The transformative effect of correctional education: A global perspective

Ntombizanele Gloria Vandala

Abstract: The mandate to deliver correctional education to incarcerated individuals emanates from the United Nation Declarations, Conventions and Standards. Consequently, numerous countries worldwide utilize correctional education as a rehabilitation programme to transform offenders into law-abiding and productive citizens upon release. But, there are still miscellaneous debates on the effectiveness of correctional education. High recidivism rates seem to be a global challenge. The assumption is that correctional education may help in reducing crime and recidivism rates. Literature suggests that correctional education changes behaviour, improves self-confidence, reduces recidivism rates and transforms offenders into law-abiding citizens on release. Convergent mixed methods design was adopted to investigate the transformative effect of correctional education. This study was conducted to former incarcerated individuals who attended correctional education programmes during incarceration period in South Africa. Questionnaires and in-depth interviews were utilized as data collection instruments. Quantitative and qualitative data were given equal status in the research field. Quantitative findings demonstrate with an overwhelming majority that correctional education transforms offenders. Qualitative findings confirm that correctional education changes behaviour, boosts self-confidence and transforms offenders into law-abiding and productive citizens. Based on these findings, this study concludes that correctional education transforms offenders since it boosts self-esteem and confidence, revives humanity, improves literacy levels, equips with skills and transforms offenders into law-abiding and productive citizens on release.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ntombizanele Gloria Vandala (PhD) is a policy developer at the National Department of Correctional Services in South Africa. She is a teacher by profession. Her research interest relates to correctional education, especially youth development projects and professional development programmes for correctional educators. She has vast experience in mainstream education, adult education, correctional education, distance education, student assessment and examination, book evaluation and policy development in South Africa. She has written, co-authored & published research articles and book chapters in the field of correctional education.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This convergent mixed methods study examined the transformative effect of correctional education to former incarcerated individuals in South Africa. The current findings aim at creating awareness to international readers, policymakers, researchers, academics, correctional administrators and correctional educators in the Criminal Justice System about the transformative effect of correctional education. This aspect may escalate empirical evidence on the effect of correctional education in the Criminal Justice System, globally. Subsequently, increased provision of correctional education programmes may facilitate offender rehabilitation and reintegration, reduce crime rates, reduce recidivism rates, reduce costs of incarceration, alleviate poverty rates, reduce inequality and promote public safety in different societies worldwide.
release. This study recommends increased implementation of vocational education programmes. This aspect may help in reducing crime, recidivism rates, poverty and inequality. Equally, this study recommends international research on the effect of correctional education on recidivism rates.

Subjects: Education; Education - Social Sciences; Education; Adult Education and Lifelong Learning; Educational Research

Keywords: Correctional education; crime; mixed methods; recidivism; rehabilitation; transform

1. Introduction
Worldwide, correctional education (CE) is delivered to incarcerated individuals as a human right in compliance with the United Nations declarations, Standards and Conventions (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; UN Standard Minimum Rules for Treatment of Prisoners, 1955; The Mandela Rules, 2015). Consequently, a host of countries worldwide give incarcerated individuals access to a variety of correctional education programmes as a human right and in preparation for reintegration in communities. The main argument is that society suffers when offenders commit crime, but; this will be worse if they return with no employment skills (Coley & Barton, 2006). As a result, in the South African context, all incarcerated individuals are given access to education and training programmes as a basic right in compliance with Section 29 (1) of the country's constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996). This Constitutional right “may not be curtailed by incarceration” (Republic of South Africa, 2005, p.138). Consequently, correctional education is utilized as a rehabilitation programme; to transform offenders into law-abiding and productive citizens upon release. Equally, the assumption is that education and training programmes delivered to incarcerated individuals in South Africa may help in reducing recidivism rates in the country (Vandala, 2018).

