

Borka Malčić¹, Stanislava Marić Jurišin², Jovana Turudić³

Educational Needs from the Perspective of Prisoners in Serbia

Abstract: This empirical research aimed to investigate the convicts' opinions of education programs in penitentiaries. Data were collected from a convenient sample of 100 male prisoners detained in a high-security ward of the correctional institution in Sremska Mitrovica. The research aimed to examine the convicts' educational needs, as well as their assessment of the free activities organized within the institution, their perceptions of the significance of working with the treatment personnel, and the correlation between education and recidivism. The research results indicate that the inmates' attitudes toward education are largely positive, but that they are dissatisfied with the education programs offered in their correctional institution.

Keywords: education, educational needs of convicts, recidivism, correctional institutions

Obrazovne potrebe iz perspektive zatvorenika u Srbiji

Apstrakt: Ovo empirijsko istraživanje imalo je za cilj da ispita mišljenja osuđenika o obrazovnim programima u kazneno-popravnim ustanovama. Podaci su prikupljeni preko pogodnog uzorka od 100 zatvorenika koji služe kaznu u zatvorenom odeljenju Kazneno-popravnog zavoda u Sremskoj Mitrovici. Cilj istraživanja bio je da se ispitaju obrazovne potrebe osuđenika, kao i njihova ocena slobodnih aktivnosti organizovanih unutar zavoda, njihove percepcije značaja rada sa zaposlenima u službi za tretman i povezanost obrazovanja sa recidivizmom. Rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da zatvorenici uglavnom imaju pozitivan stav prema obrazovanju, ali izražavaju nezadovoljstvo obrazovnim programima koji su im dostupni u okviru ustanove.

Ključne reči: obrazovanje, obrazovne potrebe zatvorenika, recidivizam, kazneno-popravnii zavodi

¹ University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1862-962X> (borka.malcic@ff.uns.ac.rs)

² University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4184-3309>

³ University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5939-2238>

Introduction

Working with the prison population is confined within the walls of correctional institutions, away from the public eye, creating an illusion of functionality. The reality and direness of the situation are obvious if we look at statistical data on the growing crime rates around the world, constant global increase in prison populations and high recidivism rates (Jovanić & Ilijić, 2015). Education should play an important role in efforts geared at the convicts' rehabilitation, resocialization, and social reintegration after their release. By investing into education, we invest into the prisoners' progress, their growth, and development in all aspects of their life. The prisoners' educational needs are perceived through their desire to participate in educational and vocational programs during incarceration as a means to expand their opportunities to reintegrate into the workforce and society upon release. Addressing the prisoners' educational needs involves the provision of citizenship education and focus on literacy and cultural development (Rangel Torrijo & De Maeyer, 2019). In this regard, educational needs are discussed in relation to the skills and qualifications necessary for successful social reintegration post-release. It is also important to highlight the non-material benefits of education, such as increased self-confidence and communication skills (Ellison et al., 2017), which further contribute to the convicts' successful social reintegration.

Education can help remove the barriers convicts face post-release in terms of legal employment, as well as improve the quality of their everyday life in prison (Turudić & Malčić, 2023). Although implementing education programs in prisons is regulated by law, research suggests that 70% of the inmates have never been included in any form of education, which leads us to question the very existence of education within our correctional institutions (Knežić & Stojanović, 2015). The need to research inmate education arose from the discrepancies between the legal framework, which defines education as one of the main principles of correctional treatment and the implementation of this concept in practice (Turudić & Malčić, 2023). In the context of education as a primary tool for change, we enquire into the convicts' needs for education during incarceration, cooperation with treatment staff and the connection between education and recidivism.

