

Insights from the survey and interviews confirmed several fundamental contributions by SETAs and employer organisations to the employability of offenders. SETAs provided learnerships and funded some of the skills programmes provided to offenders. The manufacturing and agriculture SETAs, for example, have been instrumental in bringing accredited training to offenders, particularly TVET programmes in clothing and textile, agriculture, construction, plumbing and welding, among others. Employers such as government departments, for instance, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and TVET colleges have shown significant interest in hiring suitably qualified offenders who have qualifications spanning TVET and higher education on the NQF. Offenders in Barberton, Bethal, and Witbank correctional services confirmed that prospective employers facilitated their employment, and these included community-based and faith-based organisations. However, the majority of offenders cited agriculture as the most active employment sector for most returning offenders. The demand for agricultural skills is ascribed to Mpumalanga's agrarian economy as one of the major food-producing provinces of South Africa after Limpopo, Northwest, and the Free State.

6.3.3 Functional literacy, skills development and career transition programmes

The third theme aligns with the third research question, namely, what specific programmes are currently provided by correctional libraries and stakeholders to promote functional literacy, skills development and career transition, and what strategies are used to deliver these interventions? In essence, this theme examined whether education and training interventions have been implemented to address the functional literacy and employment needs of offenders. From a CMO perspective, successful implementation of rehabilitation programmes hinges on critical contextual factors, such as leadership, culture, poverty, unemployment, family background, and prevailing economic conditions (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007). Using these theoretical insights as a point of departure, the third theme explores the type of functional literacy, skills training, and career support programmes rendered to offenders in the 12 correctional facilities surveyed by the study.

6.3.3.1 Functional literacy skills programmes

As articulated in Chapter 2, functional literacy means “the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities, at work, at home and in the community to achieve one’s goal, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential” (OECD, 2000). One of the primary goals of this study was to determine if offenders were being assisted to gain basic reading and writing skills especially given the challenges that Mpumalanga faces in youth unemployment and school dropout rates. According to a librarian Standerton, the cross-cutting skills that offenders acquired from the functional literacy programmes included the following:

“Building reading and writing skills was the most fundamental responsibility of correctional centres irrespective of their size and status” (Standerton Correctional Services, 6 February 2023).

The achievements and/or success in functional literacy skills were attributed to the Funda Mzansi programme. Offenders from Mpumalanga’s correctional centres such as Baberton, Wintbank and Bethal participated in the Funda Mzansi Programme. This

programme is relevant to the study as it indicates whether offenders are competent in reading and writing skills. In actual fact, this programme provides a yard stick against which the efficacy of literacy initiatives can be measured in the correctional centres. The 2019 Funda Mzansi Championship registered an impressive 300 participation rate by offenders nationally. The competition was held on 23-27 September 2019 in George in the Western Cape Province through a partnership between the DCS and the National Library of South Africa. A librarian in Witbank affirmed:

“They are doing very well in Funda Mzansi... All these trophies come from the competition. They take it very seriously and a lot of them want to participate here. They do debates, reading and spelling bee competitions” (Witbank Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

Literacy initiatives represent a key strategic intervention to motivate offenders in pre-release facilities such as Belfast, Carolina, Lydenburg, Piet Retief, and Volksrust to enrol for basic education. However, there were impediments to literacy initiatives. One such impediment mentioned by a learner in Barberton:

“We do have a library, but it contains outdated books, which makes it difficult to do research for study purposes (Barberton Correctional Services, 7 February 2023).

Adversely, the low outcomes in basic computer skills in Correctional Services can be attributed to a lack of computer infrastructure and internet services, especially in pre-release centres without school sections. This situation is not unique to South Africa. Empirically, it has been shown that worldwide, governments are battling to institutionalise online education in correctional facilities due to the high-security risks inherent in Internet services. Stressing the importance of computer literacy skills, one senior facilitator in Barberton stated:

“ICT needs to be understood by all South Africans to cope with the technologically evolving times... It is the only means to communicate and be able to participate in e-commerce” (Barberton Correctional Services Juvenile Section, 7 February 2023).

In Standerton, a librarian who was also involved in TVET training programmes stressed the growing importance of computer technology in offender education as follows: *“Offenders do attend computer classes, especially those who are attending school, but the quality of our services need to be upgraded”* (Standerton Correctional Services, 6 February 2023).

From this analysis, it is evident that correctional libraries continue to play a major role in the development of offenders. Significantly, this finding negates/disproves classical criminology contestations that correctional libraries have a minimal role to play in the rehabilitation of offenders, because, as proponents argue, offenders are there to be punished for their transgressions (Wilson, 1975). A librarian in Piet Retief confirmed the role of libraries in imparting research skills to offenders:

“Offenders are given new textbooks to review, summarise and there are debate competitions to check the level of library research skills. South Africa has the annual Funda Mzansi competition that has lasted for over a decade whereby our offenders also form part... It is always hosted in George Southern Cape” (Piet Retief Correctional Services, 8 February 2023).

Notwithstanding the preceding constraints, the analysis suggests that librarians have implemented section 29 of the Constitution (1996) on the right to education and further training. The results also validate the LIS Transformation Charter (2014) which explicitly emphasises that “reading, literacy, information literacy and information technologies within an integrated library and information services environment is a catalyst for economic growth and social development.”

6.3.3.2 Informal skills building initiatives

One of the overarching goals of the NSDS 3 is to ensure increased access to training and skills development opportunities to achieve the fundamental transformation of inequalities linked to class, race, gender, age, and disability in South Africa. Literacy initiatives played a vital role in empowering vulnerable offender groups with critical survival skills. Evidence

from the survey (question 4.5) confirmed that offenders had attended a wide range of formal and informal skills programmes in their respective centres. The positive outcomes in informal skills-building activities resonate with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (2019:9) assertion that "social and emotional skills such as empathy, self-awareness, respect for others, perseverance, efficacy and cultural competence are essential and are central to career success." Informal skills-building initiatives are consistent with Chapter 9 of the National Development Vision that education and training should be used to redress past inequalities, poverty, unemployment, and skills shortages to improve living standards for all the people of South Africa. During observation, offenders were engaged in several skills-building initiatives, such as maintenance and repairs, housekeeping, electricity, and administrative work.

Overall, these results validate the Desistance theory, which sees correctional education as a means to help offenders withdraw from criminal activities. In this view, correctional education should provide desistance strategies to people who are invariably prone to criminality to abstain from wrongdoing. Reforming individuals (rehabilitating offenders) requires a more human and dignified approach (McNeill, Farrall, Lightowler, and Maruna, 2012).

6.3.3.3 Skills taught in the pre-release programme

As reflected in the White Paper on Corrections Services (2004), a fundamental objective of rehabilitation is to develop offenders holistically. Both the quantitative and the qualitative results confirmed that pre-release programmes were the main source of learning and skills in the smaller correctional facilities that did not have designated school sections like the medium and maximum-security facilities. Qualitative findings from short-term correctional facilities such as Belfast, Carolina, Lydenburg, Piet Retief, and Volksrust revealed a strong focus on life skills and social capital skills that aimed to facilitate the integration of offenders into society. This focus is consistent with the vision of the White Paper on Corrections that rehabilitation needs to take the physical, emotional and cognitive development of offenders into account so as to reduce the propensity towards

reoffending. One correctional official in Lydenburg confirmed the importance of life skills in the rehabilitation of offenders as follows:

“They [offenders] get a strong grounding in anger management and other essential foundational competencies that they need to make a living after serving their correctional sentence plans” (Lydenburg Correctional Services, 28 February 2023). Another official in Volksrust corroborated this statement as follows: *“In the exit programme, we show them how to prepare business plans, how to attract clients and how to raise funds for their businesses”* (Volksrust Correctional Services, 13 June 2023).

The strong emphasis on social and mental wellness competencies in the pre-release programme is consistent with Muruna’s (2016) observation that the Desistance theory is about helping offenders find their inner self (personal identity) and rebuild and restore hope so that they can see themselves as part of society rather than outcasts. Therefore, as Pike and Hopkins (2019) point out, transformative learning can be a vehicle by which offenders begin to find a new positive identity as learners, leading to positive changes in personal and social identity and making a positive difference in their lives during and after serving their sentences. Significantly, the inclusion of the emotional dimension in transformative learning processes transcends Mezirow’s (1998) overemphasis on the cognitive dimension of the Transformative Learning theory. Both the emotional and social dimensions received little attention in Mezirow’s earlier works on the theory (Grund, Singer-Brodowski and Bussing, 2023).

The positive outcomes of informal skills programmes have also been validated by prior research. For instance, Daniels (2020) established that the AET policy framework provides second-chance educational opportunities to socially and economically marginalised and vulnerable young people to help them accumulate not just employability skills but also critical venture-creation competencies that they need to participate in mainstream economic activities. This analysis is in alignment with the White Paper on Post-school Education which sees AET as a response to systemic structural challenges of poverty, unemployment, displacement, marginalisation, and exclusion of out-of-school youth from the country’s economic system. According to Daniels (2020:2), AET provides

a rare transformative learning space for out-of-school youth facing a bleak future in South Africa. With its non-threatening, supportive and inclusive learning environment, AET has become a source of livelihood for millions of young people incarcerated without formal education.

The study results are in line with the spirit of the Berlin Declaration that “education for sustainable development enables learners to develop cognitive and non-cognitive skills such as critical thinking and competencies for collaboration, problem-solving, coping with complexity and risk, building resilience, thinking systematically and creatively, and empowering them to take action as citizens, fulfilling their right to quality education in SDG 4 – Education 2030” (UNESCO Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development, 2021:2). A study by Trechsel, Diebold, and Zimmermann (2023) found that exposing learners to self-led informal learning experiences not only deepened their understanding but also enhanced other essential capabilities such as self-efficacy, self-empowerment, trust, and social cohesion.

6.3.3.4 Formal skills programmes

Formal skills training initiatives reported by the participants included the AET, GET, TVET, and HET bands. Evidence from the interviews with skills development officials and survey respondents revealed that most offenders used internal transfer opportunities to diversify their skills by enrolling on different courses when they moved to another correctional centre. The general rule is that courses are offered on demand. Where demand is low, learners may be transferred to centres where their courses are offered. Table 5.16 confirms several formal skills programmes preferred by offenders (in terms of career choices) across the 12 correctional centres:

- Agriculture
- Engineering
- Information technology
- Catering
- Electrical
- Welding

- Plumbing
- Building/construction.

The significant improvements in the range of formal skills programmes (Table 5.16) are consistent with section 71 of the NQF (2008:21) which states that “learning in the further education and training band creates additional opportunities for accessing skills and knowledge which help prepare learners in a general way for the workplace.” A unique feature of the DCS skills development model (subsection 2.4.3), is that it accommodates both school-going and out-of-school youth and gives them the vital skills they need to actively participate in and contribute to sustainable development in South Africa.

Collectively, these results reflect the view by Mezirow and Taylor (2009) that transformative pedagogy is about promoting change, where teachers assign challenging but achievable tasks to help learners sharpen their critical thinking skills. The adult learner is constantly exposed to challenging yet stimulating experiential learning tasks that aid the application of knowledge to solve real-world problems. These learning tasks disrupt the adult learner’s mind, resulting in more critical reflection and positive change in personal beliefs and value systems (Grund, Singer-Brodowski and Bussing, 2023). These positive experiences became evident during observation in a clothing and textile workshop in Witbank during which an offender remarked:

“It’s really helping us because even if you don’t have the knowledge [theory], you can follow the steps [guidelines] from the facilitator and teach yourself how to make products like clothes and shoes... It’s very practical” (Witbank Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

A sizeable number of learners across the board made frequent references to agriculture as their preferred career choice. Insights from the survey, interviews, and observation affirmed that agriculture provided a livelihood to offenders as it allowed both skills building on-the-job and accredited skills programmes. As pointed out by one of the interviewed learners in Carolina (who was passionate about agriculture):

It's not just [routine] gardening, we learn a lot in agriculture...They [officials] also tell us about the different kinds of farming, like poultry, vegetables, fruits and beef... It's good for people who want to make a living in agriculture" (Carolina Correctional Services, 6 February 2023).

An official at the Barberton Correctional Services Farm Facility pointed to the food security skills and commercial farming skills that offenders acquired in agriculture, such as planting, crop systems, mechanical, fertilisers, piggery, beef production, milk, and breeding. The official, during the interview, elaborated:

"Yes, our learners have an opportunity to acquire agricultural skills in different areas... In the fruit and vegetable project, they prepare the soil, they plant seeds, they are taught about different soil samples, they operate machinery on the farm...We need 90 offenders to work in the vegetable project a day and the minimum is 40 offenders a day. This project [agriculture] is very important because, in our nutrition plan, they have to eat green, red and yellow every day... Green is cabbage and spinach, red is beetroot and yellow is carrot and pumpkin. We share produce with Lydenburg, Witbank, and Mbombela. In the machinery, there is always a peer instructor who teaches others how to drive and how to operate implements... The Agricultural SETA [AgriSeta] comes once a year and they enrol about 12 learners for theory and after that, the learners come back here for practicums... Once they finish, the SETA gives them certificates as proof that they are competent in all the [agricultural] skills" (Barberton Correctional Services, 21 June 2023).

These results are consistent with Becker's Human Capital Theory which states that investment in education yield significant benefits in terms of skills, productivity and improved standard of living as a result of income generating opportunities like formal employment or entrepreneurship. The qualitative findings above are corroborated by other studies which have noted the growing importance of equipping offenders with basic food literacy skills, especially among low-income and vulnerable groups (Terragni, Arnold, and Henjum, 2020). An earlier study by Palumbo (2016) noted that food literacy skills have a profound positive impact on the protection and promotion of wellbeing, while low

food literacy skills were found to have an adverse effect on the sustainability of food systems (Zareimanesh and Namdar, 2022).

Besides elementary food literacy skills, offenders also benefited immensely from the DCS farming projects. In particular, the involvement of the AgriSETA in these projects ensured that offenders acquire accredited commercial farming certificates in critical competencies such as piggery, beef production, dairy farming, fruit and vegetables, and abattoir services. This analysis aligns with the evidence from observation at the Barberton Correctional Services Farm. An official responsible for the pig farming project, which was also visited as part of the observation process, commented:

We rotate them in different projects so that they can get different [commercial] farming skills. But they all start here in the piggery section. This is where they get basic food hygiene skills like cleaning and disinfecting the sheds, feeding, preparing furrowing [breeding] sites, monitoring animal health and administering medicines, and slaughtering twice a week. There is a company [The South African Pork Producers' Organisation (SAPPO)] that comes here to train them on pork production skills to prepare them for industry. They work here for six months. After that, we assess them practically on the job to see if they know all the skills. If not, we give them extra help until they are fit to go to the abattoir section where they learn food processing skills. From there, they go to the dairy project where they learn milk production skills... We rotate them so that they learn different farming skills they can use to get jobs or start their own businesses” (Barberton Correctional Services, 21 June 2023).

Clearly, the intervention by the SAPPO plays a vital role in improving the quality of training that offenders receive in pork production. According to the DCS manager responsible for training and supervision of learners in this section:

“SAPPO brings expertise and guidance on a number of important skills, such as breeding preparations, feeding schemes, animal health and food hygiene standards” (Barberton Correctional Services, 21 June 2023). This is confirmed on SAPPO's official website –

SAPPO officials capacitate imaging pork producers by mentoring, training, managing and coordinating upcoming projects of pig farmers in South Africa (SAPPO, 2019).

The qualitative analysis above is also validated by Jenkins (2016), who found that gardening and nutrition programs were shown to increase self-efficacy and self-worth and decrease anxiety in offenders involved in these initiatives. Reduced recidivism rates were reported for participants of prison gardening programmes compared to the general prisoner population. These programmes were shown to enhance incarcerated individuals' psychosocial wellbeing in three ways: (1) increase in self-efficacy and self-worth, (2) decrease in anxiety and depression spectrum symptoms, and (3) reduction in recidivism rates. Communities within geographic proximity of prisons implementing gardening programmes also benefited from organic produce donated by the prison programmes to local charities. Similarly, Timler, Brown, and Varcoe (2019) found that correctional agriculture and gardening have become more popular in recent years, and evidence points to physical, social and mental health benefits, as well as impacts on inmate rehabilitation and recidivism. A prison garden programme engages incarcerated men in not only the growing but the subsequent donating of produce to food insecure and economically vulnerable communities.

Encouragingly, the positive outcomes in commercial farming skills corroborate the Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fishery's Report (2016) which noted a steady growth of small farmers transitioning to commercial farming, with the number rising from 57 980 in 2014 to 95 476 in 2018 – a significant 61% improvement overall. These outcomes are also in line with the Malabo Declaration concluded in Equatorial Guinea in 2014 which declared 2014 the African Year of Agriculture and Food Security. The commercialisation of small farmers is seen as key to local economic development, job creation, food security and income generation opportunities (Muzekenyi, Zuwarimwe and Kilonzo, 2022). Equally, Khapayi and Celliers (2016) have noted the growing importance of farming skills in the commercialisation of emerging farmers. Their study reported positive outcomes in agriculture, noting that “the emergent agricultural sector has a high potential to stimulate the growth of the rural economy in South Africa”. According to

Khapayi and Celliers (2016), the agriculture sector, especially in rural communities, remains largely untapped, offering greater prospects for returning offenders who have acquired commercial farming skills.

Despite significant improvements in AET and TVET outcomes, however, many learners aspiring to further their studies in higher education via digital platforms were curtailed. Similarly, Mdakane, Ngubane and Dhlamini, (2022) found that although the digital learning system has the capacity to connect a large number of learners, correctional students in the HET programme were unable to utilise these opportunities due to security requirements. The effectiveness of digital learning systems hinges significantly on the availability of suitable ICT tools such as computers and stable internet connectivity, including videoconferencing equipment, webinars, podcasts, virtual peer learning systems, mobile devices, and digital learning materials. Unfortunately, most of the learners registered for higher education programmes struggled to access these learning opportunities due to the tight security arrangements.

6.3.3.5 Information and communications technology skills

Given the increasingly wide-ranging impact of technology in the workplace, digital skills are becoming critical for workers as both a coping mechanism and a tool to improve performance, productivity and competence (OECD, Future of Education and Skills 2030 Concept Note, 2019). Despite constraints in capacity and resources, some correctional facilities were able to provide basic computer literacy skills through the CAT programme (Barberton Juvenile, Bethal, and Witbank). Owing to the tight correctional security protocols, access to the internet was restricted and closely monitored by officials in the ICT classes observed. The following statistical evidence from Table 5.25 confirms that offenders were generally not satisfied with information technology and the internet in their respective skills programmes:

- Satisfied 6%
- Highly satisfied 1%
- Very little satisfied 15%
- Not satisfied 58%

- Not sure 7% and not indicated 12%.

A Witbank learner explicitly stated:

“For security reasons, we are not allowed to use all [computer] programs... The internet is totally not allowed here. They [facilitators] teach us how to operate the computer and repair computers and how to write assignments and CVs and that is all. A peer educator added: “It helps our members a lot because when they go out [after release] they will be able to catch up with computer technology in their [chosen] industries... because they have the basics” (Witbank Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

However, a facilitator in Piet Retief commented that:

“Offenders are encouraged to be involved in computer training; they are influenced to learn and adapt positive values, thus creating the desire in them to live productive lives as law-abiding citizens when they are released back to the community” (Piet Retief Correctional Services 8 February 2023).

The analysis above suggests that librarians and facilitators promoted blended learning by combining classroom-based instruction with basic computer literacy initiatives. Blended learning combines traditional and virtual learning methods which permit self-study in learners’ own time and secure space (Becker-Pestka, 2022:5). In the Barberton Juvenile School Section, officials allowed controlled access to online research for a limited time to enable learners to download strictly relevant learning materials. However, learners in the maximum-security section were not afforded this opportunity given the inherently high-risk levels there. This contrasts sharply with the ICT initiatives reported in Germany, Wales, and England (subsection 2.7.2.4) where offenders have reasonable access to controlled digital learning experiences through the In-Cell Virtual Learning System that encapsulates real-world contexts to aid the acquisition of digital skills. With the exception of the Barberton Juvenile Section, learners in the other correctional facilities obtain paper-based printouts from the internet rather than engaging directly with online learning resources. Where learners require additional research materials to be downloaded, they request educators for assistance. In both cases, only officials are permitted to access and

download learning resources from the internet. Consequently, there is little opportunity for learners to acquire 21st-century digital skills contemplated by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2023).

The substantially curtailed nature of blended learning in correctional facilities has also been empirically validated by Mdakane, Ngubane, and Dhlamini (2022:94) who note that many offenders in correctional facilities have been deprived of self-directed learning opportunities due to inflexibility in corrections protocols. Worldwide accessibility of the internet is commonly perceived as a high-risk service that cannot be fully granted to offenders in maximum security establishments. This problem is not confined to South Africa; in Australia, Hopkins and Farley (2015:37) reported similar results – incarcerated learners still “have no direct access to the internet and must rely on education officers to obtain downloaded materials for their studies.”

