

# Creative art education: A tool for rehabilitation of adult females incarcerated in a correctional centre in South Africa<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

*In countries worldwide, creative art education for incarcerated adult females has been greatly improved and is recognised as making a valuable contribution to rehabilitation. Despite this recognition, some countries refuse to recognise such an art programme. Very few qualitative studies have explored creative art education for adult female offenders in correctional centres. This study explored how a creative art education programme can play an important role in helping female offenders escape emotions and bad experiences in confinement. The participants for this study were four incarcerated adult females. The data collection was generated from a Medium-C correctional centre in East London, Province of Eastern Cape, South Africa. Adult female offenders were organised by the correctional centre management. A thematic analysis was performed to explore the aspects of creative art education as expression that influenced the correctional centre to support and recognise the art programme for rehabilitation of adult female offenders by allowing them to develop their skills of creative independence. The findings included that the creative artworks of adult female offenders were seized as punishment. Creative art education programmes are perceived as a harmless advantage for offenders in terms of discipline, self-expression and personal transformation. Data gathered from offenders resulted in greater understanding of their lifestyle and expression through their creative artworks. The use of observation, interviews and a focus group was an excellent qualitative approach that provided meaning to data collected. This study suggested that the Department of Correctional Services should attract qualified creative art education professionals to reduce boredom, conflicts, recidivism, and to promote self-expression and opportunities among female offenders.*

**Keywords:** rehabilitation, creative art, correctional centre, adult female recidivism

## INTRODUCTION

In November 2018, interviews and observations were conducted with adult female offenders. In South Africa, the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) has an expectation that incarcerated adult female offenders will quickly change their lives because of confinement. Most of the adult females were very sad that creative arts education was taken away from the holding cells, not recognised and not supported as a component of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) within correctional centres. This research aimed to understand the reasons for the lack of support for creative art education programmes for incarcerated

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adult females. A creative art education programme can contribute to personal skills development, personal change or transformation, self-expression, and the positive self-worth of adult female offenders. The sample of this study was purposively selected. The participants, that is, adult female offenders, were selected based on their creative art portfolios, which consist of drawing, crafts and paintings. The Criminal Justice System (CJS), Department of Education (DoE), Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) and Department of Social Development are the institutions that have the authority to mandate creative art education for the benefit of incarcerated adult female offenders and the power to implement such a programme.

### Problem statement

The problem statement of this study is to increase understanding regarding the lack of support for self-directed creative art education of incarcerated adult female offenders. Potelwa (2019: 242-243) showed Figure 1.1, which is an acknowledgement letter, which translated and transcribed as the mother tongue of the participant is Afrikaans. The letter is without language tense change and it is not edited. It serves as evidence of the adult female offender who used her manual to write the letter with a pencil to acknowledge the study conducted in the female correctional centre. The study encouraged adult female offenders to be responsible for their creative artworks as tools for self-fulfilment, self-esteem and self-worth.

Figure 1.1

*Acknowledgement Letter of creative art education study in correctional centre<sup>2</sup>*

*Thank you for taking the time to read my letter, I sincerely hope that it will help you with your study. Thank you once more for the opportunity to assist you with your research as I told you that I am dedicated tutoring art. Originally I stated during recording interview that I started tutoring 5 students and I am blessed to inform you that, after your visit and interaction with us today I am proud to tell say that there are 19 students now in my class and them willing to learn creative arts. I am do not have words to thank you and describe the situation now. Every day they cannot wait for creative art class and for home work to keep themselves busy at night. They feel disappointed on the day when we do not have a class. To be honest, I never expected such a positive response for art class because we were discouraged not even giving moral support by the officials. Now that they get to learn something new they always wanted to learn but never had opportunity because creative art is something that is restricted to them. Officials fail to know that creative arts give them a chance to express themselves their feeling and emotions. My first class were consist of drawings from still photos from the magazines with children images in landscape to establish the symbolic system of loving mothers that to me teaches some of us a method of therapy because we used visual art to keep our depression into paper and control our temper. During the class I will experience one of us in class crying while drawing and I would encourage her to share with us what is she experiencing? During my drawing landscape even myself I would feeling sadness and frustrated because it remind me of my husband abuse time we were hunting. First time I introduced art class with 5 inmates were teased by other inmates that our drawing are ugly, after you came and they hear that we were interacting with a professional artist they started to be interest, hence the number in class drastic increased to 19. I believed the reason for this was motivated by lack of support and bad comment by officials who destroyed our artwork during visit in our cells. Today, after your visit we draw freely and student in class draw without instructions purely because they enjoy art than other learning subject. I am very optimistic about art been a form of therapy for all of students incarceration and I just wanted to share my experiences with other inmates with the hope that this will inspires them to change life for the better. Take care sir, and my God bless you on this road you travelling. Finally we are free to draw even in the cell. Kind regards Participant 4 in you research.*

<sup>2</sup> This letter was transcribed from a note handwritten in pencil.