However, the objective of delivering correctional education is not limited to human rights, it can make a significant contribution to “individual well-being, citizenship and social cohesion” (Pike & Farley, 2018, p. 82). Correctional education encompasses academic and vocational education (career and technical education) programmes delivered to incarcerated individuals within correctional or community correction facilities (Rivera, 2016, p. 7). An overarching goal is to reduce offending behaviour; thus, assist offenders to desist from crime. But, effectiveness of correctional education in offender rehabilitation process is still under debate among scholars. As a result, currently, there are mixed perspectives on the effectiveness of correctional education (Patzelt, Williams, & Shepherd, 2014). For instance, in the United States of America (US), there are two perspectives; some scholars emphasize effectiveness while others focus on ineffectiveness of correctional education. But, a high number of theories support the idea that offender rehabilitation may be achieved by giving offenders access to a variety of correctional education programmes to reduce recidivism rates (Ubah & Robinson, 2003). The definition of the word recidivism differs in various contexts. In the context of this study, recidivism refers to re-offense and return to correctional facilities after having been released in communities. Conversely, there are extensive speculations that correctional education has a potential of transforming offenders into law-abiding and productive citizens, consequently; reduce recidivism rates. However, internationally; there is still a high lack of research on “how correctional education translates into post-release success” especially from offenders’ point of view (Hall & Killacky, 2008, p. 303). Consequently, the objective of this study was to investigate the transformative effect of correctional education as perceived by ex-offenders.

2. Problem statement
Crime rate is perceived to be very high in South Africa. According to Breetzke (2010) the levels of crime in South Africa escalated after invent of democracy in 1994. Similarly, the United States of America is reported to be the leading country in incarceration rates globally (Erickson, 2018). High incarceration rates may contribute to high recidivism rates. For instance, scholars estimate that recidivism rate is between 84 and 95 percent in South Africa (Herbig & Hesselink, 2013; Ngabonziza...
& Singh, 2012; Quan-Baffour & Zawada, 2012). However, this problem is not isolated to the South African context. For example, United States of America, Zimbabwe, Romania and Ireland are reported to be among countries with high recidivism rates worldwide (Chigunwe, 2016; Danboeanu & Ramakers, 2018; O’Reilly, 2014; Tietjen, Garneau, Horowitz, & Noel, 2018). In most cases, exorbitant recidivism rates are attributed to stigma, criminal record and inadequate education and vocational skills (Barnao, Ward, & Robertson, 2015). But; correctional education is often associated “with reduced recidivism, economic savings, and higher post-release employment” (Erickson, 2018, p. 26). Therefore, it seems by giving incarcerated individuals access to a variety of correctional education programmes could make a significant contribution in offender rehabilitation process through reduced crime rates, recidivism rates, poverty and inequality in different societies globally.

3. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework which underpins this study is the Good Lives Model (GLM) of offender rehabilitation which was initiated by Ward and Stewart in 2003. The GLM focuses on assisting offenders through development and implementation of programmes which help them to desist from crime (Willis, Prescott, & Yates, 2013). Similarly, the current study’s focus was on investigating the transformative effect of correctional education to ex-offenders who attended education and training programmes during incarceration period in South Africa. As mentioned previously, education and training programmes are delivered to incarcerated individuals in the South African context as one of rehabilitation programmes and in preparation for reintegration in communities. The assumption is that knowledge and skills acquired through education and training programmes may promote self-sufficiency upon release. Therefore, the GLM seems to be a suitable theoretical framework for this study since one of its objectives is to give practitioners a sense of direction when planning interventions which help offenders to acquire skills for attaining primary goods (Azai, 2014). According to the GLM perspective, rehabilitation programmes should not be implemented in an environment where human rights are not respected (Ward & Gannon, 2008). Similarly, human rights are fundamental to provision of correctional education programmes to incarcerated individuals in the South African context.

4. Literature review

Internationally, correctional education is delivered to incarcerated individuals as a rehabilitation programme. A majority of countries understand the role of correctional education in offender rehabilitation process and on reducing recidivism rates (Pike & Farley, 2018). Therefore, in the context of this paper, the word transform originates from the fact that rehabilitation programmes may assist “to change antisocial delinquents into more law-abiding and productive citizens” (Abrams & Hyun, 2009, p. 47). Consequently, global scholars postulate that correctional education transforms due to its potential of changing offending behaviour, cognitive skills, employment skills, recidivism rates, literacy levels, socio-economic status, public safety, costs of incarceration and transforming offenders into law-abiding citizens upon release. Literature survey which outlines global scholars’ perspectives on the transformative effect of correctional education is discussed under different sub-headings.

