

Examining The Time Prisoners Study Using E-Learning While In Prison: Sustainability of E-Learning Programs in Prison

Vimbi Petrus Mahlangu

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8251-750X>
University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

Abstract

This study investigates the amount of time that convicts dedicate to studying through e-learning while in jail, with the goal of comprehending their drive despite difficult living conditions. The qualitative research was carried out at a jail in Namibia, using interviews as the method of data collection, in accordance with an interpretive paradigm. Thematic analysis was conducted on verbatim transcriptions of tape-recorded interviews. Namibia's judicial system has shifted its focus from punitive measures to prioritizing prisons and community reintegration. Prisoners exhibit a resolute commitment to furthering their education using e-learning programs, regardless of the constraints imposed by their surroundings. Through the adoption of e-learning opportunities, inmates are given the ability to overcome obstacles to education that are typically linked to being incarcerated, such as having limited access to educational resources and restricted study hours. E-learning platforms offer jailed individuals a flexible and easily accessible method of acquiring knowledge and skills, enabling them to pursue academic interests and career goals. Furthermore, the results indicate that e-learning programs have the capacity to foster optimism and a sense of direction among incarcerated individuals, providing them with a means to rehabilitate and reintegrate into society effectively after their release. Through participation in educational endeavors, jailed prisoners not only obtain academic credentials but also cultivate important life skills and competencies that are crucial for their reintegration into society.

Keywords: Incarceration, e-learning, prison education, inmate learning, correctional facilities, distance education

Introduction

The study focuses on how prisoners utilize e-learning platforms during their incarceration, analyzing its impact on their education, rehabilitation, and post-release outcomes.

The learning patterns of inmates were examined looking at the utilisation of e-learning while in jail, specifically focusing on the prison system in Namibia (Monica, 2024). According to Heasly and Iliško (2023) and Heasly et al, (2024)., authors ensured

that this article aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4, maintained a strong focus on the backdrop of the fourth industrial revolution, and specifically addressed how to foster a mindset of sustainability.

Leon et al. (2024) found that when a correctional facility is given a free rehabilitative program, it can leverage the program to promote its efforts in rehabilitation and gender responsiveness. So, inmates who are dedicated to education can overcome the obstacles presented by incarceration, despite the difficult conditions in prisons. This study was carried out at a jail in Namibia and used interviews as the main way of collecting data. The study followed an interpretive paradigm. The interviews were transcribed word for word by a highly trained transcriber, and data interpretation was done using theme analysis. Namibia's judicial system has experienced substantial changes, transitioning from a punitive methodology to one that prioritizes rehabilitation and the reintegration of individuals into the community. The Namibian government has shown dedication to rehabilitating inmates by enabling them to participate in distant education through e-learning, effectively using their time.

Looking at the Time Prisoners Study Using E-Learning While in Prison

The study aimed to examine the usage of e-learning among jailed individuals and assess the effectiveness and difficulties of implementing educational programs using this technology in prison environments. Incarcerated individuals are deprived of the opportunity to develop essential digital skills due to the absence of computers and internet connection. This hinders their ability to effectively utilize the economic, social, cultural, personal, and health-related resources that are available through digital technology (Nisser et al., 2024). Creating cutting-edge digital technology is essential for aiding students in adapting to the demanding prison environment (García-Valenzuela et al., 2023).

The researcher's objective was to analyze the experiences of inmates participating in e-learning programs in order to get insight into the advantages and drawbacks of education through digital platforms in correctional facilities. Historically, those who were imprisoned utilized postal mail, telephone conversations, and face-to-face meetings to maintain contact with the external world. (Raheer, 2023). Research in the field of correctional education has increasingly focused on the utilization of e-learning among incarcerated inmates. The absence of modern technology in prisons has had detrimental effects on the educational opportunities of jailed individuals (Franich & Martinovic, 2024). Offenders often display a lack of motivation towards educational pursuits as a result of multiple circumstances. One factor is that individuals are enrolled in educational programs without considering their intrinsic personal interests, as well as their unique circumstances and challenges while incarcerated (Mafilika & Marongwe, 2024). Scholars want to analyze e-learning programs in correctional facilities to discover effective approaches for overcoming the distinct obstacles encountered by jailed learners and enhancing their opportunities for high-quality education. Granting incarcerated individuals access to digital tools raises worries over the possibility of them misusing these capabilities, causing harm to the equipment, and engaging in illegal activities through digital means (Hofinger & Pflegerl, 2024).