One participant (P1) believed that through creative art education, she regained control of her life. In the United Kingdom, the House of Commons Justice Select Committee (JSC, 2018: 3)

Found that it is well recognised that adult women incarceration faced very different hurdles unlike adult men offenders in their journey towards a law-abiding life, that appropriately and effectively to the problems that faced adult women bring into the Criminal Justice System (CJS) that required a distinct approach.

To deal with expression of the feelings and emotions of adult female offenders as raised by the JSC (2014), the United Kingdom Ministry of Justice (2018) advocated in their Female Offender Strategy (FOS) that a range of services must be made available to females at their correctional centres. The Ministry stresses that this type creative art education programme has financial constraints, but also points out that such a programme can play a significant role in developing the self-worth of offenders. House of Commons Justice Select Committee review (2018: 4) stated:

While the nature of the needs of women offenders has been recognised, there has been a weakness in the organisational capability and capacity to commission services which meet them. We think the most effective means of commissioning services for women offenders requires more than the sincere intention, well-crafted specifications of services, and rigorously monitored objectives; it requires organisational change.

As stated by House of Commons Justice Select Committee review (2018), there needs to be organisational change in female correctional centres so that the needs of incarcerated adult female offenders are prioritised as with the needs of incarcerated male offenders. The current literature reveals that there are many barriers for female offenders, such as not receiving art materials and not being supported in their self-organisation to create artworks, which then limits their voices.

In China, 'art has been historically marginalised' (Li, 2013: 35), and, usually, only adult male learners have access to art in the Chinese prison education system. In the USA, Brewster (2014) found that through art education, incarcerated females develop positive attitudes and creative skills that prepare them for re-entry into their communities. Esman (2010) and Grayling (2012) showed that, in terms of the rehabilitation process, creative art classes encourage adult offenders to change their life. In the African context, creative art education has been greatly reduced from correctional institutions because the programme demands a high budget from the government.

Historically in England, art for women in correctional services was seen by Criminal Justice officials as an unnecessary programme because there was conflict about the purpose of creative art in correctional centres (Gilbert, 2019). Gilbert (2019) states that art adds unique development and benefits to each individual offender. Gilbert (2019: 2) points out that the history of creative art is about the history of humankind building knowledge that is 'important, as each of these issues results in significant emotional contexts to address when considering the process of making positive change: of enhancing confidence and self-worth'. Gilbert (2019), Gussak (2013a) and Johnson (2015) advocate the programme of creative art as a mirror of the individual's thinking at the time.

Gilbert (2019) and Gussak (2013a) showed that females in correctional centres have produced many works of art as a way of making their voices heard in the course of their rehabilitation. Original creative artwork is defined by Gussak (2013b) as being powerful, unskilled, creative artworks in the media of painting, sculpture, drawing, music, creative writing, theatre, and any art and crafts, provided that each work is a spontaneous expression. Creative art education for adult female offenders can be helpful for the treatment of self-worth and self-expression of offenders and support of creative skills of art can encompass

their rehabilitation (Efland, 2017; Gilbert, 2019; Gussak, 2013b; Johnson, 2015). Creative art education provides an opportunity for offenders to explore their thoughts, feelings, emotions or ideas in their own ways. Doing creative art involves technical skills, crafts person-ship and self-expression, with educational as well as therapeutic benefits (Gussak, 2013b). Gilbert (2019) observes that creative art education for female offenders can enable deep reflection, personal healing and lasting change for them.

Creative art education programmes in the United Kingdom have been experienced by adult females as beneficial, providing new knowledge and creative skills (Behan, 2014). Clement (2004) states that creative art education is a suitable tool for rehabilitation because it introduces new ways of thinking, an intrinsic component of creative art making. Johnson (2015: 15) observes that 'prison is intended to strip power and deliver pain; art empowers and delivers happiness'. Thus, art making can be a 'creative process that expresses and heals' (Johnson, 2015: 108). Art therapist Gussak (2013b) has found through his work with prisoners that creative art is a therapy that provides many benefits to participants, such as reduction and suppression of negative feelings and unnecessary emotions arising from conflicts in their cells, and generation of insights and self-development.