4.1. Offending behaviour

Correctional education is perceived to have a potential of reducing offending behaviour. It is believed by improving offenders’ educational qualifications may have positive impact on self-esteem and confidence (Van Wyk, 2014). In this case, correctional education seems to assist in boosting self-confidence and self-worth on offenders. This perspective seems to corroborate Kett (2001, p. 64) who postulates that young and adult offenders require education to boost self-confidence. Consequently, the findings in a study conducted by Winterfield, Coggeshall, Burke-Storer, Correa, and Tidd (2009) in the US demonstrate that all respondents reported that Post-Secondary education in a correctional facility helped in boosting self-esteem. The assumption is that offenders who attended college education depict lower misconduct than those who did not attend (Lahm, 2009).
For instance, in a study conducted at the Central Coast Adult School in California some respondents
proclaimed;

‘I gained self-respect and respect from others as well.
It has made them feel great, I never thought I would actually be taking the GED test.
Going to school here in prison has taught me that if I can do it in here I can also do it when
I get out’ (Thomas, 2012, p. 176).

In summary; the findings from different studies suggest that correctional education transforms
offending behaviour by boosting self-esteem and self-confidence.

4.2. Cognitive skills
Correctional education helps in improving offenders’ cognitive skills. According to Steurer, Linton,
Nally, and Lockwood (2010, p. 42) “speaking, writing, reading and listening, as well as quantitative
reasoning, are cognitive skills.” It is widely understood that a high number of offenders are
illiterate; thus, may have inadequate reading and writing skills. Therefore, if offenders are given
access to a variety of correctional education programmes, cognitive skills may improve. Improved
cognitive skills may assist offenders to secure employment opportunities upon release (Keena &
Simmons, 2014). This perspective seems to be congruent with the findings in a study conducted to
29 offenders who finished Ice House Entrepreneurial education programme at Mississippi
Department of Corrections which demonstrate that acquiring “knowledge and becoming
a lifelong learner” was controllable, and portrayed evidence-based change in mind-set. This
study shows the importance of cognitive-based correctional education programmes in increasing
offender employment opportunities on release (Keena & Simmons, 2014, p. 14).

Equally, offenders who have learning disabilities may have dysfunctional cognitive skills (Kelly,
Ramaswamy, & Hsieng-Feng, 2014). Offenders with cognitive deficiencies may have trouble in adjusting
to social values and expectations (Rocque, Bierie, & MacKenzie, 2012). In this case; correctional
educators transform students by instilling “critical thinking skills, encouraging debate, and applying
course lessons to the lives of their students” (Cantrell, 2013, p. 2). As a result, vocational education
programmes are perceived to be more helpful since they target career attitudes, increase skills and
reduce recidivism rates (Varghese & Cunnings, 2013, p. 1015). In summary, correctional education
programmes appear to reduce “natural” obstacles to successful reintegration by enhancing offenders’
“intellectual, cognitive and life skills” (Fabelo, 2002, p. 109). But, what is important is to align correc-
tional education programmes with risk factors (Rocque et al., 2012).

4.3. Law-abiding citizens
When offenders attend schools in correctional facilities, they are exposed to well-structured correc-
tional education programmes to prepare them for successful lives as law abiding and productive
citizens on release. For example, the findings in a study conducted to 124 offenders in the South
Eastern Region of the United States demonstrate that all offenders attended educational programmes
in a well-organized correctional facility, controlled and safe setting. Therefore, it seems, since these
participants attended classes in a safe and well-structured educational programme, they likely tasted
stable academic life for the first time (Messemer & Valentine, 2004). In this case, it appears that
correctional education has a potential of countering rejection of offenders in communities “by
preparing the prisoners for active citizenship” (Costelloe & Warner, 2014, p. 31).

It is apparent, if offenders are transformed into law-abiding citizens in societies, this means that
certain standards which are compatible with individuals’ lives have been met (Van Waters, 1995).
However, “there is no guarantee that any prisoner will automatically transform into a law-abiding
citizen simply by becoming better educated academically or by learning a trade” (Thomas, 2012,
p. 178). What is evident is that “education seems to birth the realisation of particular potentials and facilitates the emergence of the true self, a self who has hope for a brighter future” (Van Wyk,
As a result, the majority of released offenders may become, law-abiding citizens (Bosworth, Campbell, Demby, Ferranti, & Santos, 2005). In essence, research demonstrates that correctional education programmes which transfer market-related skills and lower offending behaviour may help offenders to become “law-abiding citizens” upon release (US Department of Education, 2007, p. 2).