Educational needs of prisoners

The purpose of education in correctional institutions is seen as an opportunity to improve the inmates' interpersonal relationships and discipline, while education programs are expected to positively impact the outcomes of penal reha-

bilitation and increase the prisoners' chances of engaging in pro-social activities. Prison education is a form of formal education consisting of an array of pedagogical activities designed to transfer knowledge and skills, such as literacy and calculus (Flynn & Higdon, 2022) and skills that will increase opportunities for a more productive life in community (Cecil et al., 2000). There are different interpretations of the role of education, but the one that predominates perceives it as a means of rehabilitation (Coates, 2016; Hawley et al., 2013; Stevanović, 2014) and resocialization of convicts (Behan, 2021). This includes improving the convicts' skills that will facilitate their successful social reintegration, their development of personality traits and habits in accordance with the social norm (Stevanović, 2014). Another extremely significant role of education is reflected in the inclusion of convicts, who often face social exclusion post-release (Hawley et al., 2013). If prisons create a positive environment for teaching and learning, prisoners will have the opportunity to improve their skills, enhance their employability, change personal attitudes and perceptions, enabling them to understand the reasons for and consequences of their actions (Coates, 2016; Hawley et al., 2013). All the listed factors can contribute to a decrease in recidivism (Hawley et al., 2013), as corroborated by the meta-analysis showing that the prisoners, who were included in learning and education programs, have less chance of reoffending than those who have not taken part in such correctional education programs (Bozick et al., 2018; Cecil et al., 2000; Davis et al., 2013; Hall, 2015; Steurer & Smith, 2003; Vacca, 2004).

However, despite the cited findings on the benefits of education of convicted persons, Stevanović (2014) proposes that education programs in prisons in Serbia are not implemented sufficiently, although the prisoners' low education levels indicate the need for them. Around 8% of Sremska Mitrovica inmates are included in such programs of primary and secondary education although the need for it is evident. In the Zabela prison in Požarevac, 40% of inmates need to complete their primary and secondary education but there are no possibilities for the implementation of such programs, while 9% of the prisoners are engaged in woodwork and assembly jobs, welding, and vegetable production. One out of five illiterate inmates of the Niš penitentiary is attending a primary education program (Knežić, 2017). According to the statistical data of the Ministry of Justice Penal Sanctions Enforcement Administration (PSEA), 1.73% of the inmates in 2012 were illiterate, 29.96% had primary education, 26.21% had secondary education and 1.22% had college education (PSEA 2012 Annual Report, 2013). According to the 2013 statistical data, 15.98% of prisoners were illiterate or did not finish primary education, 22.79% had com-

pleted secondary school and only 2.88% had a junior college or university degree (Stevanović, 2014). This is surprising, given that literacy programs, as well as primary schools and vocational secondary schools are available for juveniles and adult convicts (PSEA 2012 Annual Report, 2013), indicating that there is a major discrepancy between the inmates' educational needs and the programs offered, and those implemented in practice. Authors (Ilijić et al., 2016; Jovanić & Ilijić, 2015; Vacca, 2004) identify lack of motivation as an obstacle to involving prisoners in education activities, which suggests that education content needs to be tailored to the prisoners' needs, interests, and affinities, as well as the social community and the labor market, where the connection between the two is evident. Such education programs would yield more effective results (Jovanić & Ilijić, 2015).

As per the prisoners' educational needs, research findings suggest that inmates generally have a positive attitude towards education programs. They often express the need to be included in such programs (Knežić & Stojanović, 2015). There is a disparity between these data and previous research indicating that the majority (67.7%) of prisoners were not included in any form of vocational training, mainly because they were dissatisfied with the current offer in the institution (Knežić & Stojanović, 2015). This leads to the conclusion that the inmates' educational needs and interests and labor market demand should be the first criterion when selecting education programs for prisons (Cho & Tyler, 2013). On the other hand, the inmates' low education levels point to the need to organize education programs with various content in correctional institutions. Education programs will be effective if the convicts are motivated to learn, the programs and innovative teaching methods are tailored to their needs and applied by trained teaching staff with andragogical skills and the prisons cooperate with the local communities.

Educational system in correctional institutions in Serbia

The path of education in prisons in Serbia has not been a simple one. General distrust of the concept of resocialization led to the depreciation of the educational capacities, and, consequently, its abolition in the penal system. However, chronologically speaking, a significant reform was launched by the 1997 Act on the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions, when efforts were made to include international standards and new penal practices (Knežić, 2017). Furthermore, international standards dealing with rights and freedoms of the prisoners were adopted, the

inmate classification system was regulated and the multi-disciplinary approach to assessing the prisoners' personalities on admission became significant (Turudić & Malčić, 2023). All laws in Serbia since WWII have included provisions entitling prisoners to education (Knežić, 2017).