This background shows that creative art education programmes can benefit incarcerated adult women because they are recreational, enjoyable and rehabilitative (Djurichkovic, 2011; Johnson, 2015). Furthermore, offenders' participation in creative art education programmes can help them to maintain and improve relationships with DCS officials, other offenders and their families. An additional benefit is that the selling of creative artworks of offenders gives the chance for future self-employment and provides an opportunity to engage in 'productive exchanges with the community before and after release' from correctional centres which is important from a rehabilitation point of view (Johnson, 2015: 107).

Sathekge (2018), the curator for art exhibitions at Constitutional Hill, Johannesburg (on the site of the apartheid-era Old Fort and the Women's Jail prisons), has curated a permanent exhibition of the political activist Fatima Meer's diaries from her time as a prisoner. The exhibition includes sketches and paintings she secretly made and had smuggled out while in prison in 1976. Sathekge pointed out that the artworks were illegal; if they were found in the cell all inmates in that cell would have been punished, and the images would have been destroyed. In recent South African experience under democracy, creative art is a voluntary programme for female offenders. The programme is not supported by the school curriculum as a formal education programme in female correctional centres. Potelwa (2019) conducted research which showed that incarcerated female offenders are not free to express themselves through their artwork: artworks are often confiscated because some officials see artwork as unnecessary and that all it does is make cells dirty.

### **Research questions**

- What do adult female offenders make to escape boredom and confinement stress?
- How do adult female offenders in correctional centres present their emotions, feelings and personal transformation?
- What are the reasons for correctional centres limiting the creative skills of incarcerated adult female offenders?

### **Objectives of this study**

- To determine if creative art education is a tool that can help incarcerated adult female escape boredom, conflict and confinement stress;
- To determine how adult female offenders in correctional centres present their emotions, feelings and personal transformation; and

- To determine the reasons for correctional centres limiting the creative skills of incarcerated adult female offenders.

### **Aim of the study**

The aim of this study was to show the DCS that creative art education programme interventions can help incarcerated adult female offenders to express and explore their feeling and emotions through creative art skills on paper, canvas and craft. This study investigated the reasons why correctional centres refuse to allow and support incarcerated adult female offenders when they want to engage in creative art education programmes.

### **Significance of the study**

This study has developed new and original perspectives on how creative art education programmes for incarcerated adult females can build self-esteem and self-worth, and contribute to their rehabilitation. This information can be used to mobilise the transformation of the academic learning curriculum in correctional centres to recognise creative art education. The rationale for this study was to equip incarcerated adult female offenders with knowledge and skills to reshape their thinking, change their past experience and life experience, and eliminate inequality. This study sought to examine the role creative art education can play in addressing and giving voice to the self-expression of offenders in correctional centres that do not seem to fit within the current categories of education and psychology in those centres. The findings of this study contribute to the literature of correctional centres and the role of creative art education in adult learning programmes in such institutions. The findings and recommendations can contribute to relevant policy considerations in the Criminal Justice System (CJS), the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), and the practice of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), and counselling in general.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### *Participation in creative art education for expression*

Kasworm, Rose and Rose (2019: 209) state that 'empowerment of adult women incarceration has become a popular term in adult education practise, research, and adult learner become empowered by developing self-esteem'. Knowles (1980: 88) defined adult educational needs as 'something people ought to learn for their own good, for the good of an organisation or for the good of society'. The Department of Correctional Service White Paper (2005) advocates that adult education should empower adult learners by motivating them and helping them acquire creative skills and be productive. Kasworm et al. (2010: 210), citing Stromquist (1995), present the following model regarding the areas to be covered in an adult female offenders' empowerment programme:

- Cognitive (understanding causes of gender oppression and developing a new perspective of gender relations) between correctional officials and adult female offenders;
- Psychological (building self-esteem and self-worth) of the adult female offenders;
- Economic (engaging in productive economic activities) awareness of how the creative art skills of female offenders can sustain economic shortfalls in correctional centres; and
- Political (mobilising for change) – reintegration of female offenders into civil society in a way that can stabilise the high crime and high recidivism rates.