4.4. Employment skills
Employment is critical to offender reintegration. As a result, offender reintegration in society, with the hope of preventing repeating offenses, is perceived to be one of the objectives of rehabilitation process (Omar, 2011). But, internationally, the majority of ex-offenders face challenges in communities; thus, reintegration becomes difficult. “These obstacles arise from problems with internal and external capabilities (e.g. stigma, lack of educational and vocational skills) which impede them from obtaining the things that matter most to them” (Barnao et al., 2015). For instance, the findings in a study conducted to 52 ex-offenders in South Africa demonstrate that a high percentage of ex-offenders struggle with reintegration in communities due to a criminal record. In this case, questionnaires findings demonstrate that 62% (25 out of 40) of ex-offenders were unemployed (Vandala, 2018). But, employment is considered as a “prerequisite” for reintegration in communities (O’Reilly, 2014, p. 1). Therefore, ex-offenders need employment to be self-sufficient and not to return to crime (Burt, 2014). The dominant perception is that “employment is a key factor in reducing recidivism.” Therefore, interventions which help in improving offenders’ employability on release are necessary (Costelloe & Warner, 2014, p. 30). In this case, correctional education seems to be a stepping stone due to its potential of equipping offenders with employment skills (Hawley, Murphy, & Souto-Otero, 2013). For instance, the findings in a study conducted to 30,207 ex-offenders who attended education programmes at Texas Department of Corrections in the US, demonstrate that 70% of respondents managed to secure jobs during their first year of release from correctional facilities (Fabelo, 2002). These findings depict a substantial contribution of correctional education to ex-offenders’ employment.

4.5. Recidivism rates
Correctional education seems to play a pivotal role in reducing recidivism rates in correctional facilities. However, scholars have not yet reached a consensus on the definition of recidivism, but; it may be attributed to “re-arrest through reconviction to incarceration in the case of prisoners” (Graffam, Shinkfield, & Lavelle, 2014, p. 352). According to Ngabonziza and Singh (2012, p. 91) recidivism is “a behaviour process or pattern” in which offenders who were previously sentenced in correctional facilities “or community corrections” re-offend, and re-admitted to correctional facilities. Therefore, “what constitutes recidivism is subject to varying definitions and methodologies” (Ngabonziza & Singh, 2012, p.89). Generally, recidivism rate is used to measure success of correctional education (Gehring, 2000). For instance, the results in a study conducted at New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, State Department of Corrections and Community Corrections and Supervision, demonstrate that ex-offenders who finished college programmes in correctional facilities had minimal recidivism rates when compared with the “comparison group” (Kim & Clark, 2013, p. 202). Furthermore, the findings in a study undertaken between (2005–2009) in Indiana ‘IDOC division suggest;

66.7% of the offenders who had a college education had been employed in a variety of job sectors, at least one quarter in any given year in the study period of 2005–2009, since their initial release in 2005. (Lockwood, Nally, Taipai, & Knutson, 2012, p. 388)

Therefore, empirical evidence seems to suggest that educated offenders have more chances of securing employment, subsequently, chances of re-offending may be minimal. This empirical evidence seems to be congruent with a plethora of scholars who postulate that recidivism rates are low to ex-offenders who attended correctional education (Lockwood, Nally, & Ho, 2016; O’Reilly, 2014; Varghese & Cunnings, 2013; Winterfield et al., 2009). It appears that the success of correctional education in reducing recidivism rates emanates from the fact that it targets criminogenic needs. Criminogenic needs refer to, “factors that can influence whether an offender will return to a life of crime and can also
be changed through interventions” (Varghese & Cunnings, 2013, p. 1018). For example, in the case of correctional education, the “primary criminogenic needs” which may be targeted in offenders are “employment, accommodation, drugs and alcohol, mental health, social networks, cognitive skills, and attitudes” (Ngabonziza & Singh, 2012, p. 93).

### 4.6. Literacy levels

A high number of ex-offenders struggle to secure employment due to low literacy levels. Another contributing factor is that some incarcerated individuals have “very limited and past educational experience” as a result, they have entitlement to education to curtail previous education disadvantages (Warner, 2018, p. 34). According to Vacca (2004) ex-offenders find it difficult to secure employment due to inadequate work experience and low literacy levels. For instance, the findings in a study conducted in New Zealand, demonstrate that comprehension reading difficulties predict recidivism’s seriousness, persistence and continued offending behaviour upon release (Rucklidge, Mclean, & Bateup, 2013). Therefore, correctional education seems to close this gap by improving literacy levels for reintegration in communities. In summary, giving priority to offender literacy requirements in correctional facilities appears to increase chances of securing employment and furthering studies on release, subsequently; may contribute to reduced recidivism rates (Jones, Powell, & Gary, 2014). However, adults in correctional facilities may not initially be attracted to formal classes, may prefer to attend “classes in health and physical education or the creative arts area” (Kett, 2001, p. 63). But; improving literacy levels does not require formal classes only; this may be done by giving offenders access to a variety of reading material. For instance, the right to offender rehabilitation can be put into practice through “reading and writing material, education and electricity accessible in correctional centres” (Omar, 2011, p. 23). As a result, remedial reading interventions are perceived to play a pivotal role in preventing delinquency (Cole & Cohen, 2013).