An important step towards putting in motion an initiative for educating prisoners in Yugoslavia was made in the latter half of the 20th century. A temporary Instruction on enforcement of penal sanctions stipulating that education in prisons was compulsory for all convicts was adopted. The 1947 Instruction on educational and cultural work in penal institutions was an important document that defined the form of teaching and learning in penal institutions (Konstantinović-Vilić et al. 2001, as cited in Ilijić, 2016). Principal forms of education included literacy courses, vocational courses, and lectures. Literacy courses had a crucial role in teaching literacy skills to prisoners until the first four-grade primary school for adults was opened in 1954. In the late 1970s, eight-grade primary education was offered to prisoners. By the mid-1990s, successful primary schools, as well as vocational training courses in mechanical engineering, industry and agriculture, were operating in prisons (Konstantinović-Vilić et al. 2001, as cited in Ilijić, 2016). This period was marked by the existence of educational centers set up to provide primary and secondary education to prisoners (Ilijić et al., 2016). Educational centers (in the Niš, Požarevac and Sremska Mitrovica penitentiaries) were registered as subsidiaries of local schools. Each center in the three institutions had special facilities, classrooms, and other necessary teaching tools. The schools employed teachers who held literacy classes for prisoners, as well as final exams for each grade (Stevanović, 2014). Education in prisons can be approached in two distinct ways. On the one hand, formal education entails activities aimed at equipping the inmates with knowledge and skills such as mathematics, literacy, and competencies for future employment. On the other hand, prison education can also be informal, an internal process of living constituted through the reconstruction or reorganization of experience (Turudić & Malčić, 2023). In Serbian prisons, informal education primarily occurs through vocational training and jobs within the penitentiary.

Several hundred prisoners had been receiving primary and secondary education annually (Ilijić et al., 2016). Since the 1970s, the concept of resocialization was subject to severe criticism as opinion prevailed that it did not contribute to reducing criminality and recidivism; interest in education as part of the penal system diminished (Knežić & Stojanović, 2015). Less attention was devoted to educational activities in prison and their potential as belief in the idea of reedu-

cating, resocializing and correction of behavior stagnated. This resulted in fewer investments in teaching staff, an end to cooperation with civil schools, and reduction of educational activities to a minimum (Stevanović, 2014). The schools in the correctional institutions were replaced by departments of the Corrections Service, a clear indicator of how society at the time valued education and its significance in resocializing prisoners (Ilijić et al., 2016).

A change in the situation was brought about by a year-long OSCE project implemented in the Sremska Mitrovica penitentiary (December 2006 – December 2007). In this period, 104 inmates were included in primary and secondary education (Knežić & Stojanović, 2015). The next project that led to greater belief in the value of education was “Support for Vocational and Educational Training in Detention Facilities in Serbia”. The project, known as VET, was implemented in three detention facilities in Serbia (Sremska Mitrovica, Požarevac and Niš) and it included 500 prisoners. The project was funded by the European Union with the aim of assisting the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration in establishing a productive system of vocational education and training of inmates in all penal facilities (National Employment Agency, 2013). The program envisaged training in five areas (welding, screen printing techniques, woodwork and furniture making, bakery and market gardening), which was successfully completed by 95% of the participants (Ilijić et al., 2016).

All of the above leads to the conclusion that the introduction of education as an integral part of the penal system in Serbia has been challenging and that there is no coordinated systemic solution to this problem.

Legal framework for educating prisoners

Respect for human rights, including the right to education, is enshrined in a variety of international conventions and declarations and laws. This means that every person, regardless of the institution they are in, can exercise the right to be included in educational activities and content. The right to education should not be withheld in places where its implementation can bring about positive change, and its absence can lead to social segregation and hinder the individuals’ adaptability. This seems completely justified because education in penal institutions contributes to the humanization of prisons, personal development, efficient social reintegration and reduction in recidivism (EPEA, n.d.).