Literature on adult education shows and highlights the empowering capacity of creative art education for adult female offenders as a connection between collective forms and the personal relation between creator and canvas (painting, drawing or craft). In support of this, Scott (2015: 6) advocates that 'art is crucial to prison education, and creative expression' for incarcerated adult female offenders. Empowerment,

according to Kasworm et al. (2010: 10), helps 'individuals attain greater social power, whereas adult education seeks to transform social systems, particular through collective action and social movements'. Newman (2016) indicates that, from an educational point of view, one should respect and meet learners' expectations and then make use of their learning pace. As a result, this study examined what adult female offenders make of these drawing and paintings they have created.

#### *Creative art education and rehabilitation*

As laid out by Kasworm et al. (2010: 210) earlier, creative art education can be a cornerstone in adult female offenders' understanding of the causes of gender oppression and developing a new perspective of gender relations in correctional centres. Potelwa (2019) found that adult male offenders are prioritised over incarcerated adult females in terms of creative art education. Creative art education opens mind and doors for both genders to understand their gender oppression and develop new perspectives on their life experience. Van Wormer (2010: 5) observed:

Women are the fastest growing population in prisons and jails, the majority having been sentenced for non-violent crime, and two thirds of female adult inmates are mothers of dependent children.

This study discovered that incarcerated adult females feel boredom and stress in their cells because of inadequate support for them engaging in creative art education as their tool of rehabilitation and therapeutic self-expression. This study considered how creative art education of adult female offenders helps them express their life experience; not getting an opportunity to explore creative skills is a form of punishment and goes against their humanity.

This section of the research examines the findings of other scholars regarding creative art education and rehabilitation with the aim of understanding the reasons why adult female offenders are not receiving support for their creative art education. Fiedrich and Jellema (2003: 48) state that self-esteem and self-worth of the adult female offender are 'considered to be empowering in itself, spontaneously fostering self-confidence, and independence, so that individual women can change their own lives in the ways they want'. Creative art education can motivate incarcerated adult women to develop their self-esteem, self-worth, self-expression and self-fulfilment. Johnson (2015) claimed that self-directed processes are a picture of adult women's consciousness and agency in correctional centres.

This study engaged the Department of Correctional Services about the role of creative art education programme activities in a correctional centre in order to make society and policy makers aware about the powerful effects of creative art education on the welfare of adult female offenders in relationship with their aesthetic narratives or stories in their painting, drawing and crafts. Refusal of correctional services to support the offenders with art materials and with their creative artwork does compromise creative art activities in correctional centres. Quan-Baffour and Zawada (2012: 73) showed similar results that education in correctional centres 'is gaining currency in many countries'. According to Becker (2013: 3), economics 'is the science which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses'. Moreover, the literature shows that economists are as successful in understanding the production and demand of creative art education inside correctional centres as they are outside correctional centres. Parkes and Bilby (2010: 6) point out the value of adult female offenders engaging in creative art education in correctional centres as 'purposeful activity' that can be seen as economically productive activity in correctional centres. Parkes and Bilby (2010: 6) advocate that 'artistic and spiritual activities should constitute purposeful activity as they produce benefits with the current economic downturn and prison services facing budget cuts'. Adult female offenders engaging in creative art education in and out of incarceration as a productive economic programme is central to this study.