### 4.7. Socio-economic status

Correctional education has a potential of improving socio-economic status in societies if ex-offenders manage to secure jobs on release. This perspective is based on the fact that “the profile” of incarcerated people reflects poverty, illiteracy, and social inadequacy according to social standards (Lockwood et al., 2012, p. 382). In this case, correctional education is perceived as an instrument of creating future opportunities for offenders (Hunte, 2010). It is believed, an offender who receives education while incarcerated “could be released from prison with a positive attitude and become a productive member of society” (Ubah & Robinson, 2003, p. 118). Therefore, correctional education may help by equipping offenders with skills and knowledge required for employment; thus, improve offenders’ quality of life. This perspective seems to be congruent with the findings in a study conducted by Hawley et al. (2013) which outline economic and social benefits of correctional education. The general assumption is that ex-offenders may be ready for reintegration in societies if correctional education managers could focus on equipping them with skills, subsequently; “saves money and also improves the quality of life within the community” (Brown, 2011, p. 339). The assumption is that employment could help ex-offenders to support families, live productively, acquire life skills and boost their self-esteem (Keena & Simmons, 2014). In summary, receiving education qualifications and securing employment opportunities may give offenders “a sense of belonging and self-worth and is a social role that promotes inclusion, participation and social and economic well-being” (O’Reilly, 2014, p. 1). For instance, it is widely documented that post-secondary correctional education has a potential of improving ex-offenders’ economic and social status, subsequently; reduce offending behaviour (Palmer, 2012). But; more research is still needed to outline ex-offenders’ quality of life in communities (Lewis, 2006). The research should focus on how “correctional and vocational education affects employment, family relations, income generated within the community, positive decision-making, and intergenerational mentoring” (Lewis, 2006, p. 293).

### 4.8. Public safety

One of the most important objectives of implementing offender rehabilitation programmes is to increase public safety (Herbig & Hesselink, 2013). But, in a number of instances, “policymakers and
the general public may view prison educational programming as a waste of tax dollars on an undeserving population, but these programs may offer public safety benefits and future savings in corrections spending” (Duwe & Clark, 2014, p. 455). In this case, correctional education seems to play a significant role in promoting public safety. This perception emanates from the fact that, offenders who participated in correctional education seem to enjoy successful lives after release (Miller, 2014). An overarching assumption is that securing a job decreases recidivism rates (Johnson, 2013). Ultimately, reduced recidivism rates through education may be beneficial to all citizens (Burt, 2014). In this case, correctional education seems to support “security, public safety and rehabilitation in the entire range of Correctional Services.” Equally, empirical evidence advocates that correctional education reduces recidivism rates, subsequently; increases public safety (Steurer et al., 2010).

4.9. Costs of incarceration
Correctional education seems to have a potential of reducing costs of incarceration, since different studies seem to portray that offenders who participate in education during incarceration period are less likely to return to correctional facilities (Bosworth et al., 2005; Kim & Clark, 2013; Lockwood et al., 2012). Therefore, “economically speaking, it is in the public's best interest to invest in all members of society particularly if this investment yields a pro-social, active citizen” (Brazil, 2006, p. 4). For instance, in the US, it costs Government about $30,000 for each offender annually. In this case, incarceration costs are enormous; thus, correctional education may contribute to substantial savings for taxpayers (Piotrowski & Lathorp, 2012). Equally, research suggests that the costs of incarceration in societies together with the cost of crime, loss of salaries due to incarceration and the cost of welfare grants to families result to a financial burden to the Government (Lockwood et al., 2016). But, research demonstrates that offenders who attended correctional education could earn high salaries (Piotrowski & Lathorp, 2012). This factor may contribute positively to the country's economy through reduced crime and recidivism rates. The assumption is that; “even small reductions in recidivism can save millions of dollars in costs associated with keeping the recidivist offender in prison for longer periods of time” (Bosworth et al., 2005, p. 3).