6.3.3.6 Entrepreneurial skills

Beyond agricultural skills, some learners showed considerable interest in entrepreneurial skills in all the centres observed. These were learners with a demonstrably keen interest in starting their own businesses after release. As reflected in Chapter 2, venture creation skills have been empirically recognised as one of the fundamental sources of livelihood for offenders who face limited employment prospects on release. Qualitative evidence from the interviews revealed strong preferences for entrepreneurial skills on the part of some learners including clothing and textile, construction, catering, hairdressing, welding, and carpentry. Validating these results, a female offender in Mbombela said:

“When I came here, I saw the [learning] opportunities and then told myself that I am going to learn all [essential] skills so that when I get out I can start my own baking and hairdressing business to earn income and support my family” (Mbombela Correctional Services, 30 January 2023). Echoing these sentiments, a female offender in Middleburg said: *“I think more business skills because being rehabilitated with a criminal record seeking employment can be a challenge... So, I personally think that if we get help on the business side as well, will be very helpful”* (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

To some extent, this analysis suggests that there were probably more opportunity entrepreneurs (OEs) than necessity entrepreneurs (NEs) in some of the correctional facilities surveyed. Arguably, this trend holds great prospects for small, medium and micro enterprise (SMME) development in the Mpumalanga region.

A learner in the Building and Construction Skills Programme in Bethal suggested that assessments for the construction and building course should be aligned with national regulations (Bethal Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). Importantly, section 17 of the National Building Standards Act lays down specific regulatory issues and standards relating to design, erection, electrification, health and safety, and building maintenance activities that learners must be aware of.

Taken together, these results align with Vandala's (2019) point that correctional education changes behaviour, boosts self-confidence and transforms offenders into law-abiding and productive citizens. Correctional education transforms offenders by enhancing self-esteem and confidence, reviving humanity, improving literacy levels, equipping offenders with skills and moulding them into law-abiding and productive citizens. This interpretation is also consistent with the empirical analysis by Mukeredzi (2021) which found that prisoners pursue adult education to improve themselves educationally and prepare for employment after their release.

Below is the analysis of future skills needs as suggested by male and female offenders in the study.

6.3.3.7 Future skill needs

Question 4.6 of the survey questionnaire asked respondents to make suggestions regarding new skills programmes that should be provided in the future. The suggestions included the following:

- Boiler making 18(4,9%)
- Construction 38 (10,3%)

- Electrical 67 (18,2%)
- Hairdressing 13(3,45%)
- Hospitality 27 (7,35%)
- Law 20 (5, 4%)
- Political science 4(1,0%)
- Trade test 18(4, 9%)
- Teaching 10(2,7%)
- Mechanical engineering 67(18,2%).

In addition to these quantitative results, one learner from the female section in Middleburg suggested that the DCS should:

“... help us with more courses, especially on the business side” (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). However, meeting the future skill needs of learners is subject to the nature of offences committed, the differences in the housing needs of male and female offenders, individual sentence plans, and the availability of teachers.

The need to diversify skills development in the future was pointed to so as to enable all offenders to be accommodated, including across genders. One interviewed offender stated:

“They should bring different skills programmes so that everyone could be accommodated because there are those who do not cope in education so different skills and the books from the library must be updated” (Barberton Correctional Services 27 January 2023).

Addressing the gender issue, a female offender in Middleburg suggested: *“Add more programmes as in skills programmes like carpentry”* (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). From this analysis, it is evident that the demand for future skills needs was strong across the board.

6.3.3.8 Employability skills preferences across gender

In Chapter 2 it was argued that the effectiveness of LIS should be judged by the number of offenders who successfully make the transition from their skills programmes to the workplace after release. Insights from both the survey and interviews confirmed that

offenders had access to functional literacy and skills programmes, although their outcomes varied across correctional facilities. Targeted skills included functional literacy, that is, reading and numeracy skills, as well as vocational skills in terms of baking, sewing, cooking, agriculture, gardening, housekeeping, bricklaying, woodwork, and painting all of which are found in most medium and maximum-security correctional facilities. As is the case in Kenya and Zambia (subsections 2.7.1.1 and 2.7.1.2) correctional education in the surveyed correctional centres is aimed at building both literacy skills and vocational skills (Kakupa and Mulenga, 2021:2).

However, owing to the lack of human and financial resources, some correctional centres were unable to offer all these skills programmes concurrently, with many opting for the incremental approach. Overall, the results validate the empirical observation that correctional education empowers offenders with the skills they need to unlock their potential, gain employment, and become assets to their communities (Coates 2016). AET and TVET-oriented learning interventions have been found to increase restoration and employment prospects for offenders (Khanyinga and Muathe, 2018). In the long run, investments in correctional education benefit offenders, communities and the country through venture creation, labour mobility, crime reduction, and poverty alleviation (Mutamba, 2016:2). In a parallel study to this inquiry, Zampini, Osterman, Stengel and Bennallick (2019:63) found that the type of training and tutorial support provided to female offenders is typically reflective of traditional masculine cultures where women are predominantly confined to domestic and beauty training programmes.

Consequently, feminist scholars have concluded that the correctional curriculum still overtly or covertly reinforces traditional forms of gender inequality in society by preparing women for submissive roles. Thus, the collective voice by female offenders in Bethal and Middleburg that the curriculum should be diversified to reflect wider career options is illustrative of the growing demand for gender-responsive learning programmes in correctional education:

“Bring other courses like business, paving and construction because some of us want to start businesses” (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). This will ensure

that institutionally embedded notions of masculinity are discarded to make way for equitable women's participation in education opportunities. Otherwise, “classrooms could easily become micro-climates of traditional gender stereotypes” (Zampini et al., 2019:63).

Transformative correctional pedagogy challenges historical patriarchal structures that seek to reinforce and perpetuate gender inequality in correctional education. Gender-inclusive instructional practices create space for librarians, facilitators, and peer educators to critically reflect on their personal belief systems and how these impact their curriculum delivery strategies for women in correctional facilities. Gender mainstreaming in the curriculum positively influences gender consciousness in the classroom. In this way, a gender-sensitive approach allows analysis of unequal power relations traditionally rooted in correctional education policies (Cunico, 2022:208). Unfortunately, although there has been a significant increase in the number of women entering correctional systems worldwide, there has been limited empirical analysis of the disparities between men and women in correctional education thus creating further barriers to development opportunities for many women without full access to support structures post-release (Cunico, 2022). Gamble (2003) stresses the fact that equity and justice in education are fundamentally important in addressing inequality and transformation imperatives in South Africa. Therefore, by linking the results to women's discourses in correctional education, this study has improved our understanding of the dynamics that influence curriculum decisions in correctional settings.

6.3.3.9 Access to and participation in skills programmes

Emphasising the need for equitable access, quality and diversity in learning programmes, Section 2.3 of the White Paper on Post-school Education (2013:7) states that “if the post system is to serve the country well, we need more places for people to learn, more types of courses and qualifications, more financial support for students, and better-quality education and training.” Consistent with this provision, figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 analyse participation in correctional education programmes in terms of age, gender, and educational background of the participants. Examining differences among learners in terms of age, gender, education, and work experience is important in establishing whether

all offenders had equitable access to learning opportunities in the 12 correctional facilities. Gender is an important indicator of equity in education as per section 29 of the Constitution (1996) on the right to education and the LIS Transformation Charter (2014). Educational background is key in determining the impact of correctional education on the multiskilling and upskilling of offenders, while work experience aids understanding of workplace learning practices. Determining age distribution is important for identifying which age groups have easy access to library and skills training opportunities, and which ones likely need individualised support to access these services more frequently. This is crucial for improving learning outcomes across the 12 correctional establishments.

On aggregate, 50,7% of youths participated in skills programmes across the 12 correctional facilities surveyed by the study (Table 5.1). This positive finding is consistent with the Mandela Rules (2015) mentioned in Chapter 1 which emphasises that education should be made compulsory for all young people in correctional facilities. This positive result was validated by one learner in Barberton as follows:

“I have completed various certificates from college such as motor mechanic NQF level 2, ICDL, horticulture, food safety, professional cookery, meat cutting and deboning, and safety management at NQF level 6. I am currently doing a diploma in law” (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023).

A Grade 12 teacher in Barberton reported that:

“This year we have managed to produce 100% pass rate with six distinctions in Grade 12.” (Barberton Correctional Services Juvenile Section, 27 January 2023). A learner in the adult basic education school validated this statement by saying: *“Although this place [correctional facility] is not good for young people like ourselves, it helps young people who come from poor families that cannot afford to pay for school fees. Some of us come here without reading or writing skills but when they leave here, they have something... they have skills that they can use to start a new life outside”* (Barberton Correctional Services Juvenile Section, 27 January 2023). In the adult section, a learner affirmed: *“I did marketing management N4-N6 in 2021. This is very much important to me because as an individual I have committed an offence due to lack of knowledge and through*

education, I have seen a lot of opportunities” (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023).

However, there were learners in the TVET category who were deeply concerned about limited access to learning opportunities, particularly in the agricultural skills programme: *“Do not limit foreign offenders to feel discriminated [against]... Foreign offenders are not allowed to work on the farm, that is, outside the prison gates. The highest field is the pig farm which is the money making in the corporate world. Let people explore what they want to do now and pave the way for what they want to be in the corporate world”* (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023).

In a related empirical analysis, Dalton, McKenzie and Kahonde (2012) found that the actualisation of inclusive education is hampered by the teachers' lack of skills and knowledge in differentiating the curriculum to address a wide range of learning needs. Equally, Ntombela (2019) uncovered that the practice of inclusive education is fragmented due to the lack of contextualisation in correctional educational settings. In a similar vein, an official in Bethal confirmed the existence of learning opportunities as follows:

“Various outside service providers that are SETA accredited are used to provide skills programmes, for example, computer repairs, building and plastering” (Bethal Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). When asked about learning opportunities, one learner in the Middleburg Female Section replied: *“Not in all subjects, but we as a group get study tips and form groups to understand a subject better...”* (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

The positive outcomes from the Bethal and Middleburg Correctional Services align with the Desistance theoretical perspective that offenders can still be salvaged from their deeds through observance of fundamental human rights, such as equality, mutual respect, non-discrimination and human dignity (Maruna, 2016). To some extent, the study's findings confirm Gulker's (1973:55) classical observation that a good library could

humanise the environment and transform a sterile atmosphere into a productive learning environment. In line with this, a facilitator in Witbank opined that:

“It [correctional education] assists in the process of rehabilitation, changing them into better citizens of South Africa... motivational speakers.” (Witbank Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

These results resonate with the Berlin Declaration that as agents of change and sustainable development, young people should be empowered by “creating opportunities for learning and civic engagement and by providing them with the competencies and tools to participate in education for sustainable development as co-creators of individual and societal transformation” (UNESCO, Berlin Declaration: Education for Sustainable Development, 2030:2).

6.3.3.10 Gender equity in skills training programmes

Consistent with the spirit of White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (2004) and the LIS Transformation Charter (2014), the study also measured access to library and skills training services by gender. Gender distribution is an important indicator of the extent to which libraries contribute to gender equity and transformation goals in the 12 correctional centres. Figure 5.2 indicates that males constituted 84% of the learner population in DCS skills programmes, while females comprised only 16% of the total learner population. Significantly, a facilitator in Bethal confirmed that:

“Learning opportunities are available to all offenders... men and women. But it depends on the nature of the offence committed and the sentence plans. For offenders with short-term sentence plans, learning takes place mostly in the pre-release programme where they learn life skills such as anger management, cooking, personal hygiene and agriculture... AET, TVET and HET programmes are offered to learners with long-term sentence plans (Bethal Correctional Services, 6 February 2023).

However, some female offenders in Middleburg indicated that women were largely confined to traditional skills programmes. One of the learners interviewed described her experience in this regard as follows:

“Hairdressing, fashion, knitting, painting and bakery learning programmes. We also want to do the courses that men do such as paving, plastering and construction... because some of us want to start construction companies when we leave this place” (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

As contemplated in the UN SDG 5, the advancement of gender equity and emancipation of women and young girls could be achieved through various interventions, including teaching and learning, research, policy-making and improving women empowerment programming initiatives.

To some degree, this analysis confirms that librarians contributed to the implementation of the LIS Transformation Charter (2014) in the study area as evidenced by the growing number of women participating in functional literacy and skills development programmes. The DCS commitment to broaden access to education and training opportunities was eloquently described by one official in Belfast as follows:

“The Department envisioned a role to support training and preparation of offenders for the work market upon release for survival and reducing criminal life of released offenders... Offenders who need intervention academically as per needs-based assessments, are transferred to centres that offer such services within the Department.” (Belfast Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

The positive outcomes on gender equity in library and training services are consistent with the call by the IFLA/UNESCO Library Manifesto (1994) cited in Finlay and Bates (2018:122) that “all libraries should provide free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture, and information to all members of society, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status.” Equally, the Berlin Declaration (2021:3) emphasises the need for “gender equality and non-discrimination in access to knowledge and skills and ensuring gender mainstreaming in education for sustainable development programming to ensure profound understanding of sustainability challenges and potential solutions” (UNESCO Berlin Declaration: Education for Sustainable Development, 2030).

6.3.3.11 Participants' prior learning experiences

In line with the NQF Act (2008), the respondents' educational backgrounds were obtained. The intention for doing so was to determine whether the functional literacy and skills programmes responded to the training needs of the respondents as prescribed by the NQF, namely, ABET, GET, FET, and HET. The survey revealed the following patterns in terms of educational attainment (Table 5.3):

- Grades 1-8: 7,4%
- Grades 9-12: 54,5%
- General certificate: 20,2%
- Diploma: 12%
- Degree: 6%.

The gradual improvements in offenders who have successfully obtained the National Senior Certificate (Grade 12) and general certificates (20%) is a clear indication that librarians and facilitators are contributing to the empowerment of offenders in Mpumalanga Province, although improvements are needed in higher education. The following testimonials from some of the learners interviewed suggest that learners were optimistic about education in the correctional service centres surveyed by the study:

"I will start my agriculture business after my release from [the] correctional centre" (Carolina Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). The second offender added: *"I was trained in cooking skills... It will help me to start my own business"* (Belfast Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). The third offender (with a welding qualification) said: *"I am planning to open my workshop where I can do gates and other materials that can prevent criminals from entering our homes as we have high crime in our community"* (Piet Retief Correctional Services, 8 February 2023).

The number of learners with university qualifications is commendable given the tough conditions under which most offenders attain these qualifications. Essentially, these achievements corroborate Mezirow's (1997) view that transformative learning fosters personal transformations in learners, thus increasing their critical thinking skills and adaptation capabilities as part of their reflective learning journey.

A discussion of learner support services as perceived by the learners across the 12 correctional facilities follows:

6.3.3.12 Learner support services

One of the key objectives of the study was to determine whether offenders had been provided with appropriate support services to be able to achieve their learning goals. This is particularly important because White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education stresses the need for personalised learner support services to help learners overcome their unique learning difficulties. Considering this, the analysis unveiled the following results:

6.3.3.12.1 Career counselling

Career transition is an important consideration in the reformation and restoration of offenders globally. Because of this, the study canvassed offenders' views on the provision of these services in their respective correctional centres. Tables 5.13 and 5.17 confirm that many learners received career counselling services. Specifically, survey data revealed the following in terms of how they assist learners:

- They help me with career information and advice (43%)
- They help me with goal setting (37%)
- They help me choose the right subjects (31%)
- They help me to choose the right job (13%)
- They help me to identify work opportunities (15%).

Learners got this information from librarians, teachers, facilitators, peer educators, and SETA and DCS officials. In Middleburg, learners' responses to the issue of career guidance were as follows:

A female learner stated:

“Yes... even guidance, they [teachers] are very supportive.” Another female offender added: *“Yes, especially guidance and goal-setting”*, while a fellow learner noted: *“I get support from the social worker in weekly sessions. We go over goal-setting. It would be*

very beneficial if funding was given to top learners at school to study the subject you are really interested in” (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). In Barberton, a young learner aged between 21-25 said: *“It [career counselling] happens daily because it is part of the foundation phase”* (Barberton Correctional Services Juvenile Section, 27 January 2023).

Collectively, these findings reveal a significant stride in the provision of career counselling services not just in the school sections but in all the 12 correctional centres surveyed by the study. Even though they were tasked with pre-release responsibilities, small correctional facilities contributed significantly to career development – helping offenders to identify and prioritise their career goals. These findings corroborate White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (2001:24) that “all children, youth and adults have the potential to learn within all bands of education provided they are given the necessary support and guidance to overcome their unique learning difficulties; including barriers arising from the curriculum and instructional methodologies.”

6.3.3.12.2 Learning resources

Conceptually, learning resources encompass textbooks, learner guides, assessment guides, revision and learning support materials such as newspapers and video clips, games, toys, simulators, equipment, workshop facilities, and ICTs such as computers, printers, internet and data/connectivity. Quantitative evidence from Table 5.11 and Table 5.25 affirms that while learners were provided with learning resources in the 12 correctional facilities, the provision and scale of these resources varied significantly across the facilities. Resources provided included the following:

- Information and advice on library services (19%)
- Textbooks (65%)
- Learning support materials (22%)
- Study areas (54%)
- Discussion rooms (12%).

However, pre-release facilities encountered difficulties in resourcing due to limited funding opportunities. This was reflected in many of the books seen by the researcher during observation being dated in that they were published between 1960 and 1990. Furthermore, it was mostly fiction (in the form of novels) and religious books that were meant to support learning in the pre-release programme and these books were largely inappropriate. The lack of funding on the part of various centres to purchase all the required resources (including human) was reflected in the interview response of a female facilitator in Middleburg:

“Yes, I want to study N4, N5, N6 in tourism, but it is not available... because of a lack of textbooks and tutors” (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

Learning resources in pre-release facilities were primarily focused on basic literacy skills such as reading, writing and numeracy. Spirituality books were in abundance in all pre-release centres observed. However, despite constraints in financial resources, the results suggest continuity in the provision of library and information resources to the learners; although the relevance and currency of these materials are still a major concern, particularly in Barberton, Ermelo, Mbombela, and Middleburg correctional centres.

In Bethal, the challenge is the shortage of textbooks for learners in the basic education programme. During interviews, a learner in Bethal pointed out that:

“Schools have a lot of unused books...” and suggested that *“They [management] must talk to schools so that they can give us books they no longer need. We are running short of books in matric and it affects our performance at the end of the year”* (Bethal Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). A female offender in Middleburg expressed similar sentiments: *“We sometimes lack properties [materials]. If we would get sponsors for our properties and recruit more people to do the knitting and crocheting”* (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

Importantly, these resource constraints in correctional libraries were also confirmed by officials, with one acknowledging that:

“Most textbooks and teacher support materials are outdated. However, partnerships or donations from stakeholders (external of libraries) do assist to deal with this challenge” (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). A senior management representative in Bethal concurred: *“There is no budget allocated for the libraries, we depend on donations from other libraries and outside sources... We have to use offenders to run the library... In-service training is given to the offenders who are allocated to the library. They are given a basic librarian course by the public librarian* (Bethal Correctional Services, 6 February 2023).

6.3.3.12.3 Common barriers to learning

As highlighted in Chapter 1, the White Paper on Inclusive Education (2001) requires that educators and facilitators assist learners in identifying and tackling barriers in the curriculum that undermine teaching and learning in the education and training system. What follows are some of the key barriers that were frequently mentioned by the respondents during the survey. Barriers to entry included the sentence plan, the lack of motivation to learn, and the security and parole conditions. Barriers that limited participation in skills programmes were the lack of books, the lack of teachers, overcrowding, limited access to information technology, and changes in curriculum design, for example, the N1-N3 courses and business courses had been discontinued at the time of reporting. A further curriculum-related challenge was that offenders were no longer allowed to use the University of South Africa (UNISA) Online learning hub due to security protocols, and nor were they allowed their personal computers which had been confiscated for security reasons. An offender in Bethel lamented:

“Yes, it [the lack of access to UNISA online learning] is a problem for us because sometimes the teacher has to go out of his way to organise tools for us even outside the school and sometimes, they don't get them (Bethal Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). Similarly, a senior facilitator in Barberton noted how they overcame resource challenges: *“Yes, shortage of books but we make copies that will assist them. We also bring newspapers for them to refer and read to gather information”* (Barberton Juvenile Section, 27 January 2023). Echoing the same sentiments on the scarcity of learning resources, a Barberton learner in the HET programme said: *“UNISA offers all the courses*

[in the Diploma in Law] *but the challenge is internally where our computers are taken [for security reasons] ... they play a pivotal role in our studies...I have not been assisted whenever I have some copies to make or need to log on to the internet*" (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023).

With respect to study opportunities in the library, another learner said:

"The library is way outdated... besides the library is situated in a noisy environment and there is a soccer field next to it and near cells where other inmates play music so loudly... Infrastructure is old. Lighting is poor. Ventilation is poor" (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023).

These results are validated by Brosens, Croux and De Donder's (2019:735) empirical study which documented three sets of barriers that prevent offenders from participating in learning programmes, namely, (1) situational barriers – when an offender has just recently arrived in correctional settings with little or no knowledge of what is happening in learning programmes; (2) institutional barriers – when an aspiring learner enquires about available learning programmes but receives no timely response from the institution; and (3) dispositional barriers – when a learner, for example, lacks interest in educational activities or prefers practical work instead of studying. Svensson (2011) adds personal learning difficulties in reading, writing and concentration in certain subjects as part of dispositional barriers that some offenders experience in correctional education programmes. Crucially, Kaiser, Keena, Piquero and Howley (2020) stress the fact that correctional facilities should be well-resourced to provide evidence-based programming that responds to offenders' skills needs to improve outcomes.