The effectiveness and difficulties of using e-learning in prisons have received considerable attention in recent literature, indicating a growing interest in using technology to improve educational chances for jailed individuals. Digital disparities are intricately linked to economic, cultural, and social disadvantage, particularly in the

context of incarcerated individuals (McKay & Macintosh, 2024). In order for education to be sustainable, it is essential to have socially equitable resources, including well-equipped libraries, advanced technology infrastructure, and highly skilled lecturers (Kyambadde & Khumalo, 2023).

Researchers are conducting preliminary research to evaluate the efficacy of e-learning programs in correctional facilities, with the goal of comprehending their influence on educational achievements and rates of reoffending. Upon release, inmates may engage in recidivism due to push factors, such as experiencing a sense of insecurity (e.g., facing threats or intimidation), typically associated with outstanding drug-related debts (Goodley & Pearson, 2024). Scholars use qualitative and quantitative assessments to identify the specific problems of providing e-learning programs in prisons and to discover solutions for maximizing their efficacy.

Students should be cognizant of their responsibilities in the online learning process. (Mojtahadzadeh et al., 2024). Research in the subject of correctional education has focused on analyzing the benefits and limitations of utilizing digital platforms for teaching in correctional facilities. Education is one of the rehabilitation activities provided to convicts during their incarceration. (Uche et al., 2024). Research has focused on elucidating the advantages of digital education, including enhanced accessibility to diverse learning materials and the flexibility to learn at one's own speed. However, it has also highlighted the challenges, such as limited internet access and insufficient digital literacy skills among detained inmates. There exist several obstacles to accessing digital resources, which can be categorized in multiple ways (Badejo et al., 2024). Researchers are examining the complexities of providing education via digital platforms in correctional facilities. Their objective is to develop tailored techniques that maximize the benefits and reduce the limitations of technology-driven education in correctional facilities. Therefore, it is imperative that jails possess fully operational facilities for the administration and availability of information and communication (Aini et al., 2024).

Integrating digital tools in prisons is considered necessary in societies that heavily rely on digital technology. This allows inmates to have access to resources that can help them prepare for a better future after their release, and also helps them become familiar with common technologies (Chatzipolakis, 2024). A recent study conducted by Johnson and Garcia (2023) has emphasized the effectiveness of e-learning tools in significantly enhancing educational opportunities for incarcerated individuals. Implementing e-learning platforms in correctional facilities can lead to enhanced academic achievement, increased skill acquisition, and improved prospects for effective reintegration into society upon release. The flexibility of scheduling and the duty of lecturers in disseminating knowledge might contribute to the development of digital skills, communication, interactivity, sharing, autonomy, and time management among inmates (Machado et al., 2024). Due to their incarcerated state, prisoners are physically restricted from moving about and consequently lack independent access to information, unlike individuals who are not incarcerated (Machado et al., 2024). Global recidivism rates persist at high levels due to the challenges faced by individuals reentering society after being released from jail, particularly in obtaining jobs (Brophy et al., 2024). Comprehending the manner in which technology can be included into inmates' skill development helps establish a foundation for fostering their abilities and facilitating their adaptability and resilience inside the jail environment (Lim et al., 2024).

Sustainability of Using E-Learning in Prison

Integrating sustainability into the context of prisoners studying using e-learning while in prison involves considering environmental, social, and economic aspects. Rehabilitation programs in prisons must be the integral part to reducing recidivism and aiding the reintegration of inmates into society (Monica, 2024). To achieve sustainability in using e-learning in prison, the utilization of e-learning materials must lead to the reduction of paper consumption. In promoting the use of energy-efficient devices and renewable energy sources institutions must support e-learning infrastructure. There needs to be an implementation of e-waste recycling programs to facilitate the appropriate disposal and management of obsolete or faulty electronic devices. Institutions need to encourage the adoption of digital submissions as a means to reduce waste instead of using paper assignments. Student prisoners need to be provided with a top-notch education, equipping them with skills that will improve their employment prospects and reduce the likelihood of committing another crime. Prisons will therefore create environments that promote mental well-being and personal development in inmates' schooling. We have to ensure that there is availability of e-learning platforms for students in prison with impairments. Distance e-learning institutions will therefore offer a diverse range of courses that cater to different interests and professional paths, while promoting social equity. Institutions of course will develop and execute programs that facilitate the involvement of inmate students in community-based projects as a component of their educational curriculum, fostering a sense of engagement and integration.