5. Methodology
This section outlines methodology which guided this study.

5.1. Philosophical assumption
The philosophical assumption which influenced this research is John Dewey’s pragmatism. Pragmatists are informed by both quantitative and qualitative data in research. Therefore, pragmatism seems to be an appropriate philosophical assumption for this study since one of its objectives was to collect both quantitative and qualitative data when conducting research in the field. Equally, some scholars perceive pragmatism as “an umbrella paradigm” for a convergent mixed methods research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 78).

5.2. Research questions
This study was guided by the subsequent research questions in the field.

5.2.1. Primary question
What is the transformative effect of correctional education as perceived by ex-offenders?

5.2.2. Secondary questions
(a) To what extent do ex-offenders perceive the transformative effect of correctional education?
(b) How do ex-offenders perceive the transformative effect of correctional education?

5.3. Research design
The current study adopted mixed methods design due to the interest of collecting both quantitative and qualitative data in the research field. Mixed methods design consists of three core designs;
exploratory sequential, explanatory sequential and convergent. This study adopted convergent design to compare quantitative and qualitative data at multiple levels of the study and attain better understanding of the phenomenon under study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Guetterman, 2017). Equally, the assumption was that convergent mixed methods design may help in obtaining credible findings on the transformative effect of correctional education.

5.4. Data collection & sampling
Quantitative and qualitative data were collected to 52 ex-offenders in the South African Department of Correctional Services (DCS). Purposive sampling helped in selecting ex-offenders who attended correctional education programmes for a period of 2–5 years in the Department of Correctional Services. Gender representation was also taken into consideration when selecting participants for the current study. Multiple data collection sessions were held in two regions; Gauteng and KwaZulu Natal in the South African Department of Correctional Services. The actual data collection process was preceded by pilot testing of a questionnaire form to five (5) participants with demographic characteristics similar to the research sample. The objective of pilot testing was to improve accuracy of the research instrument in order to acquire credible results for this study.

Questionnaires and in-depth interviews sessions were conducted parallel in the research field. During data collection process, quantitative and qualitative data were given equal status. For instance, a questionnaire form with both closed and open-ended questions was utilized as one of data collection instruments to a total of 40 participants. Questionnaires were completed in multiple sessions of 30–40 min in the research field. Individual in-depth interviews sessions of 60–90 min were conducted to a total of 12 participants parallel to questionnaire sessions, but during the same phase in the research field. All in-depth interviews sessions were captured with an audio-recorder.

5.5. Data analysis & integration
Data were analysed according to Convergent Qual Synthesis approach as propounded by Pluye and Hong (2014). During this process, data were transcribed from different sources; field notes, audio recorder and questionnaire forms through Microsoft Word Office. But, data acquired through questionnaires and in-depth interviews were analysed independently for comparison and validation. Codes were extracted from both data sets through coding and some qualitative responses were changed into quantitative data. For example; qualitative responses such as yes or no were counted and changed into numeric values or numbers (Yes = 10; No = 2) and later converted into percentages for reporting. This phenomenon is known as data transformation. Data transformation refers to changing either qualitative into quantitative data or quantitative into qualitative data during data analysis process (Guetterman, 2017; Kumar, 2012; Onwuegbuzie & Dickson, 2008). Codes extracted from in-depth interviews and questionnaires data were developed into two sets of independent emergent themes.

Subsequently, both sets of emergent themes (questionnaires and in-depth interviews) were compared side by side and consolidated into a new set of themes. Equally, quantitative and qualitative data acquired through questionnaires and in-depth interviews were compared and merged under similar themes. During this stage, data analysis process followed mixed methods data analysis steps (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Consequently, quantitative and qualitative data were integrated and arranged in a manner suitable for reporting. Data integration refers to merging of quantitative and qualitative data at multiple stages of the study to achieve an integrated mixed methods research. Integration of quantitative and qualitative data at different levels of research is key in a mixed methods study. As a result, quantitative and qualitative data in the current study were connected or merged at multiple levels of research such as design, sampling, data collection, data analysis, interpretation and reporting stages; using the convergent design data integration criterion promulgated by (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2013). The objective was to enhance credibility of findings and achieve an integrated mixed methods research.
5.6. Ethical considerations
Approval to conduct research was granted by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) in the Department of Correctional Services. Informed consent forms were signed by all participants before questionnaires and in-depth interview sessions. Permission for use an audio-recorder was granted through a signed agreement before individual in-depth interview sessions. Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed to all participants before participation in the present study. Pseudonyms are used to conceal participants’ identity when reporting results in Table 1.