While the pre-release facilities were able to mitigate these challenges through the learner transfer system, the above findings are validated by the empirical literature. For instance, Emasealu (2018) asserts that the scarcity of teaching and learning resources and the slow implementation of prison policy reforms dilute outcomes in correctional education. Compounding this problem are budgetary constraints and inadequate infrastructure

which impede the delivery of library services (Singh, 2014:12). This was confirmed in an interview with an official in Middleburg:

“Most textbooks and teacher support materials are outdated. However, partnerships or donations from stakeholders, external or local library do assist to deal with this challenge.” (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2022).

Importantly, the CMO framework articulates that contextual factors have a direct impact on both the provision and implementation of learning programmes in correctional facilities. In terms of this theory, it is imperative for policymakers and implementers to have a clear grasp of the key factors shaping their decisions and actions in the targeted policy area, such as library and training services.

A learner in the HET programme described his studying experience as follows:

“We are in prison, some of the things we are not allowed to do as they said it is against security” (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023). As stated in the CMO theory, contextualising policy interventions is an important consideration in understanding under what conditions an intervention works, for whom, and why it is having a positive or an adverse impact on intended beneficiaries (Nielsen, Lemire and Tangsig, 2021). Contextualisation is key to understanding why crime prevention strategies succeed or fail to achieve the intended goals (Pawson, Greenhalgh, Harvey and Walshe, 2004).

The growing concerns about the inhibitive nature of correctional protocols correlate with the observation made by Kakunda and Mulenga (2021) that despite transformation processes, correctional facilities are still characterised by largely repressive security regimes that impede delivery and dilute outcomes in correctional education. An empirical investigation by Sauter et al. (2019) highlighted the centrality of a positive social climate in fostering positive attitudes, motivation, and work readiness among offenders. Industry-focused curriculum interventions along with adequate experiential learning opportunities increased employability prospects for released offenders. In respect of corrective measures, one learner in the HET programme in Barberton suggested that:

“[The] HOD of education must play a key role in promoting education but is doing the contrary, meaning he is not being supportive and not advocating for smooth learning as it reflects from decisions like taking our laptops... [We need to] have qualified teachers who are passionate about their work. Offer support and books to ensure that learning becomes enjoyable” (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023).

6.3.3.12.4 Notional hours of learning

One of the fundamental principles of the NQF Act (2008) is that learning programmes should be allotted sufficient time to enable effective teaching and learning. Based on Table 5.26, it is evident that learners were not entirely satisfied with the time allocated for learning/ training. One learner in Barberton described his experience with the time allocated for learning:

“Yes, we have time for class but not for practice... I like to practise the computer but they do not allow us... We spend a lot of time in class learning... Time to go to the computer lab is very limited” (Barberton Correctional Services Juvenile Section, 27 January 2023).

Despite these time constraints it is pleasing to note that the correctional facilities do allocate time for training and learning. According to a Bethal facilitator: *“We provide classroom time from 9:00 to 13:00 Monday to Thursday, after this the tutors are available in the section for any questions the students may have”* (Bethal Correctional Services, 6 February 2023).

From this analysis, it is evident that time constraints were precipitated by security protocols and the increasingly demanding rehabilitation schedule that required offenders to attend a whole range of development programmes, including psychosocial, arts and culture, as well as spiritual. Congestion in the rehabilitation schedule contributed to low outcomes, particularly in the self-study category where learners had limited time to study and complete their assessment activities.

Attention below is given to the roles and responsibilities in meeting offenders’ skills needs.

6.3.3.12.5 Learner engagement

One of the key questions posed to trainers/facilitators during the interviews was: Are offenders committed/motivated to learn and acquire new knowledge and skills in your skills programme? From a transformative learning perspective, “learner participation and cognitive and emotional engagement in learning activities play a key role in student academic achievement and are driven by motivational characteristics such as academic self-concept” (Schnitzler, Holzberger and Seidel, 2020:627). Analysis of the responses revealed a wide range of factors that demotivated and limited learner participation in the DCS skills programmes, and these included:

- Lack of interest in studying or improving oneself
- Depression as a result of violence and gang-related incidents
- Overcrowding, for example, more than 25 offenders in one cell
- Noise in and around cells makes it difficult to study.

Of these factors, the lack of interest in participating in learning activities was one of the major causes of poor learner participation in skills programmes. Closely linked to this was depression induced by the challenging conditions of correctional life. Validating these results, an official serving in the library at Piet Retief remarked:

“At the moment we do not have many learners... because most of them are not motivated to learn. We are trying to get them to register for the matric class but many of them are not interested. We are supposed to have at least 400 inmates but now we have over 400. It’s a big challenge for education... For those who want to learn we refer them to Standerton because they have most TVET courses (Piet Retief Correctional Services, 8 February 2023). In Middleburg, a facilitator highlighted learner disengagement as follows: “The challenge is the general lack of interest in literacy programmes especially ABET by offenders. Marketing and recruitment drives are conducted to ensure offenders enrol in the programmes” (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). In Volksrust, a librarian described the causes of learner demotivation as follows: “Yes, a challenge is [learners] dropping out at any time, finding it boring to be in class doing work... The solution will be using different teaching approaches that will allow and motivate them to

read books in the library but in line with our pre-release programme (Volksrust Correctional Services, 13 June 2023).

In light of these results, Roth, Asbjornsen and Manger (2016) observed that offenders with self-efficacy in self-regulated learning and mathematics were more likely to partake in education programmes than those who exhibited generally low self-efficacy levels. By contrast, Hettler's (1976) six-dimension Wellness model looked at the holistic development of individuals rather than self-efficacy competency alone.

Empirical studies have noted the significance of effective classroom management by educators to reduce the adverse impact of poor attendance and prolonged absenteeism on learner performance and outcomes. For instance, Swanepoel, Beukes and Yu (2021) found that consistent learner attendance correlates positively with high academic achievement. According to these authors, inadequate study time, disinterestedness, and substance abuse are some of the major factors contributing to absenteeism and poor learner performance. A study by Akkus and Cinkir (2022) noted that teacher quality and effectiveness are critical in curbing absenteeism and providing early warnings about learner disengagement from learning activities.

In Barberton, one facilitator described the adverse impact of depression on learner engagement as follows:

"Some of us have to become teachers, psychologists and social workers at the same time because some of our learners need help cope with their problems and traumatic experiences" (Barberton Correctional Services, 21 June 2023). Similarly, a female offender in Bethal described her traumatic experience as follows: *"It [studying] is difficult sometimes... especially when you are arrested"* (Bethal Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). A facilitator in the Life Orientation Programme in Mbombela stated: *"20% out of 100% are motivated because they show remorse and are willing to change. They want to get skills so that they get jobs or start their own businesses outside. But 80% just come to school for smuggling and other agendas. Others don't bother attending classes"* (Mbombela Correctional Services, 30 January 2023).

In their empirical analysis of the impact of learner attendance on academic performance, Sekiwu, Sempala and Frances (2020) noted that consistent learner attendance has a direct bearing not just on academic performance but also on learner achievement, suggesting that regular attendance enhances academic excellence.

A passionate learner in Barberton enthusiastically said:

“Here, they tell us that it’s every man for himself, so I wake up at one o’clock every morning to study and then go to the kitchen to prepare meals. I have a professional cooking course and now I am doing a law degree with UNISA. It’s tough but if you want success, you have to work harder” (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2027).

As regards the solution to learner disengagement, a Standerton offender suggested: *“Recognise every offender who is studying so that they can encourage other offenders to study... Do some awareness for all offenders so that they can be aware of the importance of schooling”* (Standerton Correctional Services, 06 February 2023).

The negative outcomes in learner engagement (subsection 6.3.3.12.5 above) are not unique to this case study. In a parallel empirical analysis in Ghana, Addae (2020) found that offenders had varied experiences of demotivating factors in their learning programmes. Prime examples included a shortage of suitably qualified educators, inadequate teacher attendance, and a punitive correctional culture that discouraged learner engagement. In conclusion, Addae (2020) noted that these challenges had a profound impact on both the design and implementation of correctional education programmes. In an earlier study, Vandala and Bendall (2019) stressed the crucial role that educators should play in helping offenders realise their learning goals despite inescapable traumatic experiences generally found in correctional settings. This is particularly important as teacher-related factors have been found to have a profound impact on learner engagement and disengagement, especially teaching styles, behavioural aspects, competencies, and communication skills.

The complexity of student engagement factors requires differentiated motivation and support interventions for each learner. Collectively, these observations imply that the lack of motivation may precipitate poor performance among learners, particularly in settings where self-study is still the most preferred mode of learning. As noted by McNeil and Weaver (2010:8), building motivation translates into self-hood and a desirable lifestyle for an individual who seeks to change. Together, these challenges underscore the need for intensifying and strengthening academic wellness, psychological wellness and social wellness services to help offenders regain self-efficacy and perform well in their respective learning programme; as articulated in Hitler's Wellness Theory.

The negative outcomes on learner engagement pose a challenge for educators in correctional settings. Constant learner engagement contributes significantly to learner achievement, cognitive development, and improved retention and dropout rates in learning programmes (Bond, Buntins, Bedenlier, Zawacki- Richter and Kerres, 2020). A disempowering learning environment is one of the major contributory factors to learner disengagement, while nurturing learning environments tend to have a positive impact on learner motivation and engagement in learning activities, leading to positive outcomes (Bond et al., 2020:3). Learner-related causes of demotivation include negative self-projection, negative thoughts about oneself, feelings of self-doubt and self-rejection, and attitudes towards the learning programme (Chong et al., 2019:68). As a result of criminality and self-blame, many offenders have lost self-worth, which precipitates feelings of disengagement and withdrawal.

Transformative learning theorists such as Wals (2020) advocate blended learning spaces that foster critical reflection and out-of-the-box thinking, thus giving learners a sense of self-empowerment, self-organisation, social cohesion, trust and mutual respect. Safe learning environments that constantly expose learners to challenging but achievable goals aid change of mindset and behaviour. This can happen when learners are given space to collectively experiment with ideas in free learning spaces (Trechsel, Diebold, and Zimmermann, 2023). Effective learner engagement is realised when a learner demonstrates a visible behavioural, cognitive, emotional, and affective preoccupation

with learning activities in his or her learning setting. This is demonstrated in active participation, performance and achievement in the learning programme (Perez-Salas, Parra, Saez-Delgado and Olivares, 2021). Sustained learner engagement reflects the quality of a learner's involvement with their learning programme, as well as their interactions with fellow learners and educators in the learning environment.

According to Hettler's (1976) Wellness theory, paying attention to learner engagement helps in stirring and elevating intellectual wellness, which is key to academic success. Intellectual wellness entails the stimulation of the mind to keep learners constructively engaged in learning experiences. This is realised through a wide range of literacy-enhancing experiences, such as reading unfamiliar topics, building and improving one's vocabulary, enrolling in college or university programmes, or engaging in educational experiences through the library and self-directed learning activities (Snyder and Horton, 2009).

6.3.3.12.6 Concerns about the learning environment

Hettler's (1976) Wellness theory emphasises the need for educators to create a nurturing learning environment that enhances academic wellness outcomes. The interviews with some of the learners highlighted characteristics of the learning environment that were perceived as cumbersome and/or alienating for them. Inhibitive factors in the learning environment as perceived by the learners included noise, stringent security rules, the lack of space to study, and a shortage of facilitators. Central to the Transformative Learning theory is authentic spaces. Authenticity exists when the learning environment is characterised by accessibility, participation, inclusion, critical thinking, role modelling, personalised support, and the use of stimulating questions to encourage dialogue and debate among learners (Gray, Ward and Fogart, 2019:13). Similarly, Desistance theory scholars acknowledge the importance of safe spaces in shaping the self and personal identity of offenders during the learning process (Szifris et al., 2018). Other desistance scholars, for example, Behan (2014) and Finlay and Bates (2018) emphasise the need for correctional centres to provide enabling learning spaces that allow offenders to freely engage in a wide variety of learning activities at their own pace and at a time of their own

choosing. It is then that learners in correctional education can experience the positive impact of informal learning and engagement with the library in their centres. Wellness theory scholars have reached similar conclusions, noting that environmental wellness is realised when there is a fit between the individual and his surroundings (Allison, 1999; Zwetsloot and Pot, 2004).

What follows is an analysis of career transition as perceived by the participants in the 12 correctional facilities.

6.3.3.13 Career transition preparations

One of the primary objectives of this study was to establish whether correctional libraries and stakeholders assisted offenders with career transition support to help them develop positive attitudes and behaviours towards employment, self-employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities. Career transition assistance is particularly important in a country facing one of the highest incidents of crime and recidivism (such as South Africa). Overall, the results in Table 5.26 affirmed that offenders were assisted in identifying employment opportunities in their correctional centres, although the strategies used varied greatly across the centres. The percentage of respondents either satisfied or highly satisfied with three strategies is reflected below:

- Job interviews skills (26%)
- Referrals to employers (10%)
- CV preparations (31%).

The quantitative findings above are supported by those from the interviews. One offender in Witbank stated:

“Yes, the DTI [Department of Trade and Industry] and Economic Land Reform have visited our area and asked if anyone who is due to come out is willing to get a job and they would ask the particulars of the interested person and give [him] their contacts” (Witbank Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). Another offender in the same correctional facility added: *“I do get guidance from other business people, also from learning referrals, they usually come to visit our facilitators and offer some sort of*

workshops where we engage and ask them all we want to know” (Witbank Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

These results align with the notion in the literature that “quality education fundamentally prepares learners for the world of work, keeps learners engaged, fosters active learner participation, has no disruptions, learners are disciplined, learning occurs smoothly with no interruptions, there is no discrimination, and the learning environment stimulates learning and elevates learner motivation” (Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge and Ngcobo, 2008:4).

During observation of the Agricultural Programme in the Barberton Correctional Services on 21 June 2023, offenders demonstrated practical commercial farming skills in a wide range of contexts, including milk production, pig farming, operating mechanical farming implements and equipment such as tractors, and irrigation schemes. Other crucial skills included land preparation, ploughing, seeding, and farm maintenance. A programme manager in the fruit and vegetable section of the farm confirmed:

“They do everything by themselves. We train peers and then deploy them to teach fellow offenders. They teach each other in every shift because per day we need 90 offenders on the farm. They run the entire farm by themselves. When they come out, they are ready to do any farm work. It gives them important skills because the economy in this province [Mpumalanga] needs workers with agricultural skills” (Barberton Correctional Services, 21 June 2023).

In Volksrust, employment preparations encompassed helping learners write their business plans and market their services to clients. This was achieved through the exit programme which focused specifically on life after corrections. Doing so contributed tremendously to raising career awareness and readiness among offenders. A Volksrust librarian described career transition preparations in this context as follows:

“First, we teach those subjects/courses that are relevant, meaning those that will assist them to be marketable/that can assist them to start their own business. Secondly, we have exit programmes where we drill them in skills like (1) how to look for funding

[fundraising skills], (2) *how to draw a business plan, and (3) how to recruit clients*” (Volksrust Correctional Services, 13 June 2023).

Significantly, Volksrust’s innovative approach prioritised entrepreneurial orientation over job readiness. This is particularly important as some offenders had done business-oriented courses such as construction, clothing and textile, fashion, and hairdressing. Building and strengthening venture creation capabilities holds greater promise for offenders who cannot secure formal employment after release.

Adversely, some offenders reported negative experiences with career transition preparations. According to a Barberton offender:

“No, I have never been given any opportunity after completing my diploma in marketing. There was no one to tell me about employment opportunities linked to my qualification; I was just on my own through all this journey” (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023).

However, while these achievements are commendable, there is a need to formalise partnerships with key employment sectors to improve labour market outcomes and prevent reoffending at the community level. This analysis aligns with the spirit of the NQF (2008:11) that institutions offering programmes that require workplace-integrated learning credits should place learners into workplace learning programmes. In Mbombela, a facilitator in the AET programme affirmed this by saying:

“The practical component is very important for those learners who do not have practical job experience... So, most of the time they learn everything... baking, salon and sewing (Mbombela Correctional Services, 30 January 2023).

In Witbank, a trainee awaiting release confirmed career preparations as follows:

“Yes, I did, there are two private colleges where they find my CV interesting... They are waiting for me to come out as we speak. They want me to join them currently to facilitate marketing field students [career opportunity – lecturing]” (Witbank Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). Another offender in the same correctional facility added: *“I am pleading*

to the Department [DCS] that it please assist us in terms getting more projects from outside [post-release] world; also, more skills offerings that we are going to use also to survive when we go out” (Witbank Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). Supporting this view, a female offender in Middleburg said: *“I am a training tutor at the school. It would be beneficial if I could get training for tutoring through the Department of Education”* (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

In transformative learning contexts where learners are recognised as stakeholders and knowledge bearers who construct understanding and meaning through active participation, outcomes are likely to be of great quality Degtjarjova, Lapina and Freidenfelds (2018). Frequent participation in education and workplace learning activities positively influences work readiness among offenders (Doekhie, 2019). Critical transferable skills and competencies include personal work characteristics, organisational acumen, work competency, social intelligence, resilience, flexibility, stress management, adaptability, and personal development (Caballero et al., 2011:52). From the Desistance theory point of view, Rapaport (2013) argues that properly planned workplace learning experiences can significantly improve marketability and employability prospects for offenders graduating from vocational programmes. From these perspectives, it can be argued that career transition for offenders is possible, especially when work readiness programmes are implemented jointly by correctional centres and prospective employers.

Crucially, these results resonate with section 4.4.4 of the White Paper on Corrections (2005:40), which notes that “enhancement of the productive capacity of offenders is critical in ameliorating criminality in society. Employment and contributing to the wealth of the community by means of production is a key component to rehabilitation and the prevention of recidivism... The Department’s responsibility is to ensure that offenders are appropriately skilled in market-related skills... so that they can take their place in the economically active and gainfully employed sector of society upon release.” The in-service training experiences reported in the Bethal and Standerton correctional centres hold greater career prospects for offenders who intend to pursue careers in the LIS sector.

The new digital library landscape warrants drastic changes in traditional library skills and competencies (Shepard, 2022). In this shifting library environment, librarians need wide-ranging sets of competencies, such as online search strategies, online data management practices, online referencing methods, interface design practices, interlibrary connectivity, online study practices, and online networking practices. These competencies are particularly important for librarians in developing countries such as South Africa where digitisation of libraries is fast becoming common practice.

The above analysis is validated by other empirical studies which show that vocational and work programmes are effective in lowering reoffending rates and enhancing work readiness, especially when they are also linked to community resources to bolster life transitions (Duwe, 2018; Sheppard and Ricciardelli, 2020).

6.3.3.13.1 Internship and learnership opportunities

As part of the career transition preparation programme, the study determined whether learners had been exposed to learnership and internship opportunities. As indicated in Table 5.26 learnership opportunities were relatively moderate, as only 26% of the learners were satisfied, 9% very little satisfied, and 34% dissatisfied. Internship opportunities were poor with only 3% of the learners being satisfied and more than half (51%) being dissatisfied with such opportunities in their centres. The internship programme is part of the DCS' strategy to equip offenders with practical job skills. It is flexibly designed to facilitate multi-skilling and upskilling of offenders in different trades and occupations while they are still serving their sentence plans. Given the above findings, it is evident that the programme is not as successful as envisaged and this could be attributed, among other reasons, to the need for tight security protocols in the centres. The low outcomes in learnerships can largely be attributed to the fact that only awaiting-release offenders had a chance to attend learnerships as they were considered to be low-risk individuals.

During observation at the Barberton Correctional Services, it was pointed out by an official that learnership opportunities were provided by the AgriSETA:

“A minimum of 12 learners are taken by the Agri-SETA for a period of six months to complete the theoretical component of the programme... They do the practical component here and get certified by our school. But it’s only those offenders who have already served their sentences and are awaiting release. Those still serving long sentences are not able to attend due to high-security risks” (Barberton Correctional Services, 21 June 2023). In Witbank, a facilitator in the Clothing and Textile Skills Programme confirmed internship opportunities: *“We first give them the basics [theory] and then drill them on practical skills... We assess them to check their competence. If they are competent, we send them to our factory just across from the school where they manufacture different goods like shoes and uniforms. We supply all our centres from this factory... And there is always a second chance for those who need extra help to master job skills”* (Witbank Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). An offender (also from Witbank) affirmed career transition preparation as follows: *“They send applications like all other job candidates and we check their credentials and make hiring decisions based on that information. There is no discrimination. They are treated like all employees applying for new positions.”* A second offender (who had already secured a job three weeks before release) confirmed: *“I am very excited... It started when I used to teach their courses and their facilitators are very good people. They teach you the job until you master all the requirements. I think it’s a good opportunity for me to rebuild my life and support my family”* (Witbank Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). Corroborating the above results, a female offender in Mbombela remarked: *“It depends on the individual...Opportunities are there. If you work hard it is easy to get a job [and] if you know how to market yourself”* (Mbombela Correctional Services, 30 January 2023).

