Research on Investigation of Students Attitudes and Participation in Prison Second Chance Schools of Sterea Ellada Region-Greece

Vasiliki Iliopoulou

Abstract: The concept, organization and implementation of educational programs, integrated into various educational structures – typical or non-typical - in detention facilities, have been processed by the State for several years and is one of its main aims at educational and penitentiary level. The inclusion and application of the penal code of articles and provisions concerning the establishment and operation of schools in prisons demonstrates the necessity of any educational process being offered and addressed to incarcerated persons during their sentence. Therefore, researches into the course of prison educational structures help and support the work of the State and achieve the goals it has set for the proper and unobstructed development of the framework within which prison will operate the system, with the ultimate goal of achieving successful results. In the past, studies and research have been conducted in Greece on the educational structure of SCSs, which operate outside prisons, on issues related to students-trainees, their motivations, perceptions and attitudes towards SCSs [1-2-3]. In addition, surveys in our country and abroad have been conducted regarding the functioning of prison educational institutions, students-trainees, their motivation for participation and their perceptions of the school [4-5-6-7-8-9]. The present study, which was conducted at the newly established Prisons of Central Greece Prisons, is expected to help investigate the motives, perceptions and attitudes of prisoners-students who are voluntarily involved in second-chance school education. In this way, it is possible to take into account, evaluate and exploit, by all stakeholders, elements and parameters that can support and potentially improve the work of prison education, especially nowadays as the State establishes and operating both new SCSs in more detention centers and new educational organizations, such as IEKs, in prisons.

Keywords: Second chance schools, Attitudes, Motivation, Participation in prison education.

Introduction

Purpose, Research Questions and Research Sample

The purpose of this study is to investigate the motivations for prisoners’ involvement in prison SCSs, as well as the views and attitudes of prisoners-students (trainees) regarding the functioning and work of SCSs. In addition, the following research questions arise:

- How do prisoners experience their role as students and what objective difficulties do they face in this role?
- Is there a need to create a curriculum within prisons as a continuation of SCSs?
- Is there any interest among prisoners-students (trainees) to continue their studies after their release?
- What are the additional benefits that detainees / trainees receive while studying at a SCS, in addition to the lower secondary school diploma?
- What are the observations of prisoners-students (trainees) about the impact that their involvement in a SCS has on a psychological and emotional level?
- Are there changes in the life-style of prisoners-students, in general, as they attend SCS lessons?

Regarding the sample of the study, the interviewees are prisoners-students (trainees) of the Second Chance Schools of Central Greece (1st SCS of Domokos and 1st SCS of Eleona Thebes), eight (08) men out of thirty-two (32) students-trainees of the school %, and eight (08) women out of thirty (30) students-trainees respectively, 26.5%.
Male prisoners-students attend the 1st SCS of Domokos and women prisoners students (trainees) belong to the 1st SCS of Eleona Thebes.

Sample Description
Male prisoners-students (trainees) present the following characteristics regarding their age, nationality and marital status, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Male students (trainees) of 1st SCS of Domokos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unmarried with children</td>
<td>18-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cypriot</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Regarding their age, four out of eight, i.e. 50%, are in the 18-30 age range, two in eight are between 31 and 41 years old, 25%, and one 25%, two out of eight are aged 42-52 years.
- In terms of nationality, three out of eight, 37.5%, are Greeks, a percentage of 50%, i.e four out of eight, are Albanians and finally one trainee comes from Cyprus, 12.5%.
- Regarding their marital status, 50%, four out of eight, are single children, two in eight, 25% of the sample, are married with children, one in eight, 12.5% of the sample , is unmarried with children and finally, 12.5%, i.e. one in eight, is divorced with children.

The female prisoners-students (trainees) present the following characteristics regarding their age, nationality and marital status as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Women students (trainees) of the 1st SCS of Eleona Thebes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unmarried with children</td>
<td>18-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Looking at their age, three in eight range between 18 and 30 years, 37.5%, four out of eight, ie 50%, are in the 31-41 age range, and one trainee is between 42-52 years old. , 12.5%.
- In terms of ethnicity, four out of eight, 50%, are Greeks, a percentage of 37.5%, ie three in eight, are Albanians and finally one trainee comes from Romania, 12.5% of the sample .
- Regarding their marital status, 50%, four out of eight, are divorced, one in eight, 12.5%, are married, 12.5% of the eight respondents in the sample. is divorced without ever having children, one in eight, 12.5%, is unmarried with children, and finally, only one in eight is unmarried, 12.5%.