6. Results
Quantitative and qualitative results on the transformative effect of correctional education are presented through mixed methods visual joint display (Guetterman, 2017). The results are reported under two themes or domains; transform and transformative effect in Table 1.

7. Discussion
The results on the transformative effect of correctional education are discussed under two themes; transform and transformative effect.

7.1. Transform
Quantitative results portray high convergence in both data sources, in questionnaires 100% (40 out of 40) and in-depth interviews 100% (12 out of 12) in unison; respondents believe that correctional education transforms. Qualitative findings confirm that correctional education transforms offenders and contributes to normal life (Vusi and Luvo). In this case, quantitative and qualitative results seem to converge on the fact that correctional education transforms. Therefore, one can surmise that the present study’s findings make a significant contribution to the Criminal Justice System by providing concrete empirical evidence on the effectiveness of correctional education in offender rehabilitation process since respondents in the current study were among beneficiaries of correctional education programmes in the South African Department of Correctional Services.

7.2. Transformative effect
Qualitative results on the transformative effect of correctional education in Table 1; seem to converge with quantitative results on the fact that correctional education transforms. For instance, the sub-themes seem to confirm that correctional education transforms by changing behaviour and attitude, boosting self-confidence and self-esteem, reviving humanity, improving employment, cognitive and literacy skills and transform offenders into law-abiding citizens. These transformative effects of correctional education are critical in offender rehabilitation process since the majority of incarcerated individuals have a complex life history of substance abuse, low self-esteem and self-confidence, inadequate education, negative attitude, lack of employment skills, low literacy levels and criminal thinking which contribute to incarceration. In addition, some respondents’ quotes in Table 1; affirm that correctional education is the best programme to give someone a second chance in life since it gives a person a sense of living and influences the way of socialization on release. Subsequently, some respondents recommend that correctional education should be made compulsory to offenders (David, Sanele, Dumisani, Ziph and Lindi). Deducing from these findings, correctional education seems to play a significant role in offender rehabilitation process since it transforms offenders, subsequently; may reduce crime and recidivism rates. For example, some respondents in the current study proclaim to have a bright future, not to be troublesome after release from prison and using computer and finance management skills acquired during incarceration period to change other people’s lives in communities (Gugu, Lindi and Anele). The current study’s results seem to be consistent with the findings in a study conducted by Hall (2015) which consider correctional education as a tool for reducing recidivism rates. In this case, the present study’s findings seem to provide the Criminal Justice System with tangible evidence for considering correctional education as an engine in offender rehabilitation process since it has a potential of transforming offenders into law abiding and productive citizens upon release. This perspective seems to be congruent with a plethora of international scholars who postulate that correctional education transforms offenders (Costelloe & Warner, 2014; Keena & Simmons, 2014; O’Reilly, 2014; Vacca, 2004; Van Wyk, 2014) since it has a potential of changing behaviour, boost self-esteem and
Table 1. Results on the Transformative Effect of Correctional Education

| THEME 1: TRANSFORM | QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS | QUALITATIVE FINDINGS |
|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
|                    | Sub-themes            |                      |
|                    | Questionnaires N = 40 |                      |
|                    | In-depth interviews N = 12 |                  |
| Transform          | Yes = 40, 100%        | Vusi: “Education can transform offenders. According to me, I wish education can be compulsory. There are people who cannot read or write. It should be a condition for release, that an offender will not be released until finishing ABET Level 4.” |
| Does not transform | No = 0, 0%            | Luvo: “I told myself that I committed crime, therefore education was my only way. Education is the key to normal life.” |