On aggregate Table 5.26 reviews that 28% of the learners were generally satisfied with referrals or contacts with employers compared to 44% who were not satisfied with the quality of these services. The minimal positive outcomes concerning employment opportunities correlate with Nee, Singh and Kularajasingam’s (2022) study in Malaysia, which found that employers used different selection criteria when deciding to hire ex-offenders. These were: (1) seriousness of the crime committed; (2) relationship between job requirements and the crime committed – where the crime is unrelated to the job, job

opportunity would be granted; (3) the job candidate demonstrates willpower and willingness to become a better person; (4) accepting reality – there are many ex-offenders in society – courage and confidence and willingness to start a new life in society would secure a job; and finally, (5) fairness and equality – treat them like all other job candidates.

In the UK, a related study by Porter, Haggard and Harvey (2022) revealed that some employers preferred background checks while others showed a strong preference for young male and female ex-offenders. Other criteria included relevant occupational experience, the ability to work shifts, suitability for the job, and qualifications.

6.3.3.13.2 Barriers to employment opportunities

As articulated in Chapter 2, one of the fundamental objectives of correctional education is to facilitate the employment of offenders once released by correctional service institutions. However, empirical analysis reveals recurring patterns in terms of the blockages hindering entry and participation of offenders in the labour market. Drawing on participants' narratives during the interviews, the following barriers were confirmed as major impediments to the recruitment and employment of offenders and access to entrepreneurial opportunities. These were stigma, the lack of support, competition from other job applicants, and exclusion. A former offender narrated his experience as follows: *“Even if you get the job, you face different treatment from the people you work with. Some will accept you as a person. Others treat you like a criminal because they don't trust you. To survive I just told myself that I needed to accept my situation inside me first. If God wants me to succeed, I will”* (Bushbuckridge, 27 February 2023). During an interview, an employer provided their perspective: *“Some [former offenders] are easy to work with and want to really change their lives but others are erratic [regress] and that scares many of us [employers] from giving them jobs because they might default”* (Mbombela, 30 February 2023).

Negative perceptions about offenders along with increased demand for background checks preclude many offenders from business and employment opportunities. As pointed out by a former offender:

“We are not accepted. There is a lot of anger and hatred. It’s very difficult to get opportunities [employment or business] outside corrections” (Bushbuckridge, 27 January 2023).

Encouragingly, some of the employers interviewed demonstrated a commitment to assist offenders with self-development opportunities and adjustment programmes as part of their professional development in the workplace. Overall, most interviewees admitted that rigid screening procedures during recruitment barred many qualified offenders from job opportunities, as most employers did not want people with a criminal record. However, most offenders were more comfortable with self-employment and venture creation than formal employment.

Desistence theory views employment opportunities as central to the cessation of criminal behaviour in offenders, as job security tends to reinforce responsibility and social conformity (Devers, 2011). Sustainable employment opportunities provide space for social transformation as offenders begin to form positive relational networks with others in the workplace. Work brings offenders close to supervisors, mentors, life coaches, and employee assistance programmes. These services provide a strong grounding in both moral and professional values generally expected of members of society which enhance life transition outcomes.

The growing concerns about labelling and exclusion of offenders from employment opportunities are also validated by the empirical studies in Chapter 2. For example, in a three-year investigation of released offenders in Canada, Sheppard and Ricciardelli (2020:34-48) found that because of stigma, released offenders, despite having the required qualifications and job competencies, often secured manual labour generally associated with low-wage and non-gratifying jobs, and this was despite participation in pre-employment programming. Stigmatisation severely limited career progression opportunities for many promising correctional graduates, who were often projected as dangerous, violent and untrustworthy. This exacerbated the marginalisation and exclusion of released offenders from labour market opportunities.

Career transition preparations were also hampered by limited experiential learning opportunities. One learner in Barberton remarked:

“We do tourism in our class but we do not know the practical side. They [teachers] show us pictures and videos [but]... We need [educational] tours to see different places around the country. Some of us want to be tour guides but we have never seen what tour guides do when they serve tourists” (Barberton Juvenile Correctional Services, 7 February 2023).

Significantly, Backman, Estrada and Nilsson (2018) note that many offenders often face economic deprivation when they come out of corrections and tend to have a generally weak attachment to the labour market, which exacerbates criminality. One of the salient lessons from the United Kingdom (Wales and England) is that most offenders are assisted in developing their individual learning plans and listing their career choices and course preferences early, career transition outcomes tend to improve considerably after release (Silvestri, 2013).

While evidence of aftercare is strong in parolees, the interconnectedness with the community remains relatively weak, which precipitates reoffending. According to the White Paper on Corrections (2005:14), aftercare is intended to “ensure successful reintegration through appropriate interventions directed at both the inmate and relevant societal institutions.” The White Paper further emphasises that “the period of incarceration should be used to nurture and rebuild the relationships between the offender, the community and society at large.” It is in this context that the present study advances the concept of destigmatisation as one of the potential solutions to facilitate the entry and participation of released offenders in economic activities.

Empirically, a Zimbabwean case study (subsection 2.7.1.3) illustrates the growing importance of constantly revamping and aligning curriculum interventions in response to shifting labour market conditions. This includes the evaluation of career transition programming to track the employability of offenders (Chakamba, 2019). Equally, the Zambian case study (subsection 2.7.1.2) underscores the importance of trade testing to

ensure that offenders are fit for industry and employment, and the centrality of balancing education with psychosocial support services (Kakupa and Mulenga, 2021:2).

Finland's experience (subsection 2.7.2.1) illustrates that the lack of adequate national statistics about employment rates after incarceration makes it difficult for correctional services officials to track and determine labour market outcomes for released offenders (Mertanen and Brunila, 2018:156) – a problem that is also prevalent in South Africa. The Norwegian experiences (subsection 2.7.2.3) indicate that follow-up support services in the post-release phase are critical in building and strengthening employability skills among released offenders and underscore the importance of peer learning under stressful conditions (Tosenseth and Bergsland, 2019:3). Addressing barriers to employment of returning offenders is key to reducing poverty and inequality that perpetuates criminality. Properly executed skills development interventions can “reduce underemployment, increase productivity, and improve standards of living” (The World Bank Skills Agenda, 2021).

6.3.3.13.3 Integration efforts at the community level

Part of the analysis was to determine the role of local communities in facilitating social and economic integration of offenders. Communities are generally considered to be a fundamental source of livelihood for vulnerable offenders due to their vast social capital endowments. In terms of Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystem theory, local communities are part of the exosystem that contributes tremendously to the development of offenders through employment and social projects. Notably, focus group data confirmed that some offenders found jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities in communities. In a focus group with community members in Mariti, Bushbuckride, it was affirmed that released offenders were assisted in finding employment opportunities:

“For the young ones, it is easy to get temporary jobs because they have a lot of energy. But for the old ones, life can be hard after prison because very few people hire old people... Yes, they [old people] do get jobs in the community like domestic, cleaning or gardening, and though the money is too little sometimes, it puts food on the table” (Mariti, 27 February 2023). A learner in Barberton also confirmed assistance, pointing out the

role of the church: *“My church has been very helpful to me. They pay for my studies. I am looking forward to opening my own law firm after corrections”* (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023).

Overall, these qualitative results are consistent with the White Paper on Corrections (2005:38) which provides that “rehabilitation should be viewed not merely as a strategy to prevent crime, but rather as a holistic phenomenon incorporating and encouraging social responsibility, social justice, active participation in democratic activities, empowerment with life-skills and other skills, and a contribution to making South Africa a better place to live in.” However, with rising crime levels, many community members were generally sceptical about the employment of offenders. A sense of mistrust and fear of reoffending behaviour dominated discussions during the focus groups. Despite this, community members appreciated the role that offenders played in community projects, such as the renovation of schools and routine maintenance works in public facilities. Many focus group participants reasoned that restoration of offenders was happening because community members did not retaliate or mistreat parolees and ex-offenders for their criminal deeds. Some churches and NGOs, particularly in Mbombela, assisted offenders in finding jobs while government institutions such as schools, clinics, and libraries assisted in the form of reference letters to help offenders find work. A key challenge was reluctance on the part of local government councillors to accommodate offenders in community projects.

This evidence validates the Desistance theory which holds that community perceptions and reactions to returning offenders may either deter or reinforce criminality, especially where there is no social capital to aid reintegration efforts. Negative expectations and stigma may act as strong motivators for recidivism in unsupportive social environments (Backman, Estrada, and Nilsson, 2018). Hettler’s Wellness Theory emphasises that in order to learn better, individuals need to be assisted to balance their emotional, psychological and social wellness competencies. The stigmatisation of offenders diminishes their self-efficacy and self-actualisation goals.

6.3.4 Quality management in library and training services

This, the fourth theme, is in response to the fourth research question that guided this study, namely, What mechanisms, if any, are used to track and measure the quality of functional literacy, skills development and career transition programmes offered to offenders in correctional centres? This question is particularly important given that the NQF requires learning programmes to be of a high quality. Given this imperative, Table 5.25 and Table 5.26 provide a descriptive analysis of the quality of library and training services as perceived by the survey respondents.

6.3.4.1 Quality of library services

Table 5.25 gives a statistical description of how learners felt about the quality of the services that they received from their correctional libraries. The quality of some of the library services was rated as follows:

Discussions rooms:

- Satisfied 12%
- Very little satisfied 34%
- Not satisfied 33%.

Time for reading in the library:

- Satisfied 15%
- Very little satisfied 31%
- Not satisfied 31%.

Peace and order in the library:

- Satisfied 18%
- Very little satisfied 37%
- Not satisfied 22%.

These results were corroborated in the interviews with the current offenders in the 12 correctional centres targeted by the study.

6.3.4.2 *Quality of training services*

While the preceding section gauged learner perceptions of the quality of library services, this section measures the quality of training services that learners received from their facilitators, peers, and SETAs such as the AgriSETA and the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA (MerSETA). In this regard, some of the survey results (Table 5.26) were as follows:

Career guidance:

- Satisfied 30%
- Very little satisfied 27%
- Not satisfied 20%.

Training methods:

- Satisfied 39%
- Very little satisfied 14%
- Not satisfied 21%.

Training time:

- Satisfied 31%
- Very little satisfied 17%
- Not satisfied 18%.

Training rooms:

- Satisfied 39%
- Very little satisfied 13%
- Not satisfied 25%.

Coaching and mentoring:

- Satisfied 42%
- Very little satisfied 8%
- Not satisfied 19%.

In response to the question concerning whether training services by the centre helped or not, an offender in Witbank responded as follows:

“Definitely yes, it does help a lot in building a future career opportunity. I for one, I know the business world as I know myself, even in terms of creating and starting my own [business] also being an eye opener” (Witbank Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

A female offender in Middleburg described the quality of training services in her centre, stating that:

“It’s the best quality, hence there is a lack of jobs in our country. It will be best for me to become my own boss and create job opportunities for the future” (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). Corroborating this view, a peer facilitator in Witbank remarked: *“Yes, I can say the level of education I am doing is on a high academic level. We enrol with Nkangala Further Education and Training College which offers us accredited certificates and relevant study materials”* (Witbank Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

Concerning tutorial support, the analysis reveals greater improvements in the manner in which facilitators, peer educators, and the learners themselves worked collaboratively to improve learning effectiveness and outcomes in their respective centres. Female offenders were more content with study time than their male counterparts. According to one such offender:

“Yes, enough time is available. I am a training tutor at the school. It would be beneficial if I could get training for tutoring through the Department of Education (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). However, some female offenders were somewhat sceptical about the quality of training. A Middleburg offender stated: *“The quality is not always on top because job finding [career transition] is not included in the study [skills programme]. It would really help if the Department of Education assisted us as ex-offenders to find jobs”* (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). A male offender in Barberton shared similar sentiments: *“The quality of training was good when the business studies were in progress but currently as we don’t have anything to do to empower ourselves... nothing is helping us”* (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January

2023). Another learner in Witbank concurred: *“Not enough time [for practice] because of the limitation that we are experiencing now in this correctional centre.”* On tutorial support services from teachers, the learner said: *“I do [get support] but it is not enough to improve my readiness in furthering my studies, for example, we don’t have study material which is of good quality”* (Barberton Correctional Services, 7 February 2023).

Interestingly, some offenders judged the quality of training services in terms of the spiritual content of the courses. According to one female offender in Middleburg Correctional Services:

“It is very good to learn spiritually not just flesh things...What we need is to convert everyone to Christ Jesus so that the will of our Father will be fulfilled” (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). This (and similar comments) underscore the Wellness theory assertion that correctional education should include the spiritual dimension to foster the holistic development of offenders (Hettler, 1976).

Concerns were also expressed about the quality of library books which, in terms of the survey results, were seen as outdated, unsuitable, and inadequate. These results were also validated by evidence from librarians in Witbank:

“The quality is bad due to not having computers in the library. Library computers are needed... The books are available but some of them are outdated. Changing of books is needed” (Witbank Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). In a similar vein, a learner from Barberton stated: *“The library is way outdated – it has been there since the days of old”* (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023). Confirming this, a librarian in the same facility remarked: *“Ensuring that books are available in the library, although they are old books, some from 1966”* (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023).

One of the fundamental objectives of the NQF Act (2008:6) is to “enhance the quality of education and training, accelerate redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities.” According to section 5(2), the NQF aims to contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large. “Education facilitates the development of competent

and human citizens who are proactive participants in social life” (Duncan-Andrade and Morrell, 2008, as cited in Finlay and Bates, 2018:124)

6.3.4.3 Quality of working relationships

Cordial and professional working relationships between educators and learners have been found to have a considerably high impact on learner engagement and achievement. Empirical studies reviewed emphasised the importance of capacitating instructors in correctional settings to ensure that offenders receive high-quality education across streams. In particular, it has been found that most teachers lack an understanding of the complex nature of correctional education due to the traumatic conditions under which some learners pursue their studies.

However, as demonstrated in Table 5.21, most learners had positive dispositions towards their teachers.

Relationship with teachers:

- Poor 4,6%
- Average 9,5%
- Good 46,6%
- Excellent 26,4%
- Unsure 4,4%.

The above dispositions are reflected in the comments made by a Barberton librarian and facilitator respectively:

“These [offenders] are my children. I teach them and I convert them to the word of God.”

“To me, these are not offenders. To me these are my children – they see me as their father because some of them have never had parental care before” (Barberton Correctional Services, 7 February 2023).

Offenders’ relationship with their fellow learners was equally positive (Table 5.23):

Relationship with fellow learners:

- Poor 2,7%

- Average 9%
- Good 51%
- Excellent 24%
- Unsure 3,8%.

These positive relationships were also validated by the interviews with learners in Barberton. One learner described his social relationships with fellow learners as follows: *“We are like family. We help each other most of the time because here it is mostly self-study”* (Barberton Correctional Services, 7 February 2023). The same sentiments were shared by learners in the female section in Middleburg: *“Peer support, even though we sometimes lack materials like wool and other stuff to knit”* (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

In a similar vein, a peer educator in the Ermelo Correctional Services confirmed that he had both a cordial and professional relationship with fellow offenders in all classes that he taught, especially in the basic education category. In the Juvenile Section in Barberton, positive relationships benefited significantly from the separation of learners from those not registered for skills/educational programmes to create a sense of identity and motivation.

In terms of Hettler’s (1976) Wellness theory, academic wellness looks at how individuals learn to improve their knowledge and skills (Botha and Brand, 2009). Emphasising the cardinal importance of nurturing social relationships, McNeill and Weaver (2010:4) state that building positive personal and professional relationships can be a powerful force in helping offenders make the transition from criminality to social conformity.

Learning together is the defining feature of transformative learning pedagogy advanced by Mezirow (1997). In its practicality, transformative learning is learner-driven, interactive, participative, and reliant on collective learning experiences rather than teacher-imposed learning solutions, with a range of resources to foster a transformative learning culture (Gray, Ward and Fogarty, 2019:12). Transformative learning inculcates positive psychological outcomes among offenders, including improved self-awareness, positive

self-image, optimism, resilience, and optimistic aspirations about a brighter future after rehabilitation (Pike and Hopkins, 2019).

The preceding analysis has demonstrated how transformative learning practices of librarians, teachers and peer educators helped foster a sense of belonging, togetherness, and shared learning among offenders. This demonstrates the power of transformative pedagogy in enabling offenders to discover their personal transformation trajectories and master a range of requisite skills necessary to make a living after incarceration. Through transformative pedagogy, we can understand personal transitions as well as the wider societal, community and institutional changes that occur when offenders are subsequently reintegrated into society (Gray, Ward and Fogarty, 2019). Correctional education embodies these principles in the study.

6.3.4.4 Quality of coaching and mentoring

There is convergence in the empirical literature that regularly exposing learners to experienced mentors in workplace contexts helps impart employability skills. The study analysis suggests mixed results, with some correctional facilities registering disproportionately higher dissatisfaction rates with coaching and mentoring than others, especially Ermelo which experienced difficulties in human, financial, and technological resources. However, it is pleasing to note that the majority of learners in all 12 correctional facilities were generally satisfied with the coaching and mentoring services they received from their teachers, as evidenced by the following evidence (Table 5.26) from the quantitative component of the study:

Coaching and mentoring:

- Satisfied 42%
- Highly satisfied 11%
- Very little satisfied 8%
- Not satisfied 19%
- Unsure 8%.

The positive outcomes of coaching and mentoring were subsequently corroborated by qualitative data from the interviews with both female and male offenders. According to one female offender in Volksrust:

“I have been given career counselling on different skills that can assist me when I am released to make a living and take care of myself such as beading, art and mat sewing. I found it very assisting and it assist me not to find myself engaging in criminal activities again” (Volksrust Correctional Services, 13 June 2023). However, other female offenders were somewhat sceptical about the quality of coaching and mentoring: *“I am not happy about the available career choice because it's very limited to an extent that you only choose what is available. I want to do information technology but it is impossible because of security issues which prevent access to computers and the internet”* (Middelburg Correctional Services, 02 February 2023).

On the whole, these results show that despite the constraining effect of the correctional environment, coaching and mentoring played a key role in enabling offenders to learn and achieve their career goals.

6.3.4.5 Quality of training delivery strategies

This analysis flows directly from the survey questionnaire where learners were asked to rate the quality of their teachers' facilitation style and/or training methods. Educators' teaching styles impact significantly on learner participation, engagement, and achievement. The following findings are drawn from Table 5.22:

Rating of teacher's facilitation style or training method:

- Poor 4,1%
- Average 11,2%
- Good 47%
- Excellent 25,1%
- Not sure 3,5%.

From these results, it is evident that the majority of learners were generally satisfied with the training methods or facilitation styles used by their teachers. This was also evidenced in the qualitative findings. A learner in Witbank responded:

“Yes, the training methods are usually adjusted to suit our level of understanding or, at times, interpreted in our languages. We spend time in theory and also in practical work. We also get assistance from SETA-accredited trainers to help us with textiles. We also receive certificates” (Witbank Correctional Services, 2 February 2023). A Barberton learner, also with a positive experience of their teachers’ facilitation styles remarked: *“Our trainers are patient and committed to offer assistance whenever we encounter challenges and need their help”* (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023).

These results align with the CMO theory notion that since individuals and groups of beneficiaries are most likely to react differently to rehabilitation programmes, policy evaluators should have a clear understanding of programme characteristics, such as objectives, tasks, roles and responsibilities, and the targets and the desired outcomes should be clearly understood. The variations in these results are indicative of the fact that learners have uniquely different learning styles, such as pragmatists who learn by doing, theorists who learn by examining and analysing things, and observers who learn by seeing things (Kolb, 1984). This analysis validates the Transformative Learning theory that critical reflection leads to a paradigm shift in how people perceive the world around them, as well as a shift in consciousness and positive change in interpersonal relationships and openness towards change and a new focus on life, work and social life (Mezirow, 1997).

The power of transformative correctional pedagogy is epitomised by positive feelings, such as self-belief, self-awareness, and a good sense of achievement (Gray and Ward, 2019). In transformative learning, facilitators of learning can sustain learner engagement and participation through the adoption and use of inclusive instructional practices that accommodate the different learning styles that adult learners bring to the learning environment. Blending instructional activities opens learning opportunities to learners from different social backgrounds and is key to promoting diversity and multiculturalism

in the learning environment. Giving learners flexibility in selecting different learning resources and guiding them on how to use them triggers interest and prolonged engagement in learning activities

6.3.4.6 Quality assurance priorities

As reflected in Chapter 2, the transition to the QCTO has increased demand for compliance in all education and training institutions, including the DCS School Section. On 27 January 2023, as previously noted, the researcher was invited to attend the DCS Skills Development Review Meeting held at the Barberton Correctional Services. Among other things, this meeting reviewed progress in teaching, assessments, attendance, challenges faced by learners (for example, stressful conditions inside cells), training management, accreditation and changes in curriculum structure (for example, phasing out of some business courses as well as N1-N4 courses).