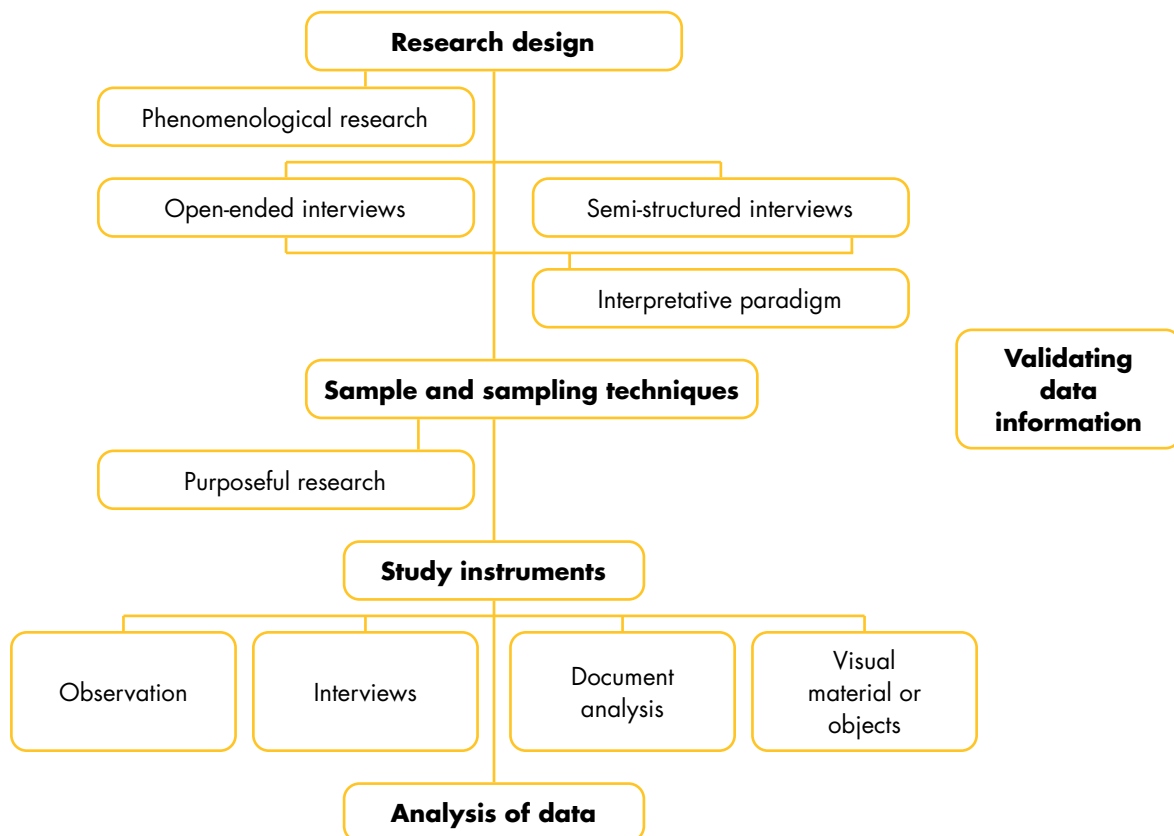
Mobilising incarcerated adult female offenders for change requires education programmes to empower them artistically and spiritually (Parkes & Bilby, 2010). Dastile (2014: 1) sets out findings from interviews held during data collection with adult incarcerated women: vulnerabilities were clarified by high levels of poverty, unemployment and limited skills of creative art education, as such 'adult women being sole income providers for their children as well as related dysfunctional relationships in marriage and romantic relationships'. Dastile (2014: 1) showed how incarcerated women found their life experiences very difficult to manage 'in respect of correctional assessment and rehabilitative and intervention programming during incarceration'. The researchers in this study presented the significant contribution that creative art education can make in mobilising personal transformation of adult female offenders regarding self-expression, anger management and self-learning, which should be taken into account by correctional centres.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research approach

The form of enquiry that was selected for this study was the qualitative approach. Figure 2.1 presents the methodological processes followed in the study.

Figure 2.1  
Methodology processes



### Research design

A phenomenological approach was selected as the research design of this study. This approach is defined by Creswell (2014: 13) as 'a design of enquiry coming from philosophy, and psychology in which the research describes the lived experience of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants'.

Open-ended and semi-structured interviews were used to gather data. The interpretative paradigm guided the research because this study sought to understand how individuals create meaning from their artworks, as a voice or communication, expression and lived experience (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Participants were required to bring their art portfolios, display their work and present the meaning of each artwork through his or her life experience during interviews.

#### *Sample and sampling technique*

The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, which is defined as the 'selection of participants or resources of data to be used in a study, based on their anticipated richness and relevance of information in relation to study problem and research questions' (Yin, 2016: 11). Four adult female offenders in a correctional centre were selected based on their art portfolio status. The participants selected already doing artworks were of a certain age, had a type of offence for which they were incarcerated, all with short-term incarceration.

This study is indebted to the four incarcerated adult female offenders who shared their time, self-experience, stories and reflections through their creative artwork. During open-ended interviews, adult female offenders showed their artworks and narrated the stories from drawing, painting and crafts works. Extensive open-ended and in-depth semi-structured interviews, document review and focus group discussion showed how the correctional centre limited participants' creative art education by not providing them with art materials, and revealed how their own materials were confiscated and destroyed by the warders or officials.