| THEME 2: TRANSFORMATIVE EFFECT | QUALITATIVE FINDINGS |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
|                                | SUB-THEMES           |
|                                | PARTICIPANTS’ QUOTES |
| Changes behaviour & attitude   | David: “Education is the key to success. It changes people behaviour and attitudes. It helps to think deep before you can take decision. It helps to be able to communicate with the outsides.” |
|                                | Jack: “Offenders can change their life. The way of socialization to community and to other peers.” |
| Boosts self-confidence         | Sanelo: “Education open a mind of a person; it changes your attitude. It gives you a sense of belonging, your state of mind rise to a higher level. It also rises your confidence and you become comfortable to yourself. It really brings back a sense of living again, you become alive, so it is very important to study.” |
| Promotes growth                | Dumisani: “Yes, focus on improving my mind. Yes, education made me grow as a person. Education keep your mind grow with your age.” |
| Revives humanity               | Zipho: “Education in Correctional Services is essential because it revives humanity. It is the best programme to give someone a second chance in life. It should be promoted. It should be enforced to every young person.” |
|                                | Lindi: “I have developed good personality traits, moral values and behavioural patterns towards my fellow humans. No one has ever complained about me since my release from prison.” |
| Boosts self-esteem             | Rethabile: “It helps one to have high self-esteem, to believe in one self. One can read and write. One can see things in a different way through education.” |
|                                | Gugu: “Yes, I was full of anger. I have no anger now. I listen to a person. Social Work programmes made me a better person. Education transform. I can see my future is bright now. It boosts self-esteem.” |
|                                | Anele: “Education should be an obligation to each and every person who comes into the system. Education helps you to understand how you affect other people’s lives. It should be instilled to everybody so that people should regain their self-esteem.” |
| Equip with employment skills   | Jabu: “To help the offenders to transform and renew their mind to become new creatures. To help them by giving the skills to eliminate poverty, unemployed.” |
|                                | Anele: “Computer skills, Financial skills. I am using those skills even today and change the lives of other people.” |
| THEME 1: TRANSFORM | QUALITATIVE FINDINGS |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS | PARTICIPANTS’ QUOTES |
| Improves literacy levels | Respondent | Literacy | Before | After |
| John | Reading | Poor | Good |
| Lifa | Numeracy | Poor | Good |
| Thabo | Speaking | Fair | Good |
| Thando | Writing | Poor | Good |
| Improves cognitive skills | Thami: “Education change our evil thinking and become a better people and gives us the direction to take in life which is good for us. Education is the key to our life to live a good life.” |
| Changes into law-abiding | Sizwe: “Education is a powerful weapon that we can use to change the world. It also does the same to offenders because of your education changes your life style. An offender can be a law abiding citizen through education because you will be able to get a better job and stop committing crime and you can assist youth not to commit crime but study hard for their future life.” |
self-confidence, equip offenders with employment skills and improve literacy levels. Equally, the current study’s findings depict that correctional education transforms offenders by improving literacy levels. For example, the results in Table 1, depict that some respondents report improvement in reading, numeracy, speaking and writing skills after attending correctional education programmes during incarceration period (John, Lifa, Thabo and Thando). These findings seem to suggest that correctional education plays a significant role in improving the quality of life of incarcerated individuals after release due to the fact improved literacy levels may enhance chances of securing employment opportunities and furthering education qualifications upon release.

8. Conclusion & recommendations
This study concludes that correctional education makes a significant contribution in offender rehabilitation process by changing behaviour and attitude, boosting self-esteem and self-confidence, enhancing employment skills, reviving humanity, improving cognitive skills, promoting growth, improving literacy levels and transforming offenders into law-abiding citizens. These transformative effects of correctional education may help in promoting public safety, reduce poverty and inequality globally. However, the current study’s findings may not be generalized, but could serve as a catalyst for provision of correctional education programmes in the Criminal Justice System worldwide.

Consequently, this study recommends that all Governments should strive to increase provision of correctional education programmes, especially vocational education and training programmes. For instance, increased implementation of “vocational training, counselling, peer counselling and faith-based rehabilitation led to reduction of recidivism by 72%” in Kenya (Munyowki, 2018, p. 11). In this case, vocational education and training programmes seem to promote employment and self-sufficiency upon release. Therefore, increasing provision of vocational training and education programmes in the Criminal Justice System may not only help in reducing crime and recidivism rates, but could promote public safety and improve socio-economic status in communities. Equally, this study recommends that the South African Government should adopt the Good Lives Model as an underpinning to all rehabilitation programmes due to its strength-based approach and focus on targeting criminogenic needs. This may help in reducing crime and recidivism rates in South Africa. Finally, this study recommends international research on the effect of correctional education on recidivism rates.

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Author details
Ntombizanele Gloria Vandala
E-mail: uzanele.mkosi@gmail.com
Formal Education Directorate, Department of Correctional Services, Republic of South Africa.

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