The QCTO approach requires a gradual shift from unit-standard-based training to qualifications-based training that allows learners to do either a full qualification or part qualification that can be integrated with the NQF. The new training strategy entails devolution of decision-making from SETAs to enterprise level where training providers will have greater autonomy to develop customised learning programmes for their learners based on the QCTO curriculum guidelines. From the training management review, the following quality assurance priorities required urgent intervention:

- Shortage of teachers
- Accreditation in courses such as agriculture, baking, and welding
- Scarcity of academic books
- Security issues
- Poor attendance
- Poor learning environment
- Learning time
- Registration with the QCTO.

These quality assurance priorities were also confirmed by school principals in Barberton, Bethal, Middleburg, Mbombela and Witbank. According to the Middleburg principal: *“Educators make efforts to attend workshops conducted by the Department of Higher Education at DCS Head Office. We also assist by allocating accredited courses conducted by external service providers. There is also a plan to apply for accreditation of skills training courses such as textile/clothing, manufacturing, welding, etc. through the relevant accreditation bodies”* (Middleburg Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

During interviews, some offenders, particularly those who had already completed N1-N3 courses, reported that they had not been notified about these changes and wanted to know what would happen with the credits that they had already accumulated in N1, N2, and N3. According to one aspirant engineering student:

“We don’t know what to do now because there are no alternative courses in place.” Another learner added: *“Reducing the courses is not fair because most of us are doing a self-study with FETs and UNISA”* (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023). Some learners in the AET phase were concerned about delays in DCS registration protocols as they impacted directly on their ability to access the National Student Financial Aid Services (NSFAS). One of the learners in the Barberton Juvenile Section said: *“When we come here [correctional centre], some of us have already completed Grade 12 and want to register for a tertiary qualification and not short courses. Registration [DCS protocols] often takes long and if you miss the NSFAS deadline, that means you have to pay tuition fees by yourself ... and that is not easy”* (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023).

Given the above, there is a significant shift towards the provision of accredited training services in correctional facilities. Prioritising accreditation signals a gradual shift from informal skills training to credit-bearing learning programmes that equip offenders with marketable qualifications. As a training provider, the DCS is required to use the new QCTO curriculum guidelines to develop customised qualifications and part-part qualifications to meet the unique learning needs of its clients. The QCTO curriculum

allows greater flexibility in both the design and adaptation of learning programmes to cater for the diverse skills needs of the workforce and offenders. In QCTO terms, a flexibly designed skills programme incorporates three crucial elements, namely, (1) theory, (2) practice, and (3) workplace learning (DCS Skills Directorate Performance Review Meeting, Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023).

To some extent, the results affirm the CMO theory assumption that contextual factors, such as leadership and policy decisions, can have either a positive or adverse impact on programme implementation and outcomes (Pawson and Tilley, 2004). While some contexts may be supportive of correctional education programmes, others may be resistant or distractive and may reflect issues that are beyond the control of programme officials (Stame, 2004).

6.3.4.7 Digitisation of library and training services

As part of its quality management mandate, the QCTO in Pretoria requires a transition from paper-based training administration systems to digital systems that allow instant access to education and training opportunities for learners and facilitators. Consequently, correctional libraries are incrementally upgrading their systems in line with security protocols to provide controlled access to online learning resources for their learners. These findings were validated by data excerpts from Barberton and Witbank as follows:

One Barberton learner remarked:

“We do have a computer laboratory but access to the internet is under strict monitoring by the dedicated facilitator who teaches us computer skills such as MS Word, typing and Excel” (Barberton Correctional Services Juvenile Section, 7 February 2023). The concern about limited ICT capacity and resources was confirmed by an official in Witbank: *“The computers are available for us to learn computer skills but internet access is not available. This is discouraging because you cannot use it to get information related to our studies except for typing”* (Witbank Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

The preceding qualitative analysis reveals the availability of computer gadgets in some correctional centres like Witbank and Barberton where librarians and facilitators imparted basic computer literacy skills to their learners. It is also significant to acknowledge the collaboration of the Standerton Correctional Centre with TVET in the provision of computer skills to offenders. As stated previously, the slow progress in the digitisation of library services is attributed to the inherently high risk posed by Internet services in correctional environments. Routine Web browsing has the potential to expose offenders to cybercrime, which may precipitate reoffending habits, especially in security management situations without proper monitoring systems. The slow progress in digitisation of correctional education is consistent with the global trends reflected in empirical literature in Chapter 2, that governments have adopted a rather cautious approach to computerising correctional education. Meanwhile, the limited computerisation efforts in pre-release facilities can be ascribed to funding constraints and limited institutional capacity. Survey results affirmed that the majority of learners were generally dissatisfied with computers, averaging 58% overall (Table 5.25).

The Norwegian experience reported in Chapter 2 provides valuable insights on how to improve online learning without compromising security protocols. For instance, through collaboration between correctional authorities and the Department of Education, a central server has been installed to enable controlled access to Web-based learning resources inside the correctional environment. A defining feature of this remote-controlled server is that it comes with a built-in alert system for security officials on internet access, traffic and content use. This ensures that offenders only use internet resources to meet their learning needs (Becker-Pestka, 2022:9). This model is particularly useful in maximum security correctional facilities such as Barberton and Witbank where learners raised concerns about limited access to online learning resources. According to an offender in Barberton: *“Because of security, they have taken our laptops that were bought by our families so that we can use them for study purposes. This was done without consulting us. This is very difficult for us because UNISA has also moved to the online learning hub, which is not accessible to us due to security reasons”* (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023).

6.3.4.8 Training management practices

Effective training management is one of the most important indicators of quality in correctional education. Interviews and site observations in Bethal, Mbombela, Barberton, Middleburg, and Witbank confirmed that correctional facilities had training management systems in place. Prime examples include the management of assessment records and reporting and data security management systems. However, the computerisation of these training processes lagged behind due to security protocols that are standardised across the 12 correctional facilities. Emphasising the need to migrate to digital training systems, a senior official during the DCS Skills Development Performance Review Meeting commented as follows:

“One of our priorities in terms of QCTO policy is to improve the security of our examination centres and learner assessment records by using online methods. QCTO is very strict on that, and it’s very important for our accreditation application” (Barberton Correctional Services, 27 January 2023). In practice, this translated to: (a) safe and secure examination centres; (b) registration of assessment centres with QCTO, finalising acquisition of the Education Management Information Systems (EMIS); (c) securing health and safety compliance certificates; and (d) improving learner attendance in all skills programmes.

Enhancing learner management systems demonstrates the DCS’ commitment to providing high-quality training to offenders in ABET, TVET, and HET programmes. The strong emphasis on accountability and reporting is in line with the CMO theory, which represents a pragmatic approach to exploring complex, multilevel policy interventions such as LIS and skills development to determine “what works, how, why, in which context, for whom, and to what extent” (De Wiger et al., 2020). In this context, the CMO theory calls for an evidence-based approach to analysing the effectiveness of policy interventions (Hobbs and Tully, 2020); hence a need to blend qualitative and quantitative analysis in this study.

An analysis of some of the sustainable practices that were identified by the study during the interviews and observation follows.

6.3.4.9 Sustainability initiatives in library and training services

Sustainability is a fundamental determinant of success in any policy intervention and correctional education services are no exception to this principle. The analysis established several promising innovations which, if leveraged well, may bolster the continuity of LIS in the 12 correctional centres.

6.3.4.9.1 Sustainability practices

Sustainable practices included referrals, catch-up programmes, resource-sharing, career exhibitions, business proposals, job interview preparation skills, and fundraising. These results were confirmed by a senior member of a school management team as follows:

“We provide offenders with ample time to attend classes and practical lessons. The classes commence at 8h30 until 12H30 which is four hours daily from Monday to Friday” (Volksrust Correctional Services, 13 June 2023).

The fundraising initiative is also worth noting here. According to one library manager in Witbank:

“We need to approach different organisations and ask them for donations... Whether it is books, newspapers, magazines, funding, workshop equipment, or career exhibitions, that will make a big difference to your school” (Witbank Correctional Services, 2 February 2023).

In Standerton, an interview with a senior facilitator revealed that offenders who needed extra training which was not offered internally were:

“Transferred to Bethal Correctional Services where they completed their vocational training” (Standerton Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). A DCS official in Carolina confirmed: *“Learners who wish to study are transferred to Witbank where they can further their studies”* (Carolina Correctional Services, 6 February 2023).

This approach is consistent with the Mandela Rules (2015) on providing suitable services to meet the unique development needs of each offender. Referrals were also confirmed in the Barberton Correctional Services where one offender had been transferred from Thohoyandou Correctional Facility and assisted by his church to find a bursary to complete his legal studies in Barberton through self-study at the UNISA. Furthermore, in one skills transfer initiative observed in Mbombela, officials provided onsite mentoring support and guidance to offenders involved in a school renovation project. Not only did this motivate them, but it also gave them confidence that they were competent in their bricklaying course. Finally, financial incentives or stipends also contributed positively to the development of “*a career mindset among offenders.*” Together, these practices hold promise for the personal transformation of offenders.

The positive policy outcomes on learner achievement and formalisation of training practices across the 12 centres challenge the long-standing view that “nothing works” in prisons advanced by Wilson (1975), Gendreau (1989), and Holin (1992). The evidence-based approach led by prominent scholars like Pawson and Tilley (2004) and Coldwell (2019) has shown that the CMO approach is more practical and relevant to the rehabilitation of offenders as it explores complex, multi-level policy interventions such as rehabilitation programmes to determine “what works, how, why, in which context, for whom, and to what extent” (De Wiger et al., 2020).

An analysis of some of the sustainability risks follows.

6.3.4.9.2 Sustainability risks

Despite the promising initiatives mentioned above, certain risks threatened the sustainability of skills development in the DCS training system. Some of the sustainability risks that were reported by officials during observation in the DCS Barberton Farm Facilities were human resource needs, infrastructure, vandalism and the lack of security in the farming facilities. The perceived sustainability risks identified in the interviews are characterised as follows:

“We have a shortage of security staff... So criminal elements take advantage of the situation... Stealing vegetables at night or even during the day when there is no one in the garden. For security reasons, offenders only work for a few hours and then return to their cells... It’s very difficult to deal with this problem [theft and vandalism] because we do not have enough manpower to look after the farming project” (Barberton Correctional Services, 21 June 2023).

6.4 CONCLUDING REFLECTION

In reflection, the analysis confirms that correctional libraries collaborated with internal and external stakeholders to mobilise critical learning resources for their learners, although such efforts were somewhat minimal in pre-release facilities due to budgetary constraints. The analysis also confirms the problem statement that correctional facilities still face formidable challenges in capacity and resources. Overall, the analysis reveals great achievements in the AET and TVET skills programmes, with many learners graduating in entrepreneurial and employability skills in wide-ranging trades and occupations including baking, catering, carpentry, electricity, and welding. This evidence affirms that correctional libraries contributed to the progressive realisation of the right to education in terms of section 29 of the Constitution (1996) and the LIS Transformation Charter (2014).

6.5 SUMMARY

Overall, the analysis confirms that correctional libraries and stakeholders contributed significantly to the learning and career needs of offenders in various ways, including facilitated learning, career guidance, mentoring, voluntary work, and recommendation letters. Stakeholders had different roles and responsibilities in correctional education and training programmes, including teaching, resource mobilisation, and administrative work. Evidence from the observation undertaken by the researcher confirmed that skills transfer occurs frequently in correctional facilities with fully running schools. Skills include, for example, agriculture, ICT, confectionary, construction, welding, hairdressing and clothing and textile, among others. Career choices and preferences varied across men and women, with many female offenders preferring more entrepreneurial courses such as garment making, fashion, and beauty salons.

The next (and final) chapter draws inferences from the main findings of the study, including the lessons learned and policy recommendations.

CHAPTER 7 : SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Following a sequential explanatory approach and multiple case study design, the purpose of this study was to assess the contribution of correctional libraries to the development of offenders in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. The inquiry covered all 12 correctional centres under the auspices of the Mpumalanga Provincial Government.

The main findings of this mixed-methods study were as follows: Quantitatively, the results confirmed that correctional libraries contributed to the functional literacy and skills development of offenders, although the scope and scale of the LIS provided varied across the 12 centres surveyed. Both formal and informal skills programmes were offered to offenders. Stakeholder responsibilities included training delivery by the SETAs, accreditation services by the QCTO, policy advice by the Department of Higher Education, tutorial support services by peer educators, and employment facilitation by community organisations, government agencies and prospective employers. Confirmed formal skills training programmes ranged from FET higher education, spanning the humanities, engineering, law, and commerce although business-related courses had been trimmed down due to the lack of human capital and financial resources. Informal skills programmes were linked to ABET and workplace learning in the DCS production facilities, such as cleaning and maintenance services, community and school projects, agriculture, renovations, and manufacturing of items, including clothing, shoes, and furniture.

Qualitatively, the results affirmed that skills programmes were monitored and evaluated in order to improve the quality of both library and training services across the 12 centres. Prime examples of Monitoring and Evaluation tools used included annual performance review reports; annual skills development review meetings where teachers from all DCS regions meet to review and discuss teaching learning, quality assurance and learner performance and achievement; as well as pass rate. These included quality assurance by SETAs such as the MerSETA, learner assessments and certification, as well as annual

performance reviews led by the DCS Skills Development Directorate. Performance review meetings were attended by senior management, school principals and teaching staff from all 12 correctional centres.

The purpose of this chapter is to draw inferences on these results based on the four themes linked to four research questions that informed the study, namely, To what extent do correctional libraries and stakeholders (for example, library managers, librarians, facilitators of learning, employers, and communities) meet the development needs of offenders in terms of functional literacy, skills development and career transition to the workplace? What are the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in facilitating functional literacy, skills development and career transition for offenders in correctional centres? What specific programmes are implemented by correctional libraries and stakeholders to promote functional literacy, skills development and career transition, and what strategies are used to deliver such interventions to offenders? What mechanisms, if any, are used to track and measure the quality of functional literacy, skills development and career transition programs offered to offenders in correctional centres?

Following the introduction above, this chapter is structured as follows: a summary and the conclusions of the study are provided next. The policy recommendations emerging from the findings and the contributions of the study are then presented. The chapter (and study) ends with future research considerations.

7.2 SUMMARY

Methodologically, the study deployed a multiple case study design and a sequential explanatory approach. Philosophically, the study was guided by the pragmatist paradigm which allowed the application of quantitative and qualitative research methods to derive deeper insights into the phenomenon. The population for this study comprised 9 864 offenders in 12 correctional centres (facilities) in Mpumalanga Province. Participant selection was achieved by combining purposive sampling for the qualitative phase of the study (240 participants comprising library managers, librarians, facilitators, employers, former offenders, and community members) and a stratified random sample for the

quantitative leg of the study involving 367 offenders from the 12 correctional centres surveyed by the study between January 2023 and January 2024. Data were collected through a combination of quantitative and qualitative research instruments, namely, a standard self-administered questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and observation. Concerning research ethics, institutional approval for the study was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the DCS respectively. Written consent was also obtained from all the participants prior to the execution of the study.

7.3 CONCLUSIONS

Consistent with the mixed-methods approach, the conclusions of the study are drawn against the research objectives and the four themes analysed in Chapter 6. The objectives of the study were as follows: to determine the extent to which correctional libraries can meet the learning and development needs of offenders in functional literacy, skills development, and career transition; to understand the role played by library staff, for example, managers and librarians in addressing the learning needs of offenders in correctional service institutions; to determine if there are any specific programmes implemented by correctional libraries and stakeholders to promote functional literacy, skills development and career transition of offenders, as well as the strategies used to deliver such interventions; and to establish whether appropriate accountability mechanisms have been implemented to ensure that correctional libraries provide adequate and high-quality services that meet offenders' learning and development needs. Based on the above, the conclusions of the study are as follows:

7.3.1 Role of correctional libraries and stakeholders in promoting functional literacy

The first objective of the study was to determine the extent to which correctional libraries and stakeholders (for example, library managers, librarians, facilitators, employers and communities) meet the development needs of offenders in terms of functional literacy, skills development, and career transition to the workplace. This objective is particularly important given the mandate of libraries in terms of section 29 (the right to education) and section 32 (the right of access to information) of the Constitution. Institutionally, all 12 of the DCS correctional facilities were generally aware of the need to provide functional literacy programmes to help offenders improve their reading skills and numeric skills. This was achieved through the institutionalisation of ABET, particularly in the larger correctional centres such as Barberton, Bethal, Mbombela, Middleburg, Standerton, and Witbank. With the exception of short-term offenders, for example, those sentenced to between three and five months of incarceration, most offenders were encouraged to participate in basic literacy programmes, subject to their learning preferences and parole conditions.

AET classes ranged from level one to level four, with level four being equivalent to Grade 9. They also have Grades 10 to 12 although there are variations in the correctional centres. Those at level four can take Grade 12 subjects on a part-time basis because in their centres there are no Grades 10 and 11 offered. Notably, correctional libraries played a major role in facilitating the development of functional literacy skills by enrolling offenders on the Mfunda Mzansi programme and forming partnerships with local media companies to obtain weekly newspapers and magazines for their learners. The role of education in capacitating and preparing offenders for the world of the world aligns with Human Capital Theory, which sees education as a strategic investment to develop not only individual skills but also the human resources needed to improve productivity and the country's global competitiveness (Becker, 1964). Extending skills development opportunities to offenders is also consistent with South Africa's National Development

Plan (2030:261), which envisions that education, training and innovation is central to eliminating poverty and reducing inequality and improving living standards.

Lessons drawn from the cross-country experiences in section 2.7 suggest that the DCS in Mpumalanga compares favourably with other agencies and countries in terms of correctional education. Its education programmes are available to both male and female offenders, contributing significantly to gender equity in line with the UN SDG 4 on education and SDG 5 on gender equality. What is more, the USA experience (subsection 2.7.2.4) yields crucial insights into the career transition pipeline for returning offenders.

Libraries also contributed to the skills development process by supporting the pre-release programme, and AET, TVET and HET interventions to facilitate the development of employability skills for both male and female offenders across the 12 correctional facilities. This pragmatic approach ensured that even the most vulnerable groups, for example, disabled persons, school leavers, unemployed youth and young women without schooling have an equal chance to learn and acquire entry-level job skills. Within Information Behaviour Theory, Wilson (1999) and Young and Yuan (2022) emphasise that meaningful information-seeking processes should be augmented with a strong feedback mechanism from those in charge of information resources, for example, librarians.

Admittedly, there were challenges across the 12 correctional facilities, such as limited financial resources, shortage of human resources, limited book supplies, security protocols, and low learner motivation levels. Despite these challenges and in light of the findings, it can be inferred that the DCS in Mpumalanga is taking progressive steps to meet offenders' constitutional right to education and further training. However, further improvements, particularly in curriculum design, are needed to ensure that ICT is reflected in most skills programmes without necessarily compromising security protocols.

The vocationally oriented Career Transition model adopted by correctional facilities places greater emphasis on the acquisition of practical job skills. This model is delivered

collaboratively by librarians, facilitators, SETAs, peer educators, and several public sector employers, for example, the departments of Arts and Culture, Agriculture, Education, and Trade and Industry. The common practice is to allow and encourage offenders to discuss their career needs with officials and their facilitators, although some offenders lack the motivation to learn. Internally, career counselling entails formal presentations by DCS officials and one-on-one discussions between facilitators and learners, as well as peer discussions. Notably, some correctional facilities (for example, Witbank) adopted innovative approaches to career development, such as open career exhibitions to showcase the products produced by trainees to donors, sponsors and potential employers. Besides raising awareness, this type of initiative contributed greatly to resource mobilisation in some of the centres surveyed. Lessons from Kenya (section 2.7) suggest that pre-release preparations targeting manufacturing skills have the potential to increase the employability and participation of offenders in mainstream economic activities. From this discussion, it may be concluded that substantial improvements are required to standardise and strengthen career development systems across correctional facilities in the study area. An important lesson from these results is that correctional libraries, as noted above, are fulfilling their mandate in terms of sections 29 and 32 of the Constitution (1996) and the LIS Transformation Charter (2014). However, the scope and scale of LIS provision are affected by the lack of funding across the 12 correctional centres. Contemporary Information Behaviour Theorists like Shirley (2003) and Hjørland (2015) stresses the need for information resource centres such as correctional libraries to diversify their information resources that is library collections to meet the rapidly changing needs of individuals. Library collections should include education, research, professional, vocational, cultural, personal development, spiritual and physical needs.

7.3.2 Stakeholder roles and responsibilities in skills development

The second objective of the study was to establish the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in facilitating functional literacy, skills development and career transition for offenders in correctional centres. In line with Ecosystem's Theory, a multi-stakeholder approach has been adopted to facilitate skills development across the surveyed correctional facilities. While SETAs provide funding and expert advice on sector

skills needs, the QCTO is responsible for the development and validation of curriculum packages for each occupation or trade. At the time of reporting, the DCS Skills Development Directorate had embarked on a transition from unit standard-based training to a qualifications-based training model led by the QCTO.