Distance e-learning institutions are obliged then to create cost-effective e-learning solutions that provide high-quality education without excessive expenditures. The establishment of partnerships with educational institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to engage in collaborative efforts with the purpose of sharing resources and reducing costs will be encouraged. Those student offenders who completed their sentences will then be offered vocational training in lucrative industries, thereby enhancing their chances of securing jobs after their release. Pathways will be created for further learning or professional growth post-release, fostering long-term economic stability. Institutions of learning together with prisons can assign resources to establish and sustain robust information technology infrastructure within correctional facilities to support the implementation of electronic learning.

There should be a reliable and uninterrupted internet connection that will offer inmates access to necessary equipment. Obligatory Training will be provided to correctional staff to support and facilitate the implementation of e-learning programs. We need to offer continuous technical support to address any issues that may arise with e-learning platforms. Lecturers will consistently evaluate the effectiveness of e-learning programs through the collection of feedback and analysis of performance data. There follows a revision and improvement of programs based on evaluations to ensure they are in line with the needs of prisoners and sustainability goals. By including these sustainability elements, the time prisoners use in e-learning while in prison, the integration of e-learning can become a holistic approach that not only provides education but also can have a positive influence on the environment, society, and economy.

Purpose

The objective of analyzing the duration during which convicts engage in e-learning activities while incarcerated is to get valuable knowledge regarding the implementation of technology-driven education within correctional institutions. Researchers seek to develop successful techniques for fostering education and rehabilitation among jailed individuals by studying their engagement with e-learning tools and the factors that influence their study habits. This research aims to investigate the difficulties and advantages of e-learning programs in prisons, with the main objective of providing insights to improve policies and practices that cater to the educational requirements of jailed learners.

Research Aim and objective

The aim of the paper is to examine the time prisoners study using e-learning while in prison.

The purpose of the paper is analyzing the duration that inmates spend studying through e-learning while incarcerated is to explore the trends, inclinations, and difficulties related to the utilization of technology-driven education in correctional facilities. More precisely, the objective of the researchers is to:

1. Identify the time periods during which incarcerated individuals engage in e-learning activities.
2. Explore the effectiveness of e-learning initiatives in promoting educational opportunities and rehabilitation among incarcerated learners.

The researcher wants to contribute to the progress of knowledge in correctional education and help the development of effective ways for improving educational opportunities for jailed individuals through e-learning initiatives by achieving these objectives.

Research Question

- (i) What are the primary time periods during which incarcerated individuals typically engage in e-learning activities within correctional facilities?
- (ii) How effective are e-learning initiatives in promoting educational opportunities in prison?

Research Methodology and Design

This study employed interviews as the primary means of data collection, adopting an interpretive paradigm and utilizing a qualitative technique. The interviews that were captured on tape were transcribed exactly as they were spoken by a skilled transcriber. Subsequently, the author obtained the transcribed notes for analysis. The research was conducted in a correctional facility in Namibia, employing a qualitative research approach. The study utilized interviews as the primary method for collecting data, in line with an interpretive paradigm.

The implementation of the qualitative methodology enabled a thorough examination of the incarcerated individuals' experiences, perspectives, and behaviors about e-learning. By conducting interviews, researchers gathered extensive and detailed data that provided significant insights into the participants' study habits,

preferences, and challenges related to e-learning in the prison setting. The participants engaged in an interpretive paradigm to investigate the subjective meanings and interpretations associated with e-learning. This method recognized the importance of understanding the social and cultural factors that impact prisoners' engagement with e-learning resources and underlined the need for self-awareness in evaluating the findings. The use of a qualitative research approach and interpretative paradigm in this study enabled the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the amount of time prisoners dedicate to e-learning activities and the factors that influence their study habits in the specific context of Namibian prison.

Sampling Procedure and Instrumentation

The methodology employed in this study included purposive sampling to choose individuals from a jail facility in Namibia. The utilization of purposive sampling enabled the researcher to specifically choose individuals who had prior involvement in e-learning activities inside the jail environment and were capable of offering valuable perspectives regarding their study habits and preferences. Semi-structured interviews were the main method employed for data gathering in this study. Semi-structured interviews offered a versatile yet targeted method for collecting qualitative data, enabling participants to express their experiences and viewpoints on studying with e-learning tools while incarcerated. The interview guide was prepared according to the research objectives and consisted of open-ended questions intended to elicit comprehensive responses from participants. The inquiries investigated many subjects, including the duration of participants' involvement in e-learning activities, the elements that influenced their study habits, the difficulties they encountered, and suggestions for enhancing e-learning programs in correctional facilities. In addition, field notes were recorded during the interviews to document contextual details and observations that could contribute to the analysis of the data. The utilization of semi-structured interviews and field notes meant that the researcher acquired abundant, qualitative data that could be examined to develop a deeper understanding of the amount of time inmates allocate to e-learning activities while incarcerated.