The first post-WWII document dealing solely with prisoners’ rights was the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, which stipulated that education enables complete development of one’s personality and sense of dig-

nity. The provisions of the aforementioned document have significantly influenced the change of philosophy of education in prisons across Europe (Behan, 2021). The 2020 European Prison Rules,⁴ with their seven articles on prison education, have also influenced the course of prison education. Notably, Article 28.1 sets out that “[E]very prison shall seek to provide all prisoners with access to education programmes which are as comprehensive as possible and which meet their individual needs while taking into account their aspirations.” Article 28.7 lays down that “[A]s far as practicable, the education of prisoners shall: a) be integrated with the educational and vocational training system of the country so that after their release they may continue their education and vocational training without difficulty; and b) take place under the auspices of external educational institutions.”

As per the prison education framework in Serbia, the principal law regulating the enforcement of penal sanctions (and prison education) is the Act on the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions (Knežić, 2017). The starting point for correctional treatment is a risk assessment of convicts which provides a sound basis for drawing up an efficient and concrete individual treatment program (Penal Sanctions Enforcement Administration, 2013) Under Article 122 of the 2014 Act on the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions of the Republic of Serbia, all convicts are entitled to primary and secondary education. The warden may approve the convict’s attendance of a part-time education program provided it is in keeping with the safety assessment (Article 123). Education credentials may not reveal that education was received during incarceration (Article 124).

We can observe that nominally, the right to education exists, but research has shown that there is a gap between the convicts’ educational needs, the law and practical implementation of education programs. Non-compliance with the legal provisions and marginalization of education are also evident. For all these reasons, we conducted this research to establish the level of motivation of prisoners to pursue their education, their views of the importance of prison education, as well as of the qualities of the treatment staff.

Methodological framework of the research

Research aim, tasks, and general hypothesis. The research primarily aimed to investigate the convicts’ attitudes to the educational treatment within the correctional institution. We then proceeded to define the following research tasks: 1. Identify the

⁴ Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the European Prison Rules Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 11 January 2006, at the 952nd meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies and revised and amended by the Committee of Ministers on 1 July 2020 at the meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (approved by the Council of Europe and Prison Education).

convicts' needs for education programs in the correctional institution; 2. Question the convicts about the free time activities organized in prison; 3. Inquire into the convicts' opinions about working with the treatment personnel; and 4. Research the connection between recidivism and the level of education. The general hypothesis of this research was: Prisoners with higher levels of education and positive attitudes towards educational treatment have greater educational needs in prison and a lower level of recidivism.

Sample and procedure. This research can be characterized as empirical, quantitative research in light of the general methodological approach, and its subject, problem, goal, tasks and hypothesis. The sample included 100 (male) convicts serving time in Sremska Mitrovica, which consists of low-, medium- and high-security wards. The prisoners in the research sample were serving time in the high-security ward. The type of sample is labeled as convenient. Of the total number of respondents, 15% had completed primary education, 75% secondary education and 10% finished junior college or university. Furthermore, 8% of the respondents assessed their financial state as worse than that of other inmates; 76% thought that their financial status was the same as that of their fellow inmates, while 16% thought they were financially better off than the other inmates. As per recidivism, 54% of the respondents were in prison for the first time, 26% for the second, 11% for the third and 6% the fourth time. Some of them were in prison for the sixth, seventh or tenth time. The findings clearly show that the recidivism rate is high among the prison population. This research was conducted in April 2022 in the correctional institution in Sremska Mitrovica and involved the use of a survey questionnaire. We used a scaling technique and the questionnaire.

Instrument. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: the first part investigated the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics (age and level of education), length of imprisonment, financial situation, and recidivism. The second part of the questionnaire comprised questions related to the prison's treatment service, expected qualities of the treatment service personnel, the inmates' attitudes towards education, organization of leisure time and expectations related to post-release life. This part of the questionnaire was borrowed (Kranjčević, 2014) with the consent of the author.

Statistical data analysis. With a view to checking the assumptions regarding differences in recidivism rates relative to education, we used a one-way analysis of the variance. We also presented descriptive statistics for certain items. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS software version 26, while Horn's parallel analysis was carried out by using Factor software 10.9.02.