This transition is being impeded by several challenges, which affect teaching and learning processes and outcomes in correctional facilities. These challenges include funding constraints, uncertainty around learners whose learning programmes have been discontinued, credit transfers for qualifying learners, accreditation of remaining skills programmes, difficulties in registering new learning programmes on the QCTO website, and the adaption to the qualifications and part-qualifications environment. Despite these challenges, correctional facilities are authorised by the QCTO to use the designated standard curriculum to develop their own customised skills programmes.

Also at the time of reporting, the DCS Skills Development Directorate had prioritised bakery and agriculture for accreditation with the QCTO. Other stakeholders involved in skills development included the DCS production facilities, the National Skills Development Fund, NGOs, faith-based organisations, and a few corporate sector entities. The above resonates with section 2 of the LIS Transformation Charter which envisages an integrated ecosystem whereby members and practitioners in the LIS sector collaborate to foster the sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources necessary to improve service provision in correctional education. The Transformation Charter stresses the need for significant improvements in the allocation of budget resources to ensure that libraries respond to the information needs of stakeholders and vulnerable groups such as offenders. These findings are consistent with the spirit of the White Paper on Corrections (2005:14) which states that “active involvement of other role players such as community institutions and corporations will encourage further rehabilitation, employment opportunities, support services and prevention of recidivism.”

7.3.3 Skills development programmes

The third objective of the study was to identify the specific programmes currently provided by correctional libraries and stakeholders to promote functional literacy and skills development for offenders and determine strategies that are used to deliver these interventions. With its primary focus on AET, TVET, and HET multiskilling and upskilling outcomes, the DCS Skills Development Directorate has embraced both formal and informal learning programmes to capacitate offenders with employability skills and venture creation skills. In both instances, learning programmes are offered on demand and target employability skills rather than theoretical learning outcomes (see Table 5.16). This has enabled the DCS to tackle illiteracy and low skill levels among many offenders in the system with little or no formal schooling.

A flexible offender referral/transfer system ensures that offenders in smaller facilities have access to learning opportunities in medium and maximum-security facilities such as Barberton, Bethal, Mbombela, and Standerton. With regard to access and affordability, most ABET and TVET programmes are free to all offenders. The only exception is HET where offenders have to find additional sources of funding to support their studies, such as NSFAS and donations from NGOs. Interestingly, some offenders have used opportunities in the DCS transfer system to diversify their skills programmes, with many obtaining qualifications and certificates in all three levels of the NQF – ABET, FET, and HET. Overall, the improvements in education and training opportunities are consistent with the Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001), and the White Paper on Post-secondary Education and Training (2013) both of which insist on collaborative efforts to improve accessibility and the quality of education nationwide. Specific strategies used to deliver skills programmes in the 12 correctional centres included tutorials, on-the-job training, peer educators, in-service training, Funda Mzansi, remedial classes, classroom-based instruction, SETA-based training, and online learning.

Based on this evidence, it is concluded that while the AET Programme has certainly improved access to basic life skills and entry-level job skills for many offenders without

formal schooling, disparities remain in the allocation of financial and human resources, which retards the provision of library and training services, especially in pre-release correctional facilities. Secondly, although offenders have been exposed to workplace learning opportunities, stigmatisation, and lack of support at the community level prevent many parolees and former offenders from accessing available employment and business opportunities. This challenge is due to the fact that the current rehabilitation model focuses largely on social integration rather than the economic participation of released offenders. This focus exacerbates reoffending rates because many of the offenders cannot find jobs after release due to labelling and isolation. It is precisely for this reason that the study proposes a focus on the Destigmatisation theory to enhance the economic empowerment of offenders returning to the community. As highlighted in Hettler's Wellness Theory, social wellness is important and underlines the need for belonging, socialising, being part of a group and living in a healthy natural environment free from pollution and violence; while spiritual wellness underscores the need for morality, clean life and ethical conduct (Snyder and Horton, 2009).

7.3.4 Quality management mechanisms in skills programmes

The fourth research objective was to establish whether appropriate accountability mechanisms have been implemented to ensure that correctional libraries provide adequate and high-quality services that meet offenders' learning and skills development needs. The data affirmed that accountability mechanisms have been affected to improve the quality of library and training services. Accountability relationships in the DCS skills development system span three levels. At the strategic level, the skills development directorate drives the vision for skills development. At the correctional facility level, principals and facilitators work together to manage teaching and learning activities and submit progress reports to their respective area managers. A key challenge is how to synchronise library services so that all correctional facilities can offer the same quality of textbooks and support materials to their learners. Disparities in the supply and distribution of teaching and learning resources affected both training practice and learner achievement in most of the 12 correctional centres.

At the programme level, learners are regularly assessed to determine progress in meeting their learning goals. For instance, in the clothing and textile workshops observed in Mbombela and Witbank, learners were required to produce a portfolio of evidence to showcase their skills. At the Witbank Correctional Services, competent learners are certified after assessment and transferred to the DCS production facilities where they manufacture shoes and clothing for use in correctional centres and social responsibility programmes, that is, donations to old age homes. Similarly, building and renovation projects manned by parolees in the Mbombela Correctional Services are closely monitored through attendance registers and on-site quality inspections by DCS officials to improve outcomes in workplace learning activities.

In light of this evidence, it may be inferred that although monitoring and reporting has been institutionalised across correctional facilities, gaps remain in both the supply and management of learning resources in the skills development system; hence the need for the review and adaptation of certain policies to improve outcomes. This point is covered in more detail in the “Policy recommendations” section below.

Section 6.3.2.1 demonstrated how principles of the CMO theory can be adapted to improve the provision of library and training services in correctional settings. Consequently, a theory-driven LIS approach has been advanced to facilitate the holistic development of offenders in both the pre-release and post-release phases. Section 7.4 below tables policy recommendations to enable the progressive realisation of these theoretical principles.

From these inferences, it can be concluded that the study has achieved the stated research objectives (section 1.7) in addressing the underpinning research problem (section 1.5). The study has offered conclusive evidence to prove that correctional libraries do play a major role in meeting the learning and career needs of offenders in correctional facilities in Mpumalanga Province.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Returning briefly to the empirical literature in Chapter 2, it was highlighted that while prior studies have examined correctional education from various perspectives such as recidivism, health conditions, and psychosocial support, not much has been empirically documented about the role of correctional libraries in education, skills building, and career transition of offenders. Given this context, this section makes several policy recommendations to help improve the provision of library, skills training, and career management services in correctional facilities in Mpumalanga Province.

7.4.1 Legislative reforms

This section outlines proposed legislative reforms based on insights from the primary data and the empirical literature reviewed. The underlying intention is to assist the DCS in identifying opportunities for correcting some of the discrepancies identified by the study regarding the role of correctional libraries in functional literacy, skills development and career transition preparation in the 12 correctional facilities surveyed. The envisaged legal reforms are set out as follows:

7.4.1.1 Fundraising guidelines

Chapter 14, subsection 103 of the Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998, provides opportunities for the establishment and promotion of public-private partnerships. It is suggested that this section be amended to allow librarians and teaching staff to attract sponsors and resources from a wide spectrum of sources, including corporates, NGOs and global institutions to fulfil their mandate in terms of section 29 of the Constitution (1996) on the right to education. To do this, correctional library staff should be given proper training on how to develop and implement fundraising proposals, including standardised performance reporting templates. This will help ensure consistency and uniformity in the provision of library services across the correctional centres.

7.4.1.2 Formalise career exhibition initiatives

Sections 61 and 62 of the Correctional Services Act lack clarity on how employers may be engaged to improve labour market outcomes for offenders. A promising innovation in

Witbank is the role of library and teaching staff in attracting and inviting public and private sector employers to host career exhibitions with offenders in the AET, TVET, and HET learning programmes. Amendments to sections 61 and 62 would assist in bolstering partnerships between employers and correctional schools, including resource mobilisation opportunities.

7.4.2 Institutional reforms

Drawing on international studies and primary data from the study (survey, interviews, focus groups, and observation), the following institutional reforms are proposed to help improve performance, resource mobilisation, and skills development within the DCS environment.

7.4.2.1 Employment support services unit

Importantly, the USA case study in subsection 2.7.2.5, highlights the need to institutionalise career transition programming where a designated employment unit prepares offenders for the transition from correctional centres to the world of work (Duwe, 2018). Three months before their official release from correctional centres, offenders meet with job training specialists to discuss skills assessments, curriculum vitae, job search skills, and job interview skills. The job development specialist contacts existing and potential employers to identify hiring opportunities for offenders a week before their release. The job search is based on offenders' competency profiles and career needs. This ensures correct placement in relevant occupations after release. Sections 44, 61 and 62 of the Correctional Services Act No.111 of 1998 in South Africa, although recognising the need to assist offenders with employment, lacks details on how the employment of offenders in the post-release period can be improved. A dedicated employment support services unit (ESSU) within the DCS should be established to be able to render the following services to improve labour market outcomes for offenders:

- **Organise roadshows to sensitise public and private entities on offenders' job needs**
- **Carry out quarterly labour market analysis reports to improve decision-making**
- **Collaboration with existing and prospective employers**
- **Link outgoing offenders with local farmers in need of commercial farming skills**
- **Coordinate workplace visits to improve skills transfer across centres**
- **Rotate career exhibitions between centres to encourage participation**
- **Where possible, secure learnerships and internships for offenders**
- **Provide prospective employers with relevant and current skills data**
- **Benchmark with Germany, Norway, Kenya and the USA to learn how career transition preparation is linked to the employment programme outside the correctional system**
- **Require the ESSU to monitor and report performance and labour market outcomes**
- **Provide guidance and assistance on venture creation, including company registration**
- **Design and implement a digital tracking system to facilitate the placement of trained offenders.**

This can be achieved through close collaboration between the DCS and the Department of Employment and Labour. Such collaboration can also be used to mobilise the financial resources necessary to implement employment support services and initiatives.

7.4.2.2 Initiate incremental adjustments to school capacity

While security concerns remain a major priority in correctional facilities, incremental structural adjustments and adaptations may be necessary to ensure that learning takes place in a conducive and stimulating environment that fosters meaningful participation and engagement between learners and their teachers and facilitators. While some schools have designated areas for skills training services, others have limited space for

learning activities. Consequently, some learners had to study in communal cells that were prone to distraction. This can be mitigated through incremental upgrading of learning facilities over time. Incremental structural adjustments are appropriate as many of the pre-release correctional facilities face considerably higher capacity constraints than maximum security establishments.

7.4.2.3 Scale up library coordination efforts

Drawing on survey inputs and insights from interviews and the empirical literature reviewed, the following measures may be instituted to enhance the quality of library services in correctional centres: (a) an integrated library development plan (ILDLP), (b) interlibrary task teams, (c) quarterly progress review meetings, (d) performance review mechanisms, (e) integrated library information systems, (f) internal benchmarking systems, and (g) standard library management templates. Encouragingly, libraries in the larger correctional centres had access to ICTs which could be leveraged to synchronise library services.

7.4.3 Programme-level interventions

Drawing on the study findings and the institutional literature reviewed, the following initiatives are proposed to help improve curriculum design, training practice, workplace learning, learner support services, resource allocation, and outcomes in correctional facilities:

7.4.3.1 Prioritise staffing needs in the school sections

Findings from the interviews revealed that many correctional facilities still rely on peer educators to mitigate the shortage of qualified teachers. Opportunities exist to improve teacher qualifications by prioritising the employment of young DCS officials who are keen to teach in ABET and TVET programmes in correctional facilities. This proposal is consistent with section 37 of the Correctional Services Act which calls for the provision of “multi-skilled staff” to enhance service delivery in correctional facilities. Hiring and development of librarians and facilitators should be prioritised, particularly in those correctional facilities that currently provide ABET, TVET, and HET qualifications and part-

qualifications. Talent development is consistent with QCTO policies on accreditation and quality assurance as well as the Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) (2030:3). The latter “recognises the crucial role of teachers to promote ESD and invest in the capacity of development of teachers and other education personnel at all levels and to ensure a whole-of-sector approach to the necessary transformation of education.”

7.4.3.2 Empower peer educators to improve service quality

Evidence from the 12 correctional facilities validated the central role of peer educators in the development of offenders. While some were qualified, others needed professional coaching and mentoring to hone their teaching skills. This requires the institutionalisation of professional coaching and mentoring practices across the centres to improve the quality of peer education. Ideally, continuing professional development of peer educators should be prioritised in centres such as Ermelo where the bulk of teaching is done by peer educators, particularly in the ABET programme. Recommended capacity-building initiatives include lesson preparation, warm-up training, problem-solving, and guidance on the design and administration of assessments. In Ecosystems theory, peers play a pivotal role in influencing development of individuals in society (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

7.4.3.3 Standardise career transition preparations

Across the board, offenders had different experiences with career support services. This can be mitigated by standardising career management practices to maintain the same quality standards in all correctional libraries. Preferably, the orientation programme should focus on (a) raising awareness of available learning opportunities, (b) providing career guidance to learners in all streams, (c) sensitising learners on basic study skills and techniques, (d) and inviting universities, TVET colleges and SETAs to motivate learners and inculcate and embed a culture of life-long learning. To improve learner achievement outcomes and career readiness, offenders should be motivated to see the value of education in their lives and the importance of attendance and engagement. One of the most salient revelations in the study was learner disengagement. Owing to personal and security protocols, some offenders were discouraged from participating in skills-

building programmes. The following strategies may be used to enhance learners' extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in terms of education in correctional facilities: (a) provide all learners with relevant learning materials, (b) assist learners on how to use library resources, and (c) guide learners on how to conduct online research to meet their learning needs.

7.4.3.4 Establish an online resource-sharing hub for librarians

Given the disparities in resource allocation between correctional facilities, it may be appropriate to leverage partnership opportunities in the Correctional Services Act to facilitate resource sharing and capacity improvement in correctional facilities. The outcome of these collaborative efforts should be a viable cross-sector resource mobilisation strategy to increase the supply of teaching and learning resources in correctional education. This will assist correctional facilities in building and maintaining the vital social capital networks and corporate relationships required to supplement budget resources. Ideally, this resource centre should have both manual and online capabilities to enable easy and quick access to much-needed teaching and learning resources. It should enable librarians to discuss and share library information and resources instantly. The resource hub should link librarians with local schools, public libraries and potential donors, for example, NGOs, non-profit organisations (NPOs) and corporates. (Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecosystems Theory stresses the need for convergence and collaboration between the different ecosystems in facilitating individual learning and development in society; and partnerships are key to achieving this goal. These include schools, family, peers, teachers, parents, learners, government and local community, and civic organisations.

7.4.3.5 Escalate benchmarking efforts to enhance LIS outcomes

Best practices from the Barberton Juvenile and Witbank Correctional Services provide ample opportunities for LIS staff within the DCS system to learn from one another. The high-level expertise in these two centres can be used as a blueprint to improve the quality of library services in ABET, TVET, and HET programmes across the board. This requires a great deal of cooperation between library teams in all 12 security facilities. To ensure

that benchmarking benefits librarians and learners, well-resourced libraries should be encouraged to share resources with their under-resourced counterparts in other correctional facilities. While most of the surveyed correctional libraries had business-related information, none had specific information that tells offenders *“How to start and run your own business.”* The DCS can mobilise these resources through partnerships with key agencies that provide SMME support services nationally, such as the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), the South African Revenue Services (SARS), the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC), and the Department of Small Businesses, among others.

7.4.3.6 Scale up practicums in the AET programme

While some correctional facilities have included a practical component in their AET initiatives, others only offered theory-based learning programmes due to the lack of teachers, resources, and practising equipment. Learners in the foundation phase (Barberton Juvenile Correctional Facility) suggested that practical computer skills should be included in the AET programme. To close the gap between theory and practice, correctional centres such as Mbombela bought instruction manuals for each subject so that their learners could master the basic steps followed to make a product, for example, sewing, baking, and hairdressing. In the Witbank Correctional Services, learners without formal education were exposed to practical skills through simulations (for example, where a learner uses an A4 paper sheet to practise sewing skills during practical sessions). Once the learner has mastered the pattern, she or he is then given clothing to sew. After successful completion of the practicum, graduates are transferred to the DCS factory where they manufacture shoes and clothing supplies for other correctional centres.

7.4.3.7 Standardise computer literacy initiatives

A few pockets of excellence were observed in some correctional facilities, such as Barberton, Bethal and Witbank, where learners were exposed to basic computer literacy skills supervised by correctional officials. To address security concerns, computers were customised to provide only Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint programmes to build functional literacy skills. Internet use was strictly limited to research, after which

connectivity was deactivated for security reasons. The aim was to help offenders acquire basic computer skills and online research skills. Officials monitored the computer lab to ensure that offenders only used the computers to support their learning. However, other correctional facilities only had a few computers with dated software in their libraries. While recognising the high-security risks inherent in all ICT resources, opportunities exist to collaborate with manufacturers to procure tailored computers with built-in security features aligned with the DCS risk management policies. Banks and many retailers have done this successfully.

7.4.3.8 Improve risk control in agricultural skills programmes

Agriculture holds promise for many offenders who enter the corrections system without practical job skills. In the Barberton Correctional Services, officials raised concerns about vandalism and pilfering by outside elements, particularly in the vegetable farming initiative. Security infrastructure, such as fences and poles, had been stripped, making the facility more vulnerable to external criminal elements. Along with ageing infrastructure, this increases sustainability risks of the farm, which in turn may reverse gains in the agricultural skills programmes. If not curbed, these risks may spread to the dairy farm and beef production facilities nearby. To address these risks, the DCS could partner with the community policing forum to sensitise community members to the need to bolster risk management efforts around food security projects. Strengthening security measures around the farm is critical in ensuring the sustainability of the agricultural skills programmes.

7.4.3.9 Align assessments with industry standards

In Bethal, it was suggested that assessments in courses such as building and construction should be informed by industry standards because, as one TVET learner put it: *“When you go out, you are expected to demonstrate understanding of building and construction standards in your work, otherwise they won’t take [hire] you”* (Bethal Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). To address this issue, facilitators need to work closely with relevant SETAs and the QCTO to obtain advice and guidance on how to align

assessments with industry standards. The QCTO qualifications framework is of great importance in this regard.

7.4.3.10 Design a centralised server to improve online learning

Best practices from Norway (subsection 2.7.2.3) suggest that it is possible to have a centrally monitored server where DCS officials can monitor both access and utilisation of online content and resources by offenders. Equally, the partnership between the UK Correctional Services (subsection 2.7.2.4) and the Open Learning University provides another excellent example of improving online learning opportunities for offenders. Here, the Open Learning University has assisted Correctional Services officials in designing the In-Cell Learning Facility where offenders have controlled access to online content that relates specifically to the courses that they are doing. This initiative has led to the formalisation of a virtual learning campus in major correctional facilities in Wales and London. Given the widespread financial constraints reported by officials across the board, it would be prudent to introduce these improvements incrementally through targeted pilot projects.

7.4.4 Labour market interventions

Evidence from the survey, interviews, observation, focus groups, and the empirical literature has shown that many released offenders face severe challenges in accessing employment opportunities; this is attributed to stigmatisation, discrimination, and the lack of support from the Department of Employment and Labour. This has resulted in negative labour market outcomes, even for suitably qualified offenders. Given this, the study recommends the following labour market interventions to improve employability prospects for offenders particularly those in developing countries.

7.4.4.1 Annualise career readiness initiatives

Preparing offenders for the world of work may not materialise unless they are exposed to labour market realities at least once a year. This can be achieved by institutionalising annual career exhibition events by public agencies, businesses, local farmers, and NGOs. To mitigate security risks, these initiatives can be shared via live broadcasts in one central

correctional facility. Video recordings of the live broadcast can be dispensed to all correctional facilities to promote career awareness among offenders. Done well, this can be a crucial career counselling tool. In addition to annualised career road shows, a dedicated website may be activated or streamed to bring labour market news to offenders. Ideally, this website should include information on employment and SMME opportunities, including success stories told by role model offenders. This requires innovative approaches to balance security needs with offenders' career transition needs.

7.4.4.2 Consider employment plans for released offenders

Owing to labelling and scepticism about offenders generally, it may be prudent for the DCS to explore ways in which offenders may be accommodated as part of “vulnerable groups” in employment equity plans in the workplace. As a tracking instrument, this would assist the DCS in monitoring the participation of offenders in the country's labour market. One of the key findings of this study is that while offenders get good education and training services during incarceration, labour market outcomes remain poor and inequitable. The German experience (subsection 2.7.2.2) holds greater promise for the absorption of released offenders into mainstream economic activities. This programme makes it compulsory for all released offenders to find gainful employment after release. Equally, the deployment of job training specialists by the USA Correctional Services (subsection 2.7.2.5) paves the way for the hiring and placement of offenders after incarceration.

The logic behind these interventions is that offenders are likely to experience positive social reintegration when they have a viable source of livelihood in their communities. In other words, social integration is impossible without sustainable sources of income for returning offenders. As part of the post-release preparations, mandatory job induction training should ideally be provided after release to increase job readiness. One of the salient concerns of former offenders was that training in correctional facilities *“only give you the knowledge and skills you need to secure self-employment or business opportunities after incarceration. But when you get to work, you find that you still have a lot of catching up to do”* (Carolina Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). A

standardised induction package may be institutionalised to familiarise offenders with the world of work.