Selection of Research Methodology
The main purpose of a scientific research is to provide answers to important questions using scientific methods [10]. A research in the social sciences is based on three key questions: the 'what' (subject of the research), the 'why' (feasibility of conducting research), and the 'how' (research methodology) [11-10].

Through this process it tries to give a picture of reality by analyzing the data that result from the data collected. Each research has an object, which deals with the formulation of a particular problem and then the definition of its boundaries.
That is to say, there is a specific framework within which the researcher is invited to move. An important part of the research is the foundation of the feasibility of the research effort, as well as the validity of the research process. The latter is ensured when research is carried out with techniques and tools (research methodology) that are accepted by the scientific community. In the social sciences, methodological approaches are usually of a quantitative or qualitative nature, depending on the type of research data.

Most of the time, the combination of these two methodological approaches is used, since the results of quantitative methods need to be compared with the pre-existing theoretical framework, while qualitative methods, due to their flexible structure, favor the development of new theoretical assumptions. Depending on the specifics and the specific objectives of the research, the appropriate tools are also identified by the researcher. In order to do an original work, one must first research what has been written so far on the subject to be presented.

In the present work, empirical research, with qualitative data to follow, is intended to confirm, challenge or enrich the findings from the literature review [11], which has already been carried out. In addition, the bibliographic review also helps in the formulation and implementation of qualitative research.

**Individual Interview**

Interviewing is one of the most flexible methods of collecting research data in the social sciences, since in some types of interviews (structured type) the main means of communication between the researcher and the subject are specific questions that the researcher has predetermined [12]. The present research will use the semi-structured interview, which is an intermediate situation between a perfectly structured interview and a completely open and free discussion.

In this type of interview, the researcher has pre-formed the question box (Interview Guide), but when conducting the interview he / she is able to formulate it in the order he / she wants at the moment and / or make extra questions and answers, in order to gather the information required by the research objectives.

The selection of the semi-structured interview in the present research is aimed at creating a personal and open communication on the research questions, which will give the prisoners - SCS students the opportunity to freely express their personal perceptions and motivations. In addition, it is possible to obtain other interesting data that the researcher may not have anticipated [13]. The advantages of interviewing the questionnaire for this research and the given researcher are presented below.

**Advantages of the Method**

Initially, perhaps the most important reason contributing to the choice of this method is the level of oral and written language of the learners, which is often quite low, since they have left school too early. In addition, interviews are indicated for ‘monitoring unexpected results’ [3], while being a two-way method resulting in more data being collected [14]. Specifically, the person who does the interview, the researcher comes into direct contact with the interviewee, has the ability to recast the question, if the latter does not understand it [15].

He/she can add questions that may arise during the interview and finally keep this information necessary and can give measurable results. The interview, therefore, as an oral procedure facilitates both the interviewee and the researcher and at the same time demonstrates the positive attitude of the participants towards the process [13]. The semi-structured interview methodology, however, also has some disadvantages, which should be taken into consideration by the researcher in order to avoid problems that may arise.

**Disadvantages of the Method**

Its disadvantages are characterized as very demanding in terms of time and data processing, and very often the respondent is influenced by the interviewer and the research itself [13]. In particular, the process is quite time-consuming [14-13], as each interview should be conducted by the researcher himself and will take a long time in relation to the questionnaire. That is, it requires sufficient time for the interviewer to plan and attempt to move within the framework he or she has set. This means that the researcher is very well prepared, well
aware of the purpose of the questions in order to gather the information he or she wants. Regarding the fact that the interviewee is very likely to be influenced by the interviewer, we would say that the research subjects do not try to mislead the researcher, but depending on how they perceive the question, they try to give the answer which they consider to be the most appropriate. Whether or not this happens, it depends on how the researcher perceives the research, the way they perceive the questions and what image they want to present [14]. In summary, researchers should consider both the advantages and disadvantages of the method when designing the research and the selection of questions.