Presentation and interpretation of the research results

Research of the educational needs of prisoners showed high average values on all five items, above 4.33 on a five-point scale (Table 1). Namely, prisoners point out the need for primary, secondary, and tertiary education, as well as the need for further education and training. The need for education is corroborated by data obtained in the research by Knežić and Savić (2013) conducted on 210 prisoners in the prison in Sremska Mitrovica and 50 prisoners in Zabela correction facility. The data clearly confirm the desire for education among the prison population in Serbia.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics – prisoners' opinions of their educational needs

<i>I think that the prisoners need ...</i>	AM	SD
1. ... free primary education for adults	4.57	.73
2. ... free secondary education for adults	4.52	.79
3. ... free re-training	4.45	.83
4. ... free vocational training	4.47	.87
5. ... free tertiary education	4.33	1.09

Furthermore, Table 2 shows descriptive indicators (arithmetic mean, standard deviations) for individual items of the opinion scale on work and education within the correctional facility. Lower scores were obtained on items *The offer of free education programs in correctional institutions is satisfactory*, *I have taken part in free education programs*, and *I think work is more important than education*. The highest scores were obtained on items *Work and education are essential parts of life* and *Each person in the correctional institution should have the opportunity to do paid work*.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for individual items of the opinion scale on work and education within the correctional institution

	AM	SD
1. The offer of education programs in prison is satisfactory	2.70	1.37
2. I have taken part in education programs	2.71	1.45
3. I plan to pursue my education in prison	3.04	1.50
4. The array of education programs available at the institution should be broadened	4.30	.99
5. The programs are synchronized with the actual labor market demand	3.13	1.28
6. Each person in the correctional institution should have the opportunity to do paid work	4.39	.97
7. I think that work and education are essential parts of life	4.46	.94
8. I have a positive attitude towards work in the correctional institution	3.98	1.22
9. I think work is more useful than education	2.90	1.42

In conducting an exploratory factor analysis of the opinion scale on work and education, we obtained the following values of Bartlett's sphericity test ($\chi^2 = 160.62$, $p < .01$) and the KMO test of sampling adequacy ($KMO = .75$), indicating that data for factorization were appropriate. The Gutmann-Keiser rule of characteristic root and Horn's parallel analysis both support a three-factor solution, which explains 58.73% of the questionnaire variance (Table 3). We used Horn's parallel analysis, the procedure based on the hypothesis that only those factors or components whose eigenvalues are larger than those derived from random data with analogue characteristics, to consider the variability which represents the result of the specificity of the sampling and can be interpreted as a modification of Kaiser-Guttman's rule, given that it provides the opportunity to eliminate dimensions whose variance is not higher than the one expected of random data (Subotić, 2013). Communalities ranged between .354 and .749, wherefore it was unnecessary to remove items due to low communalities.

Table 3. Results of Horn's parallel analysis

Factor No.	Eigenvalue	Variance %	Cumulative % of variance	AM random eigenvalue	Decision
1.	2.41	26.84	26.84	1.49	Accept
2.	1.66	18.48	45.32	1.21	Accept
3.	1.21	13.41	58.73	1.18	Accept
4.	1.00	11.11	69.84	1.08	Reject

After removing item number 8 (*I have a positive attitude towards work in the correctional institution*), which had significant cross-loadings in the first analysis on all three items, and repeated analysis, a factor solution was obtained, without any significant cross-loadings. The first factor was loaded with items relating to satisfaction with the education programs offered in the facility, the second factor was loaded with items relating to inclusion in the education programs of the correctional institution. Correlation between factors ranged between .059 and .277.

Although there is a need for education in prisons, respondents voiced dissatisfaction with the array of education programs offered in their penitentiary and highlighted the low level of participation in the offered education programs. The research conducted in the Sremska Mitrovica prison in 2015 also showed that the inmates had a positive attitude towards education, but that they, too, were dissatisfied with the choice of education programs conducted in the institution (Knežić & Stojanović, 2015). The fact that results coincide in this way suggests that there is a dire need to examine and revise the current education programs in

the prison in Sremska Mitrovica. Convicts stated that education and work were essential parts of life, claiming that the offer of education programs had to be extended and tailored to labor market needs, and asserting that all inmates should have the opportunity to engage in paid work.