Analysis, Ethical Protocol, and Credibility

The theme: Examining the Time Prisoners Study Using E-Learning While in Prison emanated from a bigger study titled: Supervision of students in a distance e-learning mode: supervision of prisoners which was conducted in a Namibian prison. Identification of themes emerged from the interview protocol i.e., from the interview questions that were asked.

The interviews were translated by a professional translator to guarantee accuracy. The material was transcribed exactly as spoken. Times that were identified from the translated transcripts, based on the question asked during the interviews. Some students studied from 9am to 3am on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays Wednesdays and Friday's students' study from 9am to 12:30 pm. Some students study from 10pm to 12am (midnight). Some students study after 9, 10, and 11 when it is quiet. Normally some students study in the morning from 9am to 3pm. Others study from 9am to 13:30. Some of the students' study from 9am to 12am. Others prefer to study from 9 am to 4 pm.

The data obtained from semi-structured interviews were analyzed using theme analysis. Thematic analysis is a methodical process of detecting, interpreting, and reporting patterns or themes within qualitative data. This process facilitated the analysis of participants' experiences and viewpoints about the utilization of e-learning resources while incarcerated. Themes were identified by a systematic process of coding and categorization, which was then followed by the analysis of patterns and correlations within the data. Ethical Protocol: The study followed ethical rules and regulations to guarantee the participants' rights and well-being. The author's institution acquired ethical clearance, as evidenced by the Ethical Clearance Certificate Ref: 2022/11/09/90284259/04/AM. Furthermore, the researchers acquired the necessary authorizations from the Namibian correctional authorities to carry out the study within the jail institution. Participants were given informed consent papers that outlined the study's objectives, the rights they had as participants, and the confidentiality of their answers. The study ensured confidentiality by anonymizing participant identities during the reporting and dissemination of findings. Credibility: The study took steps to increase the credibility by ensuring the research procedure was rigorous and trustworthy. The method of triangulation was utilized to validate conclusions by cross-referencing data from several sources, including interviews and a questionnaire. The researcher engaged in reflexivity, actively considering and acknowledging their own prejudices and assumptions throughout the study process in order to reduce the likelihood of bias influencing the results. Collectively, these measures enhanced the credibility and validity of the study's conclusions.

Research Findings

In understanding the age, gender and the courses the inmates were pursuing, in the interview protocol the question that was asked to the participants was in two parts. The first question was "How old are you" and the second question was "What is your profession?". In their responses, the author was able to deduce what they were studying because they were not directly asked the courses they were doing. However, they mentioned that they were studying towards certificates, diplomas, and degrees. All the participants in the study were males. Participant 1 was 61 years old. Participant 2 was 35 years old. Participant 3 was 40 years old. Participant 4 was 39. Participant 5 was 63 years old. Participant 6 was 56 years old. Participant 7 was 34 years old. Participant 8 was 37 years old. Participant 9 was 35 years old. Participant 10 was 52 years old. Participant 11 was 69 years old. The participants were serving sentences of between 5 years and 10 years, except for three prisoners who were political prisoners and were serving sentences of between 10 and 18 years (Namibian Correctional Service, 2023). In Namibian prisons, inmates have access to a variety of educational and vocational programs designed to aid in their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. These programs include Agricultural Training, Vocational Training, Educational Programs, and Health and Wellness Programs. These programs are part of a broader strategy by the Namibian Correctional Service (NCS) to reduce recidivism and enhance public safety by equipping inmates with the skills and knowledge needed to reintegrate successfully into society. The participants were studying certificates in accounting, degrees in education, honours degrees, master's and doctoral degrees, a Bachelor in Logistics and Supply Chain Management, a certificate in finance, a diploma in Mechanical Engineering, and certificates in estate management.

The results presented below are captured verbatim and to protect the participant prison students “I” and “We” are used instead of the names of the participants.