Sweeney (2010: 3) argued that 'imprisonment constitutes a wastefulness of life and a form of social revenge that damages prisoners and the wider society'. The researcher was inspired after observing the way these adult females claimed their rights and freedom to establish their own creative art education programme that was not in the formal curriculum of the Department of Correctional Service (DCS) school in the facility. However, this study identified the creative art skills, the voices and the stories of adult female offenders as a gap that has not been addressed and considered, for their personal identity to developed, transformed or changed and rehabilitated was observed during data collected as barriers. Correctional officials (warders) do not recognise and promote adult female creative skills as a tool for offenders' therapy. The DCS White Paper (2005) advocated that incarcerated adult female offenders' social conditions need to be redressed. Sweeney (2010: 4) supported adult women's creative art skills and explored how they used creative art education to achieve personal development, 'critical insight', and 'even transformation' of their lives within incarceration and out of incarceration.

#### *Study instrument*

To gather data, this study employed a number of sources (Creswell, 2014), including observation, interviews, document analysis, and audio or visual material or objects.

#### *Sample of interview questions*

- What do you think creative art education is trying to achieve (do)?
- If not all (how) has creative art education improved your life?
- How do you see creative art education impact on the lives of other adult females incarcerated?
- What are some of the problems (challenges) you see?
- Why is creative art education important for adult learning?

#### *Data analysis*

The study analysed interview data according to themes to discover the answers and factors that would influence the policymakers in the DCS to close the gap and recognise a creative art education programme



for incarcerated adult female offenders. This study used an inductive process to code and analyse the data to derive main themes and sub-themes. The inductive process works 'back and forth between themes and the data until the researchers have established a comprehensive set of themes' (Creswell, 2014: 254).

### Setting of the study

This study was conducted at the Medium–C correctional centre for adult female offenders in West Bank, East London in Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. This study coded the participants as P1, PS, P3, and P4 so that it could flow and the research saw if all participants participated in the research.

#### *The study procedure*

This study was approved by the University of Fort Hare Ethics Research Committee of the Faculty of Education. The DCS, granted the researcher permission to conduct this study in the selected institution. Incarcerated adult female offenders received an information letter and consent form related to the study and returned it if they wanted to participate in the study. According to the Research Ethics Policy of the University of Fort Hare (2015), confidentiality must be observed and maintained all the time. As a result, this study's participants were anonymised to preserve their personal identity and signed a consent form. Collection of data was by means of an audio-video recorder; participants were informed about how the device works.

## RESULTS

During the observation, the researcher realised that creative art education was a learning area that the Department of Correctional Service management neither knew about nor understood the role of. Interviews revealed correspond with other authors' (Behan, 2014; Gussak, 2013; Sweeney, 2010) findings that the reasons many incarcerated adult female offenders participate in education reflect the range of expression and motivations of adults inside and outside incarceration. This study held face-to-face interviews and focus groups with all the participants who completed the consent forms over a period of three weeks. This study found that participants who showed their involvement in the art programmes of creative skills changed and developed their minds, attitudes and feelings about incarceration. Creative art education assisted them in relieving boredom and has the potential to enhance problem solving and self-awareness. Participant (P2) said:

I used to be a patient of depression with a lot of anger against my husband. One psychologist asked about my profession and gave me a sketch book pad and told me to go under a tree and draw whatever. I was not ready to do that and resisted but she persuaded me. I went under the tree and drew and kept drawing. During next consultation because I was admitted at a psychiatrist hospital, she asked about my drawing. I showed her, and she told me that I can draw and other people can change their situation through applied art.

This study validated the significance of creative art education programmes for incarcerated adult female offenders when the participants confessed that their lives had changed since they became involved in the programme through practical and theoretical assistance from other female offenders that had a background in art. The following positive response was contained in an acknowledgement letter that was written by one of the participants (P3):

Creative art develop a sense of self-worth and provided therapeutic change without verbal interaction need.

During the investigation of the study in the correctional centre, participants acknowledged the idea that the research chose them (adult female offenders), and the programme they were not supported, empowered,

and encouraged. This study found that the participants utilised creative art skills for communication purposes although they did not know that – through the course of this study, they realised this and were able to narrate their drawings, painting in canvas and craft works.

The value of the creative art education programme conducted during data collection was acknowledged by the social worker, clinical psychologist and by the warders who had not previously supported adult female offenders' artwork. The manager of the adult female offender's correctional school showed support by providing a classroom and proof of an application for procurement of art material. The challenge they face now is the absence of an adult art professional educator to teach, encourage and look after the creative art educational programme like other academic learning areas.