Regarding the prisoners' attitudes towards cooperation with the treatment personnel, they least agreed with the statement *I see working with treatment personnel as coercion* and *I see working with treatment personnel as an unnecessary obligation*. Average scores on other items, which are affirmative regarding prison treatment, ranged between 3.02 and 3.88. Prisoners agreed the most with the statement *I cooperate with the treatment personnel as much as I can*, and *I understand the need to work with the treatment personnel*. When asked about the treatment personnel' personality traits they found important for effective cooperation, inmates rated all traits—competence, empathy, understanding, communication skills, cordiality, receptiveness, and engagement—very highly on average. Namely, 5 out of 7 traits scored over 4 on a five-point scale. Prisoners ranked *communication skills* and *understanding* the highest. They perceived social competencies as important for cooperation and valued them highly.

In order to examine if there is a correlation between the number of relapses and the educational status of the prisoners, we performed a further analysis in the form of one-way ANOVA. The results of the variance analysis ($F(2.97) = 1.136$, $p > .05$) suggest that there are no statistically significant discrepancies in the average number of relapses depending on the level of education (Table 4).

Table 4. Difference in the number of relapses depending on the education status of prisoners

	<i>AM</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df1, df2</i>	<i>p</i>
Primary education	1.40	.63	1.136	2. 97	.325
Secondary education	1.97	1.54			
College or university education	1.70	.82			

We can interpret these results in the light of the stigmatization of ex-convicts, who do not meet with support and acceptance in their community post-release. Instead, they become victims of isolation because employers are reluctant or refuse to hire people with a criminal record. In such an unregulated system without post-release support, we can only assume that many ex-convicts relapse and go back to criminal behavior to survive. Consequently, we can associate the number of relapses with the lack of post-release acceptance in our social system rather than to the level of education.

Conclusion

The topic of prison education, as well as dealing with the prison population, has not been a source of inspiration for many researchers in Serbia. This can be ascribed to a number of obstacles, including, notably, the isolation of the system, inability to access penal institutions, as well as problems and difficulties that working with convicts bring. Precisely for these reasons, the public is deprived of objective information about the living conditions, the work of the treatment services and activities carried out in correctional institutions. Available research shows that primary and secondary education programs are organized in the Sremska Mitrovica penitentiary. Until the end of the second half of the twentieth century, correctional facilities in Serbia, including the one in Sremska Mitrovica, housed educational centers extending basic and secondary education to inmates; these centers were affiliated with corresponding schools in the cities (Knežić & Savić, 2013). These centers were integrated into the Rehabilitation Service under the Regulation on the Organization and Systematization of Jobs in 2006, each overseen by a coordinator responsible for organizing cultural and educational activities (Knežić & Savić, 2013). The growth in the number of prisoners, (Knežić & Savić, 2013) and the increasing number of relapses suggest that the situation is alarming and indicate the need for systemic change.

Herewith a summary of the research findings:

- Prisoners have largely positive attitudes towards educational treatment in prison. There is a need for conducting education programs in prison, and convicts consider education as useful. This is an excellent basis for work with convicts, although we must allow for a possibility that the result may be biased due to socially acceptable answers that the prisoners gave.
- Prisoners expressed dissatisfaction with the offer of education programs in the Sremska Mitrovica establishment, which is why they were reluctant to participate in educational activities organized by the prison. They stressed the importance of connecting the programs with labor market demand. Organization of free primary, secondary, and tertiary education, as well as the provision of vocational training to prisoners, is crucial. This result also implies that it is necessary to conduct programs in correctional institutions that will have a compensatory role and be closely linked to finding a job and building social competencies. Researchers should investigate which education programs are desirable for the prison population and organize them accordingly.

- One of the more interesting findings of the research relates to high recidivism rates that are not connected with the inmates' level of education. The high relapse rate is interpreted as lack of post-release acceptance and inclusion of the inmates. Ex-convicts are often marginalized because of their criminal record, which prevents them from finding work. A systemic change of the mindset and society's treatment of ex-convicts, and a chance for them to use their skills and knowledge are necessary. These topics require further research.
- Findings indicate that prisoners highlight the importance of education programs (especially social competencies and soft skills). This suggests that we need to hire more pedagogical and andragogical experts who have mastered these skills at university.