**Interview Planning**

A very important factor to be taken into account is the situation that prevails in these institutions, in order to avoid a rigorous and rigid methodology that will affect the outcome. That is, the methodology should be flexible in terms of the age, sentence and "treatment" of the prisoners at the institution [16]. In addition, the process of planning the interview, that is to find, formulate and form the questions, contributes to the bibliographic review, in order to use the previous experience in similar surveys in the formulation of the questionnaire.

Thus, the questions are not arbitrarily selected, but they are also the product of scientific research (literature review) and contribute to the reliability of the result. The researcher then notes, in detail or in a list, all the information that he or she would like to gather during the interview. This 'messy' list of desired information then needs to be organized and the questions put in a logical order. At this point, it is important to mention that the interviewer should seek to feel comfortable during the process, so that a great deal of attention should be paid to the series of questions.

In particular, it is advisable to begin with questions that facilitate and encourage the respondent and gradually the more difficult questions should follow. It is very important, when designing questions, not to "guide" the respondent and, moreover, to use language understandable to him/her [14]. On the one hand, in the first case, there is a possibility that invalid information may emerge, while on the other hand, the interviewee is not facilitated, which may require clarification and this can be time consuming. In addition, in some cases the respondent may feel at a disadvantage and not feel comfortable following the interview, a situation that is not desired by the researcher, who tries to maintain a "comfortable" and mild climate during the interview. Additional information that the researcher needs to take into account in order to maintain an appropriate climate for the interview is to have a prologue prepared before the interview begins.

This foreword will explain where the resulting data will be used and in any case that confidentiality will be used during the process. However, a pleasant climate should be sought by closing the interview, where the researcher should always thank the interviewee for his/her participation and ask him/her if there is anything he/she would like to add [14].

**Organization of the Interview**

The organization of the interview is mainly about how the researcher will manage the way he collects his results, his time and the means he will use. So, for his convenience, he can use a tape recorder and notes to make sure he will gather all the information he will need [14]. In addition, during transcription, he may be able to listen to the interviewee’s responses more than once and to include in his conclusions evidence that may not have been understood during the interview.

Of course, one should ask for the authorization of the interviewee as well, when he/she uses the tape recorder and this task requires both the disclosure of the research-investigation and the notification of the IDEKE research license to the prison managers. Finally, checking for proper functioning of the tape recorder should be performed from time to time. In addition, it is important to determine the length of the interview and the timing of the interview.

In the context of establishing a good relationship with the interviewee, silence breaks should be allowed and no stress should appear to end the interview [14]. Finally, it is very important to mention those parameters that should be taken into account in order for the results to be measurable and
as valid as possible ([17]. These parameters are presented below:

- Open and case closed questions will be used, i.e. questions answered in a specific way and a finite amount of information.
- Respondents will be given instructions and clarifications.
- The questions will be formulated with vocabulary and expressions accessible to the respondents, taking into account their educational level.
- Also, during the pilot phase [17], a questionnaire could be completed to help feedback on its design:
  - How long did it take you to complete the questionnaire?
  - Were the instructions clear?
  - Were there questions vague or ambiguous? If so, which ones and why?
  - Did you object to answering some of the questions?

The Interview Guide is based on

- The review of international literature
- The review of Greek literature on issues similar to our own issue
- The results of the pilot implementation using a questionnaire to be distributed in the pilot phase.

Quality Analysis of Content

The present study has selected qualitative content analysis because it helps to access the text messages that were formed from the interviewing of prisoners-students, systematically and qualitatively. Qualitative content analysis studies the answers given carefully and socially, given that the frequency of certain features, which appear within the answers, is unrelated to their significance.

Each repetition of a report does not have the same significance. Also, omissions or silences in the text can be significant [18]. Thus, the qualitative analysis seeks to take into account what the respondent is able to silence, that is, to discover the 'underlying' or 'creepy' content that he or she perceives through 'hesitations', silences, repetitions, etc. p.[19]. Although content analysis can be applied in a variety of different ways, some basic steps and stages are usually followed.

- It is first necessary to elaborate theoretically and clarify the research subject and research questions. Usually, this stage goes through the whole research process as it is reshaped during its progress.
- Then, precise identification of quality material is required.
- Next, the logging and analysis unit is identified, that is, the parts of the answers that are of research interest.
- Then, the conceptual categories in which the qualitative data are classified and on which the content analysis is essentially based should be systematized.
- Finally, in order to give results, the material must be coded within each category.

