

Review of: "The Effectiveness of Prison Education in Reducing Criminal Recidivism: A Systematic Review"

Lorna Balie

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Thank you for this important piece of research. This is an excellent research question, and I found the topic very interesting. What would also be important to look at is the type and quality of education provided by each of the studies reviewed, as not all education is equal or provides the same opportunities, if at all; opportunities are provided to former prisoners within their country-context.

In both the abstract and introduction, the definition of recidivism could be more refined, as it is generally defined as the re-entry or return to prison and also as to come into conflict with the justice system, rather than only as a relapse in criminal behaviour. In the Discussion section, the author writes that recidivism is defined and measured differently in the studies reviewed. This needs to be discussed upfront in the background/lit review/conceptual analysis section, and then adequately addressed in the methodology section as part of the selection criteria analysis. In addition, the author does not explicitly highlight why this research is important and the gap in literature it attempts to fill.

The phrase "deprivation of liberty" is vague and may encompass more meanings than intended. Replacing the phrase with "prison sentence" should suffice.

I agree to a certain extent that education is important to contribute to a reduction in recidivism, especially for economic reasons, but it is unfortunately not key, as you mentioned later in the article that a number of factors are required for a successful entry into society and prevention of recidivism.

The author has a sound methodology, clear and well-justified selection criteria.

The in-text referencing in the "Characteristics of studies" section may have more parentheses than needed. Please review if necessary.

The discussion and conclusion adequately summarise the link between the analysis and the results, which validates the findings of this study.