The research findings have high andragogical implications pointing to the necessity of conducting education programs in correctional institutions, as well as tailoring them to labor market needs. Modern trends in prison education dictate that the objectives of education programs be designed to foster the inmates' self-actualization, their social relations, employability and civic responsibility (Ilijić et al., 2016).

The main limitation of this research is related to the fact that the sample is convenient, which diminishes the possibility of generalizing the results. It would be beneficial to explore examples of good practice (Nordic countries) to gain insights in more effective education programs in correctional institutions that can be implemented as resocialization tools. Further research should focus on an analysis of current offers of education programs in prisons, and on a more comprehensive classification of courses that can be organized in prisons (non-formal organized programs delivered by volunteers, self-education and distance education), and on exploring which types of education programs are the most appealing to the prisoners. Furthermore, such research should, notably, aim to examine the prisoners' educational needs in order to raise public awareness of the significance of education as a facet of correctional treatment.

References

- BEHAN, C. (2021). *Education in Prison: A Literature Review*. UNESCO Institute for Life-long Learning. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000378059>
- BOZICK, R., STEELE, J., DAVIS, L., & TURNER, S. (2018). Does providing inmates with education improve postrelease outcomes? A meta-analysis of correctional education programs in the United States. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 14, 389–428. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-018-9334-6>

- CECIL, D., DRAPKIN, D. A., MACKENZIE, D. L., & HICKMAN, L. J. (2000). The Effectiveness of Adult Basic Education and Life-Skills Programs in Reducing Recidivism: A Review and Assessment of the Research. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 51(2), 207–226.
- CHO, R. M., & TYLER, J. (2013). Does Prison-Based Adult Basic Education Improve Postrelease Outcomes for Male Prisoners in Florida. *Crime & Delinquency*, 59(7), 975–1005. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128710389588>
- COATES, D. S. (2016). *Unlocking Potential: A review of education in prison*. Ministry of Justice of UK.
- DAVIS, L. M., BOZICKI, R., STEELE, J. L., SAUNDERS, J., & MILES, J. N. V. (2013). *Evaluating the effectiveness of correctional education: A meta-analysis of programs that provide education to incarcerated adults*. Rand Organization.
- ELLISON, M., SZIFRIS, K., HORAN, R., & FOX, C. (2017). A Rapid Evidence Assessment of the effectiveness of prison education in reducing recidivism and increasing employment. *Probation Journal*, 64(2), 108–128. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0264550517699290>
- EPEA. (n.d.). *Council of Europe recommendations on education in prison*. Retrieved from <https://www.epea.org/council-of-europe-recommendations-on-education-in>.
- FLYNN, N., & HIGDON, R. (2022). Prison Education: Beyond Review and Evaluation. *The Prison Journal*, 102(2), 196–216. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00328855221079276>
- GODIŠNJI IZVEŠTAJ O RADU UPRAVE ZA IZVRŠENJE KRIVIČNIH SANKCIJA ZA 2012. GODINU [2012 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PENAL SANCTIONS ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION] (March 2013). Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Justice and Public Administration, Penal Sanctions Enforcement Administration.
- HALL, L. L. (2015). Correctional education and recidivism: Toward a tool for reduction. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 66(2), 4–29.
- HAWLEY, J., MURPHY, I., & SOUTO-OTERO, M. (2013). *Prison Education and Training in Europe: Current State of Play and Challenges*. European Commission.
- ILIJIĆ, LJ. (2016). *Uticaj obrazovanja i profesionalnog osposobljavanja na redukciju recidivizma kod osuđenih lica [Influence of education and professional training on reduction of recidivism risks of sentenced persons, PhD thesis]* [Doktorska disertacija, Univerzitet u Beogradu]. <https://nardus.mpn.gov.rs/handle/123456789/6758>
- ILIJIĆ, L., PAVIČEVIĆ, O., & GLOMAZIĆ, H. (2016). Potrebe i mogućnosti obrazovanja osuđenika [The needs and possibilities of convict education]. *Andragoške studije*, 11, 75–93. <https://doi.org/10.5937/andstud16020751>
- IZVEŠTAJ O RADU UPRAVE ZA IZVRŠENJE KRIVIČNIH SANKCIJA ZA 2013 [2013 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PENAL SANCTIONS ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION] (May 2014). Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Justice and Public Administration, Penal Sanctions Enforcement Administration, available at: <http://www.uiks.mpravde.gov.rs/cr/articles/izvestaji-i-statistika/>
- JOVANIĆ, G., & ILIJIĆ, L. (2015). Obrazovne potrebe i edukativni tretman osuđenih [Educational needs and educational treatment of convicts]. *Zbornik radova – 9. Među-*