According to Samanidis [20], “qualitative content analysis helps to understand that the texts, which are the material to be analyzed, have a specific purpose and operate within a specific socio-political and ideological context. Texts are also viewed as a social practice with its predispositions, orientations and directions, on the assumption that it promotes specific analyzes of the world and at the same time reinforces certain aspects of reality that are most often related to the interests of particular social groups”.

Expected Results

The conclusions of the research, which will be made after a qualitative analysis of the content of the data, should be compared with the results of previous surveys, to determine whether the motivations, perceptions and attitudes of prisoners-students (trainees) are common or similar to other SCS students’ characteristics. It is also possible to compare the findings with those of previous investigations that may have been carried out in other prison SCSs.

Participation motivations, perceptions and attitudes of prisoners-trainees and especially those attending prison SCSs, who are also the target group of this work, can trigger adaptive changes in SCSs program as well as databases for configuration an institutional framework for the proper functioning of SCSs or other training structures within detention facilities (prisons). Given that the purpose of a SCS is to enable adults to integrate into the social and productive fabric, promote equality of opportunity, resist and combat social
exclusion, raise awareness of environmental issues, develop entrepreneurship and promote of gender equality, the importance of the above is great. Recognizing, therefore, the real needs of learners helps to take measures and actions targeted at these groups, as well as measures to improve the conditions of inclusion in the educational system of pupils threatened by inequality in order to prevent marginalization. In summary, we would say that the results of this work can contribute to early diagnosis and problem solving and at the same time enhance the capacity building of learners based on their needs, cognitive level and social skills.

Conclusions
The concept of social reintegration emerged at the end of the 19th century to replace penalty as punishment, by "improving" the person who has exhibited abusive behavior and committed an offense. The penitentiary system has turned towards this end, implementing a number of programs that would help to rebuild their personality. Along the way, there have been efforts that have been successful and others that have failed.

Thus, it is now considered that social reintegration should be pursued with respect for human rights, while the state should support ex-prisoners in their quest for a smooth return to social life. Efforts to create educational opportunities in prisons have begun since 1989, as the factors imposing it have been visible and clear, given that by the time statistics mentioned above had shown a high proportion of prisoners with very low levels of education. To this day, these rates appear to be at the same level, revealing the high and serious need for prison education. In addition, these rates indicate one of the main causes of prisoners' abusive behavior, the cause of unemployment.

Therefore, it is necessary to encourage prisoners to participate in educational programs aimed at acquiring inmates in such a way as to minimize their chances of recidivism when returning to society, mainly due to unemployment. The main incentives for prisoners to start attending a SCS program, as found in the present study, are to reduce their sentences, obtain a high school diploma, which increases the likelihood of post-release vocational rehabilitation and eventually their personal evolution and development through the improvement of various skills. These results are consistent with the findings of previous studies, as presented in the literature review [4-5-6-7-8-9]. These incentives are met by almost all prisoners-trainees, especially as motivators to make the decision to start school. But along the way, as other studies have shown, as well as the present work, the incentives to continue to participate in the educational process vary and focus on the benefits they derive from their personal development, as individuals and personalities, given the great gravity in the ability they employ through their journey to SCS to redefine and reshape attitudes and behaviors. During the course of study, prisoners-students recognize even more benefits from the above, such as:

- Fight routine during their detention, as they have something to do throughout the day with tasks and reading.
- Creating and providing daily contact with the "outside world" through their teachers, which makes them feel that they are not completely cut off from society.
- Improve their psychological state. Most prisoners-students do not fail to emphasize how beneficial their school employment is to their psychology by talking about "psychotherapy".
- Positive, rewarding employment as well as deterring extreme, abusive behavior or as one prisoner-trainee typically puts it, "prevents you from doing many bad things".
- Developing and embodying a sense of opportunity/s to change, redesign their life course.

Many of the above have been mentioned in previous research, such as "fighting routine"[6-8] or "contact with the outside world" [6], but also additional benefits such as " working with something positive rather than something negative in prison "or" creating the mood to redesign their lives ".