Regarding positive and negative aspects of a creative art education programme, Cullen and Gilbert (2013: 15) stressed that programmes that provide rehabilitation 'receive considerable support as a major goal of the correctional system', but this was not the case for the participants in this study. One of the participants (P4) said:

Offenders that were good in creative art skills were used by warders to draw or paint the project homeworks of their children without compensation.

The literature referred to above regards creative art education as a voice of healing and storytelling for incarcerated women whereas correctional centres are mainly about punishment. The value of creative art education, which is the gap that brought about this study, is its contribution to rehabilitation: it reduces adult female offenders' idleness, and increases their self-worth, self-fulfilment and self-development. Participants (P2) further elaborate during interviews:

Visual art developed from my experience as I never studied it before. I am a person who loves creativity and fear mistake and judgement. I was afraid to do art, but one day I started to drawing cartoons, baby room and crafting. What I learnt through my art experience is that I can do something if I am ready to do, now I can imagine something and create it without fear. Even for my crafting I designed drawing before crafting or mosaic.

Creative art education programmes can provide evidence of change in the offender so they can complete other treatment programmes and the evidence may contribute to the negotiation of parole. Wright et al. (2012: 775) pointed out the problem with rehabilitation as an 'exclusive focus on the individual, is that it fails to recognise the importance of certain ecological factors that have been shown to be significant predictors' of re-offending. The lifestyle of one participant involved in the creative art education programme, as shown above, appeared to be personally transformed or changed. The programme, provides discipline, and rehabilitates adult female offenders in the correctional centre.

The programme of creative art education was perceived to cause no harm, introduce no risk and show no negative consequences for adult female offenders in the correctional centre. P3 doubted that art materials such as pencils and paint brushes were a risk for offenders: 'I refuse to agree that art tools are a risk' (P3). The negative life experiences of some participants influenced them to not show their art-making to other participants because they are not educated and trained to present their drawings/paintings in front of other offenders. Lack of knowledge was a challenge for their low self-esteem and confidence. One participant (P2) cited a personal negative experience of how offenders were fighting with each other:

In the cells, we are not doing anything, ever since our art material was seized during cell search operation; now make us stressed and boredom.

This study found that some participants refused to share their life experience with the social workers but through participation in the creative art education programme they shared and narrated their life challenges through crafting, drawing and painting. Gussak (2013b) stated that female offenders are reserved and could not say out loud, she will gag to avoid to be embarrassed. P4 shared her story, saying:

I would love to share one that I did for my sister because my sister was my victim. I started sketching this drawing for crafting something special that she can see how apologetic I am for my wrongdoing.

## DISCUSSION

Incarcerated adult female offenders in this study indicated that when they started to learn about creative art education, it was hard to find reliable literature and a teacher to motivate them. They were ashamed and did not have confidence in their practical drawings, crafts and paintings, but the information they found in newspapers, magazines, television and online in their correctional service school computer lab helped them to understand something about creative art education values. Along with the issue of risk that was identified by one official, information about creative art education should be addressed and awareness should be raised to prove that the programme is not harmful but rather a tool that has proven to rehabilitate adult female offender incarcerated in South African correctional centres. No participant perceived creative art education programmes to be a risk for them. Participant (P1) said:

There are a lot of offenders rehabilitated by use of visual arts because visual art to me and other is expression, inside before we had a lot of offenders with anger but through creative skills of arts helped them and me. Offenders have nothing to express themselves with, inside here there is a lot of infighting and morale is low. Without this visual art, there is no rehabilitation anymore.

This research above presented good results of self-expression, confidence, development, rehabilitation and self-worth from the participants regarding the important role that the creative art education programme played. However, the refusal by warders to allow offenders to express themselves through creative art education was an infringement of their right to learn. This study's results showed the clear reason for the rationale identified for this study. Many positive benefits of creative art education for adult female offender's personal transformation were limited for adult female offenders. Personal transformative learning theory is 'a process of perspective transformation that has three dimensions: psychological (change in understanding of the self), conviction (revision of belief system), and behavioural (change of lifestyle)' (Mezirow, 2014: 1). Shailor (2011: 8) stated that personal transformation 'is through the freedom found in artistic self-expression, creativity, and self-discovery; inmates gain a sense of renewed hope in themselves and their future'. It was evident in this study that incarcerated adult females found self-direction, self-worth and self-development. P4 said:

Visual art keeps me busy, motivated to be a better person, develop self-worth and self-esteem.