- narodni naučni skup „Specijalna edukacija i rehabilitacija danas,” [Collection of Papers presented at the 9th International Scientific Event “Special Education and Rehabilitation Today”], Begrade, Serbia, 25–27.9. 2015, 157–168.
- KNEŽIĆ, B. (2017). *Obrazovanje osuđenika: način da se bude slobodan* [Convict education: a way to be free]. Institut za kriminološka i sociološka istraživanja.
- KNEŽIĆ, B., & SAVIĆ, M. (2013). Obrazovanje u zatvoru – od prava do realizacije [Education in prison – from law to implementation]. *Andragoške studije*, 1, 99–116. <https://scindeks.ceon.rs/article.aspx?artid=0354-54151301099K>
- KNEŽIĆ, B., & STOJANOVIĆ, M. (2015). Odnos recidivista prema obrazovanju u KPZ [The reoffenders’ attitudes towards education in penitentiaries]. *Zbornik Instituta za kriminološka i sociološka istraživanja*, 34(2), 63–77.
- KRANJČEVIĆ, V. (2014). Odgojno-obrazovni rad s odraslim osobama u penalnim ustanovama [Educational work with adults in penal institutions] [Doctoral dissertation, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Pedagogy]. <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:142:702806>
- NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AGENCY (2013). *Podrška stručnom obrazovanju i obuci u zatvorskim ustanovama Srbije* [Support for Vocational Education and Training in Serbian Prisons]. Retrieved from https://www.nsz.gov.rs/live/info/podr_ka_stru_nom_obrazovanju_i_obuci_u_zatvorskim_ustanovama_srbije.cid2696
- RANGEL TORRIJO, H., & DE MAEYER, M. (2019). Education in prison: A basic right and an essential tool. *International Review of Education*, 65(5), 671–685. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-019-09809-x>
- RECOMMENDATION REC (2006) 2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the European Prison Rules. *Council of Europe Portal*. Retrieved from https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805d8d25
- STEURER, S. J., & SMITH, L. G. (2003). *Education Reduces Crime: Three-State Recidivism Study Executive Summary*. Correctional Education Association.
- STEVANOVIĆ, Z. (2014). *Tretman osuđenika u zatvorskom sistemu Srbije* [Treatment of convicts in the Serbian prison system]. Institut za kriminološka i sociološka istraživanja.
- SUBOTIĆ, S. (2013). Pregled metoda za utvrđivanje broja faktora i komponenti (u EFA i PCA). *Primenjena psihologija*, 6(3), 203–229.
- TURUDIĆ, J., & MALČIĆ, B. (2023). Komparativna analiza obrazovnih programa u penalnim ustanovama SAD-a, Švedske i Srbije [Comparative Analysis of Educational Programs in the Penal Institutions in the USA, Sweden and Serbia]. *Zbornik Oseka za pedagogiju*, 32, 51–69. <https://doi.org/10.19090/zop.2023.32.51-69>
- VACCA, J. M. (2004). Educated Prisoners Are Less Likely to Return to Prison. *The Journal of Correctional Education*, 55(4), 297–305.
- ZAKON O IZVRŠENJU KRIVIČNIH SANKCIJA [ACT ON THE ENFORCEMENT OF PENAL SANCTIONS] (2014). Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, Nos. 55/2014 and 35/2019.