Figure 1
The Times Prisoners Spend Using E-Learning

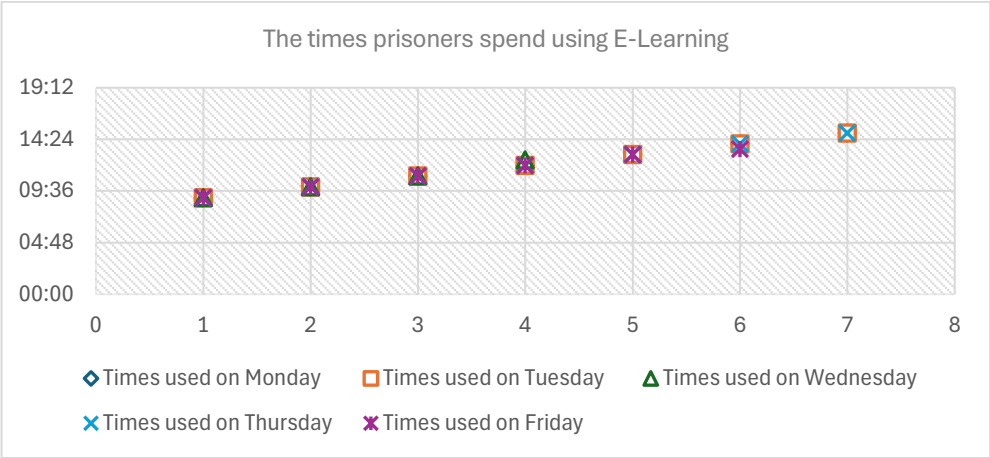
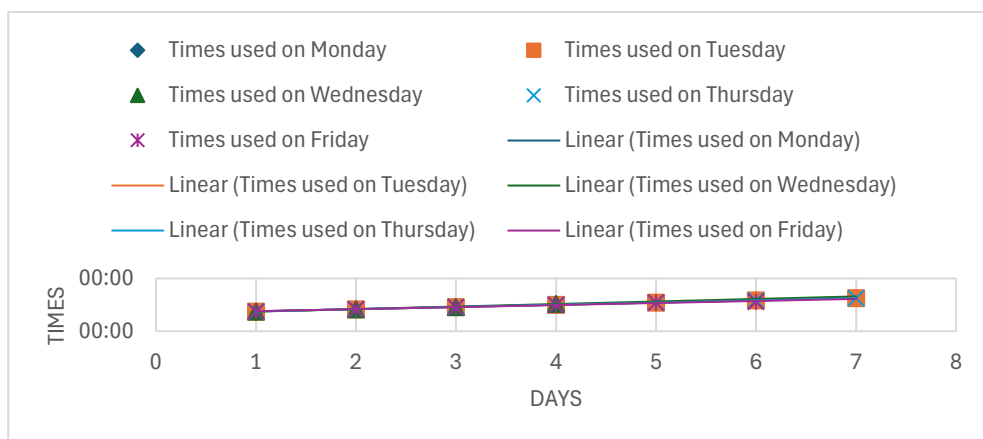


Chart 1 above confirms a recent study conducted by Smith and Johnson (2023) which revealed that jailed inmates participate in structured learning activities from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Notably, the study observed fluctuations in the schedule over the week, with longer study hours on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. During these specific days, participants would attend classes from 9 AM to 3 PM. In contrast, the study found that on the other two days, specifically Wednesday and Friday, there was a shorter study session. It began at 9 o'clock in the morning and ended at 12:30. The study provides valuable insights into the daily and weekly schedules of structured learning activities for jailed inmates. The researchers were able to observe and document the fluctuations in the schedule, with longer study hours on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, and shorter sessions on Wednesdays and Fridays. The study suggests that jailed inmates are provided with structured learning activities for a significant portion of the day, which could have positive implications for their rehabilitation, skill development, and preparation for reintegration into society.

Participant(s) said, *“For me I mostly study during the day”*.

Recent research has shown that jailed inmates have a preference for studying during daylight hours. Based on the findings a significant number of convicts claimed that they mostly dedicate their daytime hours to studying. Access to educational facilities, focus levels, and daily routines inside correctional environments can influence this desire.

Figure 2
Times Using E-Learning During the Night



Participant(s) said, *"I do mostly my research on the internet, or do my assignments, so during nighttime, especially from 9 or when our lights are off, in the cells, so I mostly study from 10 o'clock I can go out until 12 o'clock or 1 o'clock midnight. So, it is how I am managing my time. Most of my studies was done during the night"*.

Chart 2 above indicates the times of the night when inmate students study using e-learning.