7.4.4.3 Extend business incubation services to offenders

To increase self-employment prospects for offenders, the DCS in partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry and local businesses may collaborate to improve access to business occupation programmes for those offenders who wish to start their own businesses after release. Incubation provides an ideal opportunity for motivated offenders who are keen to participate in venture creation. An emerging best practice in Volksrust Correctional Services is the commitment to provide entrepreneurial education in the exit programme, including business plans and customer service skills. Apart from empowering offenders with basic marketing skills, this initiative can be extended to attract potential employers to facilitate career transition.

7.5 RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT REVISITED

As articulated in Chapter 1, the critical problem for this study was the lack of a robust empirical analysis of the role of correctional libraries in implementing section 29 of the Constitution (1996) and the LIS Transformation Charter (2014) regarding functional literacy, skills development, and career transition for offenders. Significantly, both the analysis and the conclusions of the study confirm that although there were systemic challenges in capacity and resources, all the correctional libraries supported the development of offenders; however, educational outcomes varied across the board. An important “takeaway” from this study is that the DCS has made significant strides in promoting the progressive realisation of offenders’ right to education as per section 29 of the Constitution (1996), including efforts to digitise correctional education practices amid security concerns.

7.6 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS REVISITED

The first assumption underpinning the study was that all correctional centres provide the same quantity and quality of library and training services. However, upon inquiry, it was established that only maximum security establishments provide formal education and

training services, while libraries were a standard procedure across the 12 correctional services surveyed. The second assumption was that all 12 correctional facilities have both male and female offenders, which was not the case. For instance, only Bethal, Mbombela, and Middleburg correctional centres accommodated female offenders. The third assumption was that education and training services are available to all offenders. In reality, access to these opportunities depends on: (a) sentencing plan, (b) parole conditions, (c) nature and seriousness of the offence committed, and (d) length of sentence, for example, offenders with short-term sentences ranging from three to six months were not eligible for education and training services. The fourth assumption was that all libraries have adequate human and material resources. However, it was observed that not all libraries had sufficient resources, qualified librarians, and ICTs.

7.7 CONTRIBUTION TO SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

As indicated in section 2.8 there have been very limited empirical efforts to assess the role played by correctional service libraries in addressing the development needs of offenders, particularly in terms of skills training and career support services. Most of the studies reviewed focused primarily on overcrowding, health conditions, and recidivism. Based on insights from the quantitative and qualitative results, the study contributes scientific knowledge to (a) empirical literature on the role of correctional libraries, and (b) rehabilitation theory and policy practice on skills development within the context of correctional services.

7.7.1 Implications for theory

By locating the role of correctional libraries within the interdisciplinary landscape of librarianship, education and criminology, the study has improved understanding of the value that a well-resource library can add to the multiskilling and employment of offenders in South Africa. In retrospect, none of the seven criminology theories reviewed in Chapter 3 provided clear principles on how best to mobilise learning resources to enhance skills training outcomes in correctional settings. Instead, the theories reviewed tended to only emphasise a human rights approach to the rehabilitation of offenders. In addressing these theoretical limitations, the study proposes adaptations to the CMO model and the

Desistance theory to elevate the theorisation of correctional pedagogy in the field. Currently, there is no clear conceptualisation of career management services in correctional settings except routine career discussions without predetermined outcomes. Drawing on datasets from the survey, interviews, focus groups, observation, and empirical literature, this study makes contributions specifically to the CMO model and the Desistance theory, as set out in Figure 7.1 and Figure 7.2 below.

7.7.1.1 Adaptations to the Context-Mechanism-Outcome theory

As articulated in Chapter 3, the CMO approach underlines the importance of contextualising rehabilitation policy interventions to enhance outcomes. Crucially, the preceding analysis has confirmed the prevalence of contextual factors impacting both provision and implementation of library and training programmes in the study. The CMO theory asserts that contextual factors impacting policy interventions vary from one area to another, which was validated by datasets derived from the survey, interviews, and observation. Accordingly, Figure 7.1 theorises four critical contexts that warrant adaptations to the CMO model to improve the quality of correctional education, especially in developing countries such as South Africa.

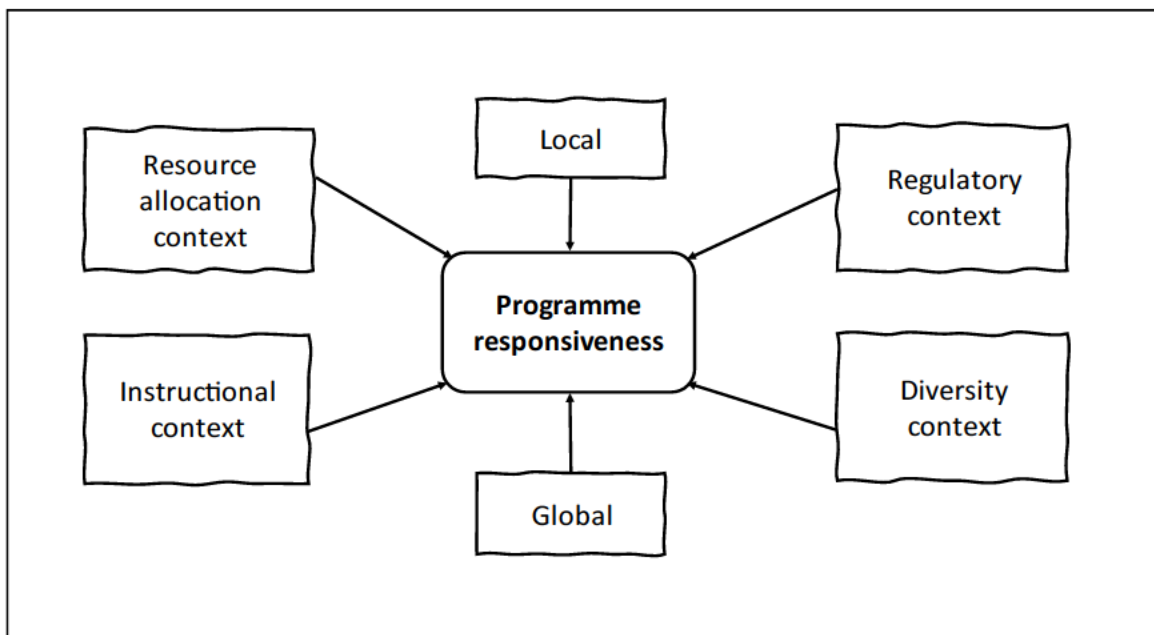


Figure 7.1: Proposed adaptations to the Context-Mechanism-Outcome model

Source: Researcher's creation (2024)

Figure 7.1 conceptualises some of the key constructs necessary to enhance responsiveness and/or the effectiveness of correctional education programmes to client needs. Conceptually, responsiveness denotes the ability of a policy intervention or programme to effectively address the unique development needs of intended beneficiary groups. In responsive educational settings, trainees are continually inspired to collectively locate and select appropriate learning resources and materials necessary for the achievement of their learning goals (Mbatha and Mtshali, 2013). A responsive curriculum creates opportunities for innovation, critical thinking, and close interactions between learners, stakeholders and the community environment where the acquired knowledge and skills will be practically tested. This was confirmed by the facilitator in the agriculture skills programme in Barberton:

“We train the peers first and then deploy them so that they can teach fellow inmates practical job skills... We supervise daily tasks to ensure their work meets our standards” (Barberton Correctional Services Farm, 23 June 2023). But programme responsiveness (Figure 7.1) needs to be cascaded further down to communities so that returning offenders can find social incubators to help them adjust to normal life.

Fundamentally, the *Resource allocation context* has both a supportive and constraining effect on correctional education. Data revealed significant gaps in the resourcing of library and training services as pointed out by a facilitator:

“We don't have a budget allocation for education at the moment... We refer learners to other centres for training” (Carolina Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). A weak resource allocation context impedes the work of practitioners such as librarians, facilitators and peer educators. The resource context impacts both the acquisition of human resources and training delivery capacity which, in turn, dilutes outcomes in correctional education. As Backman, Estrada, and Nilsson (2018) point out, acute resource deficiencies for returning inmates may precipitate the formation of negative values, which may ultimately increase the propensity towards reoffending.

Aligned to resources is the *Regulatory context* reflected in security protocols and procedures. Although necessary and fundamental to public safety, excessive regulation impacts adversely on teaching and learning processes in all 12 of the correctional facilities surveyed. Survey data and insights from interviews revealed significant constraints in training time, study time and experiential learning time. In this regard, an offender remarked:

“Sometimes it’s difficult to study... time is limited because of the rules” (Standerton Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). It was conceded that the current security regime across the board does not allow enough time for self-study. This was attributed to multiple programming activities that offenders must attend daily as part of their rehabilitation schedule.

Beyond regulatory constraints is the *Instructional context* encompassing teaching and learning systems, and processes. A fundamental principle of the CMO model is the effective implementation of rehabilitation programmes to enhance service quality and client satisfaction. Significantly, many of the learners were generally satisfied with the quality of training as articulated by one such learner:

“It’s very helpful. I am going to start my business in agriculture soon after this” (Piet Retief Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). The analysis has established the implementation of ABET, TVET, and HET programming, particularly in maximum security establishments. The analysis has also confirmed the prevalence of a referral system whereby smaller pre-release facilities periodically refer learners to maximum security institutions to improve access to education and training services. While these achievements are commendable, it is worth noting that the instructional context still requires significant improvements, particularly in continuing professional development to empower librarians, facilitators, and peer educators intellectually.

The CMO model also stresses the need for educational interventions to be sensitive to social and cultural contexts. Building on this logic, the present study adds the rather more fluid and inclusive concept of diversity to extend the analysis from simple “cultural factors” to improve understanding of the complex social factors impacting the responsiveness of

correctional education programmes. The *Diversity context* implies differences in correctional learners as a result of race, gender, age, tastes and preferences, career expectations, lifestyle, social status, personal value systems, work habits, nationality, and differing cultural orientations. Data from the 12 correctional centres surveyed confirmed the existence of a multicultural learning environment with learners from diverse social backgrounds: According to a facilitator:

“Our schools are open to all learners... Africans, Coloureds, Chinese, Indians, Whites, women, the disabled, youth, and foreign nationals” (Bethal Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). Diversity impacts not just curriculum design but also teaching and learning processes and outcomes in correctional education. Data affirmed differences among men and women in terms of career preferences and course selection, suggesting a need for diversification of learning interventions to accommodate differences in learner tastes and preferences. In this sense, the CMO model makes a valid observation that effective programming requires a firm grasp of deep-rooted social and institutional contexts that ultimately shape implementation processes and outcomes on the ground. The theorisation of the diversity context will deepen understanding of how best to design responsive curriculum interventions that align with the career aspirations of the men and women kept in correctional facilities.

Paying attention to programme responsiveness is centrally important. As Petersilia (2000) notes, ordinarily, policymakers tend to overlook the post-release transformation needs of offenders, with virtually no systematic and comprehensive analysis and tracking of former offenders in the labour market after release. As one offender in Piet Retief put it:

“Yes, they help us when we are still here. But when we leave, they say we will have to find job opportunities by ourselves” (Piet Retief Correctional Services, 6 February 2023). This, Petersilia (2000) warns, could backfire and gains in crime reduction efforts may erode if thousands of returning offenders are not socially incubated to find their way back to society.

7.7.1.2 Adaptations to the Desistance Theory

The Desistance theory hypothesises that correctional education should be based on a clear understanding of crime cessation as an evolutionary process rather than a once-off occurrence. Desistance theorists further assert that correctional education should be underpinned by strong social bonds to foster the development of pro-social behaviours among offenders. Traditionally, the conceptualisation of crime causation and reoffending has always been premised on relatively predictable variables such as age, marriage, and employment. Offenders who commit crimes at an early age are more likely to engage in criminality when they become adults than those who never engage in such activities at an early age. Contrastingly, offenders who have spousal engagements are more likely to desist from criminality than unmarried offenders. Equally, offenders with access to employment opportunities are unlikely to return to criminality. What is missing in desistance analysis is pragmatic interventions to tackle the devastating impact of labelling and stigma on career transition and employability of offenders post-incarceration. Additionally, the theorisation of employment as a deterrent to recidivism is limited to job security rather than the broader labour market factors that impede marketability and participation of offenders in economic opportunities. As McNeil and Weaver (2010:7) argue, one of the key limitations of desistance research is that “it is not readily translated into a straightforward model for practice, hence the reliance on metaphor analogies.” Insights from the survey and interviews revealed wide-ranging labour market constraints that affect not just employment but also career advancement of released offenders. It is in this context that the study proposes adaptations to the Desistance theory (Figure 7.2) to enhance the understanding of destigmatisation as a potential catalyst for entry and participation of offenders in labour market opportunities.

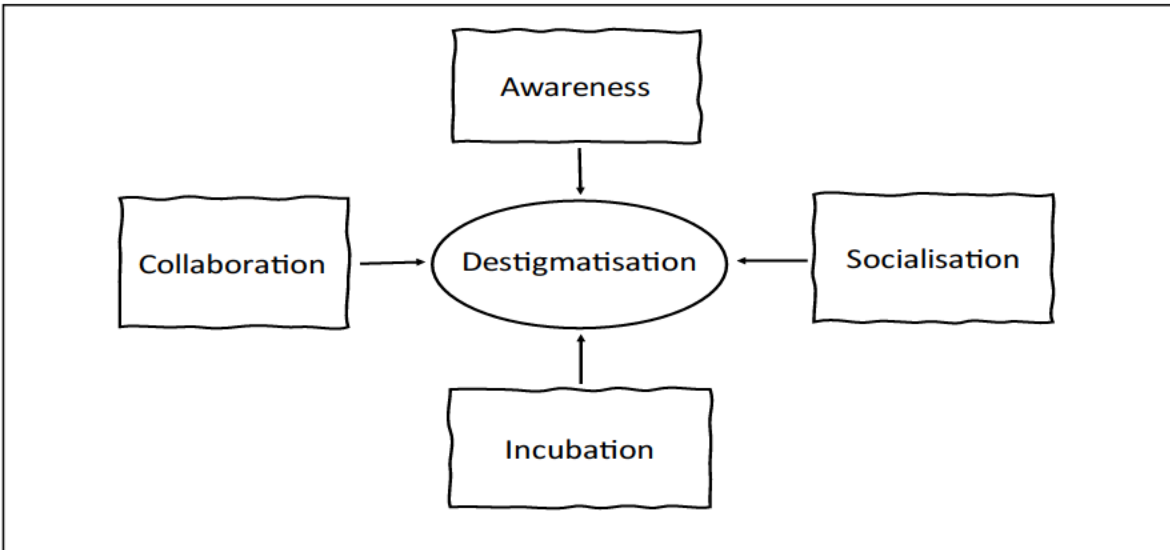


Figure 7.2: Proposed adaptations to the Desistance theory
 Source: Researcher's creation (2024)

Figure 7.2 theorises four constructs that essentially define the proposed adaptations to the Desistance theory, namely, *awareness* building, *socialisation*, *collaboration*, and *incubation*. Since desistance analysis embraces pro-social behaviours and attitudes, escalating destigmatisation efforts would, therefore, significantly reduce offenders' inclination towards recidivism. Destigmatisation implies the systematic eradication and/or amelioration of socially embedded stereotypes about offenders' criminal history over time. *"Take out the stigma in our certificates"* is one of the resonating messages shared by offenders during the interviews conducted. Labelling is a generic negative depiction of a person based on certain aspects of their behaviour. The process of labelling necessarily involves a power dynamic that pronounces the inequality between those who have the position to assign labels and those who are labelled (Miller, Schreck and Tewksbury 2008:179). Central to stigma reduction efforts is awareness building through ongoing socialisation efforts to gradually change deep-rooted negative perceptions about offenders in society. Observation data validated this claim. According to a former offender:

"The problem is councillors and the community... they do not give us projects, they still discriminate against us" (Bushbuckridge Correctional Services, 8 March 2023). Implied in this statement is the notion that socialisation processes should embrace reconciliation

and forgiveness beyond offender-victim relationships. Restorative justice is about giving individuals a voice, allowing and encouraging them to express their needs and reducing recidivism by encouraging change in individual offenders and facilitating their integration into the community (Batley in Peacock, 2013).

Targeted socialisation efforts are, therefore, required to build trusting and respectful relationships based on fundamental values such as humility, remorsefulness, responsibility, and concern for others. In the absence of effective socialisation interventions to raise consciousness in communities, returning offenders are subjected to humiliating stigmatisation and labelling which ultimately brings back feelings of hopelessness and despair that drive most offenders back to criminality. Mobilising and deepening destigmatisation consciousness is critical to reviving and strengthening social bonds weakened by long absences from the community as a result of incarceration. Quality social relationships are essential in embedding positive social values to help offenders regain their dignity as members of society (Birech, 2020:413).

Critically, Figure 7.2 also draws attention to the importance of developing and deploying social incubators that are willing and capable of helping offenders regain social functionality as members of society. Not only is incubation critical for the inculcation of social values in offenders and their communities but also in igniting and nurturing the entrepreneurial aspirations that many returning offenders dreamt of during incarceration. Tailoring incubation interventions according to unique individual development needs has the potential to turn offenders into agents of their own social transformation (Youcefi and Lundgren, 2017).

Equally, community-based collaboration arrangements (Figure 7.2) are central to unlocking the social capital networks necessary to support and facilitate the social integration of offenders post-incarceration. Systematically conscientising and educating local communities on the wealth of human capital that released offenders bring back to society after release is fundamental to redressing inequality and the marginalisation of offenders in the economy. Collaborative relationships create vital social capital networks

and support structures that enhance and strengthen connectedness between returning offenders and their communities. The notion of social connectedness fosters the development of interpersonal closeness to the outside world, thus providing returning offenders with a vital lifeline. Socially connected returning offenders are unlikely to resort to criminality as social connectedness nurtures positive attitudes, perceptions and behaviours (Folk, Mashekby, Stuewiga, Tangneya, Moorec and Blaskod, 2019). As contemplated in the White Paper on Corrections (2005:37), moral regeneration and advancement of constitutional values require creating a nurturing environment that fosters self-discipline, social independence and sustainable family support systems to aid social bonding between offenders and their communities; thus contributing to a transformed community.

Beyond socialisation and collaboration lies incubation (Figure 7.2) as an alternative solution for offenders who are passionate about venture creation. Datasets from women participants in Bethal, Mbombela, and Middleburg revealed a strong disposition toward entrepreneurship as a viable source of livelihood and wealth creation beyond incarceration. Thus, according to one female offender: *“Because of lack of job opportunities in our country, I want to be my own boss and create jobs for future generations”* (Mbombela Correctional Services, 30 January 2023). Implicit in this statement is the desire to contribute to sustainable development through job creation – a clear indication that some offenders understood the crucial role of entrepreneurship in alleviating hunger, poverty, and unemployment which is consistent with the UN (2015) SDG 1: “No Poverty” and SDG 2: “Zero Hunger”. Both social and business incubation interventions are central to building and strengthening offenders’ entrepreneurial capabilities and competencies beyond incarceration. Accessibility of incubation opportunities is possible as transformation charters are being implemented in all economic sectors as part of broad-based economic empowerment legislation in South Africa.

Baskaran (2019) noted that the existing social incubation model led by NGOs is flawed as it fails to adapt to the economic needs of offenders in geographical spaces

characterised by high levels of poverty, unemployment, and economic deprivation. Since local government runs business incubation programmes as part of their local economic development plans, equitable expansion of these programmes is necessary to increase economic opportunities for returning offenders. Both social and business incubation create economic security for returning offenders. This will assist in freeing offenders from poverty trappings, especially in disadvantaged communities (Baskaran, 2019). While there is much enthusiasm about the “rehabilitation revolution”, the transformation of offenders is likely to fail if there are no equitable economic participation opportunities for returning inmates. This is where entrepreneurship comes in (Centre for Entrepreneur, 2016:5). Transforming and turning returning offenders into entrepreneurs requires both internal and external support mechanisms such as social and business incubation programmes to prevent reoffending and reincarceration.

Unlike current conceptualisations of stigma which focus on consequences such as recidivism (Ahmed and Ahmed, 2015), hatred, revenge, and social exclusion (Hutton, 2015), the present study stresses a positive approach by highlighting destigmatisation as a viable option to addressing endemic social exclusion and disempowerment of offenders in society. In principle, this requires a significant paradigm shift from the causes and consequences of stigma to investing in destigmatisation interventions at the societal level. A broad-based approach encompassing communally shared understanding of offenders’ development needs is key to unlocking their career potential after incarceration. In summary, increased mobilisation of social capital may bolster destigmatisation efforts not just at the community level but also in the labour market where offenders are struggling to find employment opportunities.

7.7.2 Implications for policy

The analysis (Chapter 6) and the conclusions (current chapter) have shown that although significant progress has been made in promoting literacy, skills development, and employability of offenders in correctional education, there are discrepancies in policy implementation that impact learning outcomes adversely. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Time constraints which adversely affect policy implementation,
- Institutional protocols which restrict learning opportunities,
- Limited interlibrary collaboration which limits the allocation and sharing of learning resources, and
- Financial resources which are required to drive the implementation of education policy.