This study explored how a creative art education programme can play an important role in helping offenders escape emotions and bad experiences in confinement.

Creating something is to get rid of frustrations, to keep ourselves in good morale and busy, stay out of troubles and conflicts. (P4)

Shailor (2011: 11) suggested that 'it is important to blend arts as an intervention for personal development, life skills, and learning' while building a supportive sense of community in a correctional centre. This study adopted four artistic disciplines as employed by Shailor (2011: 11) who drew from the Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE) learning model:

- Art production – creating and making art while learning how to express ideas and their stories/ voices into picture;
- Art history – acquiring knowledge and understanding of the artistic life, the historic time period in which they lived, and the contributions of their art to culture and society;
- Aesthetics – through creative art, discovering a personal transformation and appreciation of beauty, emotion, feeling and personal philosophy of what is beautiful in art; and
- Art criticism – the process and result of critical thinking about art; this usually involves description, analysis and interpretation of art, expressing some kind of judgement.

The above model shows the framework of artistic discipline that presents the fundamental ‘principles of adult learning’ as identified by adult education theorist Malcolm S. Knowles (Shailor, 2011: 12). Knowles, Holton and Swanson (2005) addressed the following key adult learning principles that also guided this research:

- It is important for adults to be involved in planning and assessing what they learn;
- Experience serves as an important foundation for learning;
- Adults learn best when doing activities that have immediate personal relevance; and
- Adults learn best from problem-centred rather than context-related experience.

This study blended the DBAE learning model and adult learning principles to elucidate the research questions of how adult female offenders in a correctional centre present their emotions, feelings and moods, and how they escape stress through participation in creative art education for their self-worth, self-esteem, rehabilitation and personal transformation. This study showed that adult female offenders incarcerated discovered their ‘own voice and to experience life with a sense of personal freedom’ (Shailor, 2011: 8).

Adult female offenders during the collection of data revealed that they were not compensated for their creative artworks by warders. They regarded this as a form of punishment that disproportionately targeted the females incarcerated and limited their potential for rehabilitation. Another participant in the study revealed that

Creative art prevent conflicts, re-offending, reduces offenders offences and make discipline among us.

This study has both a weakness and a strength to address the significance of educating incarcerated adult female offender about creative arts. The weakness was that not all preparation by the correctional centre was organised as the researcher would have liked. The strength of the study was the topic of investigation. It attracted adult female offenders and it gave them the opportunity to specialise and develop new expertise.

## CONCLUSION

The results showed that creative art education is an important tool that can be used by correctional school management, social workers and clinical psychologists for rehabilitation of incarcerated adult females. The results showed that creative art education allows and developed confidence, and challenged offenders’ low self-esteem. Therefore, there needs to be advocacy for creative art education for incarcerated adult females to be taken into consideration as for other academic subjects offered by correctional centres.

The role ABET is playing in the political life and socioeconomic landscape of South Africa is very important. Many universities in this country offer courses in creative art education, and many child and adult education professionals are sitting at home jobless. It is very sad that despite all the gains of this country, incarcerated adult female offenders cannot have even one professional creative art educational teacher or intern. This study provides an understanding of the perception of incarcerated adult female offenders who took the deliberate decision to not be deterred by the barriers and challenges they encounter. They refused to be passive and do nothing while incarcerated even when their artworks were seized by the warders during search operations. The encouragement currently provided by the warders and senior officials turned out to be inadequate for creative art education of adult female offenders in the correctional centre.

Offenders are in need of creative art resources and professional educators to improve their adult learning and their knowledge about the value of creative art education programmes to their humanity. Access to art resources would encourage more offenders to participate in the programme. It was noted that creative art education is useful for developing discipline among adult female in their respective cells. Creative art education is a communication strategy that allows those that normally remain silent to voice their feelings through creative artwork, either by drawing and painting on canvas or paper. Obstacles faced by incarcerated adult offenders were, firstly, the lack of art resources; secondly, the lack of books to read in order understand the theory of creative art education; and, finally, the lack of a professional creative art skills educator.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This study suggested further research and creative art educators to shed light at the correctional centre on the importance of creative art education programme. Professional educators in the correctional centre should make aid communication development of creative art education to allow adult female offenders to value their own drawings or painting narratives for self-expression, and the growth of self-worth and self-development. Clearly, more research needs to be done to explore and expose the importance of creative art education programmes. In addition, more research needs to be done to advocate andragogy to incarcerated females reluctant to learn and explore other learning areas.

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