In general we would say that inmates - trainees, evaluate SCS very positively, as similar research results have shown in other SCSs, not necessarily prison schools [1-2-3] and really seem to live up to their expectations. They are actively involved in the learning process and strive to enjoy, integrate as much of this opportunity as
possible, to improve their lives both in prison
during their incarceration and after serving
their sentences and being released. They call
the SCS an "oasis", in relation to the reality
of living in prison, honestly stating that it
greatly and substantially improves their
daily lives. All of the above are a point of
reference and answer to the research
questions that were initially sought and
processed.

Therefore, responses are given to the way
inmates (prisoners) are experiencing the new
role they have adopted as students, and there
is a great need to establish a curriculum
within prisons as a continuation and
extension of SCS and in some cases
expectation and, in part, the need to pursue
post-release studies are evident.

The interviews also show the additional
benefits those inmates - in addition to
obtaining a high school diploma - have as a
catalytic effect on their psychological well-
being, on their healthy emotional
development and on a new, more rational
and more civil society-based approach, on a
new, more logically redefined basis. The
benefits, therefore, of SCS prisoners -
trainees are undeniable, both in terms of the
research they have done and the testimonies
of the prisoners themselves. However, there
are factors that can often be an obstacle to
achieving the goals of prison SCSs, both in
terms of living in Greek prisons and the lack
of institutional frameworks for operating
educational facilities in detention facilities.

Factors such as overcrowding, lack of
prisoners' segregation, or, sometimes,
inability to control drug trafficking, a serious
shortage of social services and health
services, or weaknesses in the more complete
and meaningful professional training of
prison officers etc., are often able to
disintegrate, "tear down", or at worst level,
all that which with the support and
assistance of the State, are "built" within the
school. Therefore, it is clear that the
functioning of prison SCSs alone does not
guarantee their achievement, that is to say,
the social reintegration of the individual, if
no general efforts are made to upgrade the
penitentiary system, since a smooth and the
highest likelihood of successful reintegration
treatment of those who were given a certain
incarceration sentence.

Moreover, no matter how successful an in-
prison training program is, it makes no sense
if it is abruptly interrupted by release,
without the possibility of continuing any
other complementary or expanding
educational structure because such
conditions unduly confirm the indifference of
the "unprepared" society to ensure decisive,
effective and responsible reintegration of the
individual. Finally, it should be noted that
the present work, which relied largely on
qualitative research and analysis, drawing on
elements and data from a relatively small
sample of research, could be the reason for
further research, mainly quantitative, which
they may be broader, cover a larger sample,
and be carried out with more specific and
more detailed reports, approaches and
metrics.

As a result, it is possible to orientate and
focus on future research and studies that will
concern and focus, more specifically, on
parameters and areas related to the gender
of prisoners - trainees, their age, occupational
and marital status, their former course of
study up to and including the commencement
of their studies at SCS, the smooth and
proper functioning of the educational
organization within the prison, within the
framework of the current penitentiary
system, the possibility of restructuring or
voltage existing educational programs and
structures and more elements of relevant
content and interest [21-58].

References

perceptions of trainees at Pyrgos Second
Opportunity School about the effectiveness
of Counseling Careers for their smooth
integration into the labor market.
Bachelor's thesis. Hellenic Open
University - School of Humanities, Studies
in Education.

Students' Perceptions of Self Image (Self
Esteem). Bachelor's thesis. Greek Open
University-School of Humanities, Studies
in Education.

3. Lazou A (2008) Students' views on the
learning barriers they face in Second
Chance Schools. The case of SBS Pyrgos.
Bachelor's thesis. Hellenic Open University - School of Humanities, Studies in Education.


5. Landritsis I (2007) Second Chance School Trainees: Research on their Characteristics and Cultural Capital at the SSSs of Patras, Pyrgos and Agrinio, University of Patras - School of Social and Human Sciences Postgraduate Education - Primary Education Department.


37. Recommendation no. R (89) 12 from the committee of ministers to the state-members for education in prison (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 October 1989 at the 429th meeting of the Ministers.
48. Nikolopoulos G (2005) the issue of professional reintegration of former convicts: Theoretical findings, research findings and social actions. Social Research Inspection, 118 C.


55. Government Gazette B 1169 / 04.08.2010, "Renaming Second Chance Schools".