Improving and escalating the provision of LIS is central to achieving the constitutional mandate of libraries in terms of section 29 and section 32 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996.

7.7.3 Implications for practice

Through the detailed cross-country analysis in Chapter 2, the study has identified a few pockets of excellence (in terms of practice) from both developed and developing countries (section 2.7) that may be considered to improve innovation in library and skills training services in correctional facilities. These include, for example, the institutionalisation of employment practices and public-private partnerships to accelerate the mobilisation of resources across sectors. In doing so, the study enhances understanding of the importance of cross-sector coordination mechanisms to ensure that all stakeholders contribute to the development of functional literacy skills and employability skills among offenders in correctional facilities. The managerial implications of this study, therefore, are the adoption and use of evidence-based approaches to inform the design and development of correctional pedagogy programmes and practices to enhance outcomes. In respect of libraries, it is imperative to explore innovative LIS technologies that can be deployed to improve both the provision and access to information services and learning resources for the benefit of offenders.

7.8 FUTURE RESEARCH

Through a multiple case study design and explanatory sequential approach, this study yielded an empirical analysis of the role of correctional libraries in the development of offenders in Mpumalanga Province. Key analytical variables considered by this mixed-

methods study included functional literacy, skills development, and career transition for offenders. Therefore, a complementary study is needed to examine the efficacy of continuing professional development interventions for librarians and educators to improve human resource management practices in correctional institutions. Another key strategic area that requires further empirical investigation is the sustainability of entrepreneurial activities undertaken by former offenders to help improve economic participation outcomes in this area. The latter is particularly important in lowering repeat offences by offenders returning to society.

7.9 CONCLUDING REMARK

In conclusion, by adopting an interdisciplinary stance involving librarianship, correctional pedagogy, and criminology, this study has demonstrated that correctional libraries contribute significantly to the development of offenders; however, post-release placement efforts require substantial improvement to prevent recurring patterns of criminal behaviour. Overall, the findings of the study confirm that correctional libraries fulfilled their legal mandate in terms of section 29 of the Constitution on the right to education and section 32(1) on the right of access to information; as well as the LIS Charter (2014).

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[9](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10551-004-1895-9). Accessed on 13 December 2023

Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance Certificate



16 January 2023

Precious Saiya (221117202)
School of Social Sciences
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear P Saiya,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00004954/2022

Project title: Contribution of correctional libraries to rehabilitation and integration of inmates to the community in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Degree: PhD

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 24 October 2022 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaires/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. **PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 16 January 2024

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/ms

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix 2: Letter of approval – Department of Correctional Services



Correctional services

Department:

Correctional Services
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X136, PRETORIA, 0001 Poynton's Building, C/O WF Nkomo and Sophie De Bruyn Street, PRETORIA Tel (012) 307 2770, Fax 086 539 2693

Dear Ms P Saiya

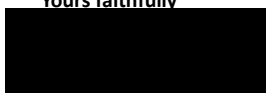
RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES ON: CONTRIBUTION OF CORRECTIONAL LIBRARIES: TO REHABILITATION AND INTEGRATION OF INMATES TO THE COMMUNITY IN MPUMALANGA PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

I wish to inform you that your request to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services has been approved.

- This ethical approval is valid from 11 January 2023 to 11 January 2024
- Your internal guide is Director -Sports, Recreation Arts & Culture, Mr. Somaru at Head Office; kindly contact him at - 012 3058206
- The Area Commissioners where the research will be conducted will be informed of your proposed research project.
- You are requested to contact them before the commencement of your research, It is your responsibility to make arrangements for your interviewing times
- You are not allowed to use photographic or video equipment during your visits; however, the audio recorder is allowed
- Your identity document/passport and this letter should be in your possession when visiting the Correctional Centre's
- You are required to use the terminology used in the White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (February 2005) and Correctional Services Act (No. 111 of 1998), e.g. "Offenders" not "Prisoners" and "Correctional Centre's" not "Prisons".
- You are required to submit your final report to the Department for approval by the Commissioner of Correctional Services before publication (including presentation at workshops, conferences, seminars, etc.) of the report.
- Should you have any inquiries regarding this process, don't hesitate to get in touch with the REC Administration for assistance at the telephone number: (012) 3072894/95/0723271937

Thank you for your application and interest in conducting research in the Department of Correctional Services.

Yours faithfully



ND MBULI
Chair: DCS REC
DATE: 11 10112023

Appendix 3: Questionnaire – Offenders

QUESTIONNAIRE: OFFENDERS

Instructions

1. Please complete all sections in this survey
2. Choose one answer from each section
3. Put a mark (x) next to your answer /statement
4. You must be older than 18 years to do this survey
5. Your confidentiality is guaranteed throughout the survey

Section 1: Demographic Information

1.1 Which of the following best describes your age?

18-25	1
26-30	2
31-35	3
36-40	4
41-55	5

1.2 Which of the following best describes your gender?

Male	1
Female	2

1.3 Which of the following best describes your highest level of education?

Grade 1-8	1
Grade 9-12	2
General certificate	3
Diploma	4
Degree	5

1.4 Which of the following describes your work experience?

1-2 years	1
3.-5 years	2
6-7 years	3
8-10 years	4
11-20 years	5

Section 2: Access to Library Services

2.1 Have you been informed about the library?

Yes	1
No	2

2.2 Do you get enough textbooks for your studies?

Yes	1
No	2

2.3 Do you have enough books (learning resources) for your studies?

Yes	1
No	2

2.4 Are you allowed to take out library books for your homework?

Always	1
Sometimes	2
Occasionally	3
Seldom	4
Not at all	5

2.5 Have you been helped to choose textbooks that match your careers?

Always	1
Sometimes	2
Occasionally	3
Seldom	4
Not at all	5

2.6 Which of the following probably prevents you from using library services?

a. Lack of advice and relevant information	1	2	3	4	5
b. Lack of support from library staff	1	2	3	4	5
c. Lack of guidance from teachers	1	2	3	4	5
d. Shortage of resources e.g. text books	1	2	3	4	5
e. Lack of time	1	2	3	4	5
f. Strict correctional rules and procedures	1	2	3	4	5
g. Shortage of teachers / facilitators	1	2	3	4	5

Section 3: Type of Library Services Received

Which of the following best describes the type of services you get from your library?

Textbooks	1	2	3	4	5
Learning support materials	1	2	3	4	5
Computers	1	2	3	4	5
Internet	1	2	3	4	5
Study skills	1	2	3	4	5
Study area	1	2	3	4	5
Library research skills	1	2	3	4	5
All of the above					

Have you been helped to prepare for tests, assignments and exams?

Yes	1
No	2

Section 4: Training and Career Support Services

4.1 Which of the following describes the kind of support you probably received from the library to help you plan your career better?

Helps me to set my career goals	1	2	3	4	5
Helps me to choose the right subjects / courses	1	2	3	4	5
Helps me to choose the right job	1	2	3	4	5
Helps me to identify work opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
None of the above	1	2	3	4	5

4.2 How often do you get career counselling from the library?

a. Daily	1
b. Weekly	2
c. Monthly	3
d. Quarterly	4
e. Not at all	5

4.3 How often do you get career counselling from your facilitator or teacher?

a. Daily	1
b. Weekly	2
c. Monthly	3
d. Quarterly	4
e. Not at all	5

4.4 Which of the following best describes your career choice?

Engineering	1	2	3	4	5
Agriculture	1	2	3	4	5
Information technology	1	2	3	4	5
Building and construction	1	2	3	4	5
Welding	1	2	3	4	5
Carpentry	1	2	3	4	5
Woodwork	1	2	3	4	5
Painting	1	2	3	4	5
Catering e.g. baking, cooking, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
Plumbing	1	2	3	4	5
Electrical	1	2	3	4	5
Other Please specify					

4.5 What specific skills programmes have you attended so far?

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
	Other please specify

4.6 What other useful courses or subjects do you think should be included in the skills programmes to benefit other Offenders in future?

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
	Other please specify

Section 5: Learner Support Services

5.1 Do you get personal support and guidance from your teacher / facilitator?

Yes	1
No	2

5.2 How often do you get learning support from your teacher / facilitator?

Always	1
Sometimes	2
Occasionally	3
Seldom	4
Never	5

5.2 Which of the following best describes the kind of support that you get from teachers or facilitators in your skills programme?

	Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not at all
a. They help me with homework	1	2	3	4	5
b. They help me with study skills	1	2	3	4	5
c. They help with career information, counselling and advice	1	2	3	4	5
d. They help me with assignments	1	2	3	4	5
e. They help me with practical work e.g. internships/ learnerships	1	2	3	4	5
f. They help me prepare for examinations or assessments	1	2	3	4	5
Other please specify					

5.3 How often do you get this support from your teachers / facilitators?

a. Daily	1
b. Weekly	2
c. Monthly	3
d. Quarterly	4
e. Not at all	5

5.4 Do you get enough coaching and mentoring during workshops /classes?

Always	1
Sometimes	2
Occasionally	3
Seldom	4
Never	5

5.5 Do you get enough coaching/mentoring during your practice in the workplace?

Yes	1
No	2

5.6 How would you describe the working relationship between you and your teachers?

Poor	1
Average	2
Good	3
Excellent	4
Not sure	5

5.7 How would you describe your teacher's facilitation style or training method?

Poor	1
Average	2
Good	3
Excellent	4
Not sure	5

5.8 How would you describe the working relationship between you and fellow students or Offenders in the classroom?

Poor	1
Average	2
Good	3
Excellent	4
Not sure	5

5.9 Which of the following best describe your experience on group learning in your class?

	Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
a. We work as a team and help each other most of the time	1	2	3	4	5
b. We only work together during exams, tests or practical work	1	2	3	4	5
c. There is no cooperation among members	1	2	3	4	5
d. Most of the time we do not support each other	1	2	3	4	5
e. There are no opportunities for group learning	1	2	3	4	5

Section 6: Level of Satisfaction with Library and Training Services

6.1 How satisfied are you with the following library services?

	Satisfied	Highly satisfied	Very little	Not satisfied	Not sure
a. Relevant information and advice on available library services	1	2	3	4	5
b. Learning materials e.g. text books and supporting materials	1	2	3	4	5
c. Guidance on how to use library services	1	2	3	4	5
d. Information technology e.g. computers/Internet	1	2	3	4	5
e. Study rooms and exam preparations	1	2	3	4	5
f. Discussion rooms for group work	1	2	3	4	5
g. Water & sanitation services in the library	1	2	3	4	5
h. Time for reading and relaxing in the library	1	2	3	4	5
i. Peace and order during study hours	1	2	3	4	5

6.2 How satisfied are you with the following services in your skills programme?

	Satisfied	Highly satisfied	Very little	Not satisfied	Not sure
a. Career guidance	1	2	3	4	5
b. Training methods	1	2	3	4	5
c. Training time	1	2	3	4	5
d. Training rooms	1	2	3	4	5
e. Internships	1	2	3	4	5
f. Learnerships	1	2	3	4	5
g. Coaching/mentoring	1	2	3	4	5
h. Referral / contacts with employers	1	2	3	4	5
i. Advice / tips on how to prepare your CV	1	2	3	4	5
j. Advice on how to prepare for a job Interview	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you

Appendix 4: Interview guide – Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Education

1. What is your role in supporting and helping Correctional services libraries to address literacy and the skills needs of Offenders in Mpumalanga province? Please explain with regard to the following needs:

1.1 Teaching resources (e.g. textbooks, teacher’s guides, equipment, technology, etc.)

1.2 Learning resources (e.g. prescribed textbooks, study guides, learning support materials, equipment, videos, online learning tools, workshops, etc.)

1.3 Experiential learning /workplace learning

2. In what way does the Department assist with recruitment, training and development of teachers, facilitators and Mentors to improve skills development in correctional centres? Give examples of action steps taken to date.

3. In what way does your organisation support and contribute to the employment of Offenders after release from detention? Please explain with regard to the following.

3.1 Career information services

3.2 Collaboration with employers and community organisations

4. Are there any challenges in supporting education and skills development in correctional centres within Mpumalanga Province? If so, what are they and what steps is the Department taking to address them?

4.1 Challenges

4.2 Steps taken to address them

5. What is the vision of the Department of Education regarding the future of education and skills development in correctional centres in Mpumalanga Province? Please explain with regard to the following:

Action plans to improve teaching practice in correctional service centres	Action plans to improve resource allocation in correctional service libraries	Action plans to improve work readiness and employability of Offenders

6. In your view, what can be done to improve the partnership between the Department of Education and Correctional service libraries for the benefit of Offenders? Give examples.

Appendix 5: Interview guide – Correctional Services Managers

Age _____

Gender _____

Qualifications _____

Position / rank _____

Work experience _____

1. What is the role of your department in supporting education and training of Offenders in preparation for employment outside correctional centres?

2. In what ways does your department assist correctional libraries so that they can meet the learning and skills needs of Offenders? Please explain with regard to:

2.1 Budget allocation for correctional libraries

2.2 Human resources / staffing needs

2.3 Training of library staff

2.4 Technology support for correctional libraries

2.5 Textbooks, learner and teacher support materials

2.6 Diversification of skills programmes

3. What steps are taken to ensure that the correctional library in your centre provide high quality services and account for performance and results. Discuss.

4. Are there any challenges in meeting the learning and skills development needs of Offenders in your correctional centre? If so, what are they and what actions have been taken to address them?

5. Given the strict prison rules, in way does your department ensure that Offenders have adequate time to attend classes, do assignments and prepare for assessments. Discuss.

6. To what extent does your department work with Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) to ensure that Offenders get high quality training that is accredited and relevant to their career choices? Discuss.

Appendix 6: Interview guide – Librarians

Age _____

Gender _____

Qualifications _____

Work experience _____

What type of library information services do you provide to support learning and skills training for Offenders in your correctional centre?

How would you describe the quality of library services in terms of the following?

Teaching Offenders computer skills

Teaching Offenders library research skills

Supplying Offenders with textbooks and support materials

Tutorial support services

Preparation for assessments

Do all Offenders have access to library services? Motivate your answers.

Does the library provide career guidance to Offenders? If so, what type of services do you provide and does this prepare them for the world of work? Motivate your answers.

In what way does the library work with facilitators, employers and families to help Offenders transition from correctional centres to the world of work? Give examples.

Appendix 7: Interview guide – Trainers/Facilitators

Age _____

Gender _____

Qualifications _____

Teaching experience _____

What subjects do you teach in your correctional centre?

Why are these subjects important for Offenders in terms of skills development and employment opportunities?

Are Offenders committed/motivated to learn and acquire new knowledge and skills in your programmes? Do participants in skills programmes? Motivate your answers.

How do you balance theory and practice in your subject or course? Do Offenders have enough time, resources, tools and support to be able to practice acquired skills? Motivate your answers.

Are there any challenges in your subject and if so, what actions are you taking to overcome them to ensure that all Offenders benefit from your subject / course?

Challenges in my subject / course	Actions taken to overcome challenges

As part of your teaching responsibilities, do you provide coaching and mentoring in your subject in order to prepare Offenders for the world of work? If so, what specific activities are involved, and why are these important?

Do you prepare Offenders for assessment in your subject? If so, what specific support services do you provide (e.g. revision, extra classes, etc.)? Are these helpful? Discuss.

Does your subject include career counselling to help Offenders make the right career choices and improve their job readiness? Discuss.

Appendix 8: Interview guide – Current Offenders

Age _____

Gender _____

Qualifications _____

Work experience _____

1. Are you enrolled on a skills programme? If so, which subjects are you doing (e.g. plumbing, welding, bricklaying, carpentry, agriculture, business, etc). and why are these important for your career life after prison?

2. Do you receive support on career planning? If so what specific forms of support do you get e.g. guidance on goal setting, funding, referrals, placement, experiential learning, etc to improve work readiness?

3. Do you get enough time for practising acquired skills in the subjects that you are doing? Do you get coaching or mentoring during practicums? Discuss.

4. Are you assisted with tutorials to cope with your studies e.g. study tips, study groups, peer support, individual counselling, revision, extra learning materials, etc? Motivate your answers.

5. Have you been assisted to find employment opportunities after training? Do your teachers / facilitators talk to you about employment opportunities linked to your subjects? Discuss.

6. Are there any challenges that probably prevent you from achieving your learning and career goals? If so what are they and what can be done to overcome them?

7. How would you describe the quality of training that you receive in your correctional centre? Is it helping you to build your career (for example find a job or start your own business)?

8. In your opinion, what can be done to improve education and skills training programmes to benefit more Offenders in your correctional centre? Give 5 solutions.

Appendix 9: Interview guide – Former Offenders

Age _____

Gender _____

Qualifications _____

Work experience _____

1. What job are you doing at present and why this job?

2. Has the training that you received in prison prepare you for this job? Discuss

3. Does this job match the skills that you learned while in prison? Are you finding it easier to do your job competently? Motivate your answers?

4. Since you joined this job, have you been given any induction or additional training so that you can perform well in your position? Discuss.

5. How would you describe the working conditions (e.g. wages and benefits, health and safety, medical aid, etc.) for you and fellow Offenders in your area? Are you satisfied with working conditions? Discuss.

Appendix 10: Interview guide – Employers

Age _____

Gender _____

Qualifications _____

Work experience _____

1. Do you employ former prisoners in your organisation? If so, how many have you employed and in which job categories are they deployed?

2. What is your experience in working with former prisoners? Are they co-operating? Discuss.

3. Are they competent and knowledgeable about their jobs? Discuss

4. Do you provide extra training, induction, coaching and mentoring to help Offenders learn and grow professionally in their jobs? Discuss.

5. Do you provide career management / development services to former Offenders? If so, what specific activities are involved and why are these important?

6. From your experience are there any challenges in employing former Offenders? If so, what are they and what can be done to resolve them?

Challenges in employing Offenders	What can be done to overcome them

Appendix 11: Interview guide – Community Members

Age _____

Gender _____

Qualifications _____

Work experience _____

1. Have you worked with former Offenders in your area and if so, what was your experience about their attitudes and behaviours?

2. How would you describe the skills and performance of Offenders in your project? Are they competent? Discuss.

3. Does the community in your area support former Offenders with jobs, business opportunities or resources when they come out of prison? Discuss.

4. Are there any challenges in working with former Offenders in your community/ If so, what are they and what can be done to overcome them?

5. In your opinion, what can be done to improve access to work and business opportunities for former Offenders? Discuss.

Appendix 12: Focus Group Themes

Focus group theme	Purpose	Findings
1. Information/learning needs of Offenders;	This theme aims to establish how Offenders access and use information to support their learning and development needs in each of the case studies	
2. Steps taken to meet Offenders' information and learning needs;	This theme explores the perspectives and experiences of library managers and librarians on how LIS services are provided to Offenders	
3. Opportunities and constraints in meeting the information and learning needs of Offenders and	This theme seeks to identify opportunities and challenges that impact on the library's ability to contribute to functional literacy and employability skills needs of Offenders in the participating correctional centres.	
4. Improving service delivery in correctional libraries.	This themes is aimed at eliciting the views and contributions of library managers and librarians on how best to reposition and improve provision of LIS necessary to facilitate development of functional literacy and employability skills among Offenders.	
5. Types of information sought by Offenders in correctional library centres	This theme establishes the specific types and categories of information sought by Offenders in their effort to satisfy their learning and development needs in the case study correctional centres.	

Appendix 13: Observation Schedule

Experiential learning activities observed during fieldwork	Purpose of the observation	Findings
1. Facilitation of learning by Instructors /trainers	To establish whether the teaching and learning methods used in correctional centres are effective enough to help Offenders acquire practical job skills.	
2. Learning process	To establish how Offenders learn in each of the participating correctional centres. The aim is to find out if innovative learning methods such as technology-assisted learning; collaborative learning and peer learning are used to help Offenders achieve their learning goals	
3. Practice / application	To find out if Offenders, after learning, are able to successfully apply acquired knowledge and skills in the workplace. The intention is to establish whether there is a balance between theory and practice in the skills development programmes that are offered to Offenders.	
4. Coaching and mentoring (Workplace learning support services)	To learn whether Offenders are given the necessary support and guidance to be able to improve their knowledge, job skills, performance and professional development on the job.	
5. Feedback	To find out if Offenders are provided with instant feedback on their learning/training and whether they are encouraged to regularly discuss their learning and development needs with their facilitators in each of the participating correctional centres.	

Appendix 14: Proof of Editing Letter

Athol Leach (Proofreading and Editing)



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9 September 2024

To Whom It May Concern

This letter serves to confirm that I have edited the following Doctoral thesis (Information Studies) by **Precious Kholomile Saiya** titled:

“CONTRIBUTION OF CORRECTIONAL LIBRARIES TO REHABILITATION AND INTEGRATION OF OFFENDERS TO THE COMMUNITY IN MPUMALANGA PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA”

The thesis was edited in terms of grammar, spelling, punctuation and overall style. In doing so, use was made of MS Word’s “Track changes” facility thus providing the student with the opportunity to reject or accept the changes made.

Please note that while I have checked the in-text references and those appearing in the list of references for consistency in terms of format (the latter as much as feasibly possible), I have not checked the veracity of the sources themselves.

The tracked document is on file.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]
Athol Leach
(MIS, Natal)