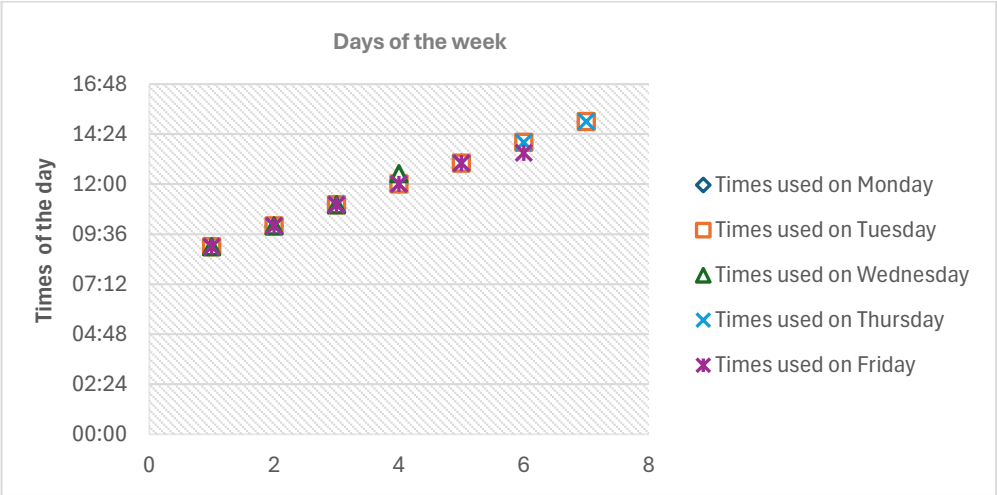
There is a need to protect individuals who might experience greater safety risks during jail incarceration especially those inmates studying during nighttime and depend on online resources (Ellison et al., 2024). Based on their research, a considerable number of convicts dedicate a substantial amount of time to studying during the late hours, typically beginning at 9 o'clock when the lights in their cells are turned off. Participants consistently engage in nocturnal study sessions that often run until midnight or even 1 o'clock in the morning. The time management tactics employed by jailed learners demonstrate their ability to adapt and make the most of the resources available to them, allowing them to maximize their study hours despite the limitations of their surroundings.

The fact that inmates are studying during the late hours, when the lights in their cells are turned off, raises questions about the level of institutional support and oversight for these educational activities. It is unclear whether the late-night studying is a structured, supported, and resourced component of the correctional facility's educational program or if it is a self-initiated effort by the inmates. Studying during the late hours, when the lights are turned off, may present various challenges and constraints, such as poor lighting conditions, limited access to educational materials, and potential fatigue or sleep deprivation among the inmates. These factors could limit the effectiveness and quality of the learning experience. If the late-night studying is a self-initiated effort by inmates, it may raise questions about equity and accessibility, as not all inmates may have the same opportunities, resources, or abilities to engage in such self-directed learning during the late hours.

Participant(s) said, *“After lock- up because that is now the time that the prison environment is now more quiet, it is more of, more settled, it gives us now the time to be able to study whereby we can study without disturbances. Because during the day it is very hectic, not only for us but for the whole system”.*

It must be emphasized that there is a need to study during non-incarceration hours, as jailed persons found the environment to be suitable for learning. Based on their research, participants observed that the jail environment becomes more tranquil and calmer after lock-up, creating an ideal setting for learning without interruptions.

Figure 3
Times E-Learning Usage from Mondays to Fridays



Participant(s) said, *“What we usually do is we come and do research; we print a lot of documents and then we go and study during the night when it is quiet. Everybody is asleep so you find yourself studying until three o’clock in the morning. A lot of reading. So there is not much sleep and you spend a lot of time during the evening hours studying. Especially in the evening, after 9, 10, and 11, when it is quiet. Other people are sleeping then you can do your studies. During the night. I usually study during nighttime”.* Chart 3 above illustrates the suitable times for inmates on which they use e-learning usage from Mondays to Fridays.

The willingness of inmates to dedicate substantial time to studying late into the night and early morning indicates a high level of intrinsic motivation and commitment to their own learning and self-improvement. The extended periods of studying, especially between 9 PM and 3 AM, allow inmates to engage in deep, uninterrupted learning, which can be beneficial for knowledge retention and skill development. Jailed individuals must participate in intensive research activities during daylight hours, utilizing printing services to produce a substantial number of documents to support their studies. Afterwards, numerous inmates allocate substantial amounts of the night to studying when the surroundings are calm and favorable for concentrated learning. Individuals frequently engage in a nighttime study routine that goes well beyond midnight, dedicating a significant amount of time to reading and academic activities throughout the late hours. Age, gender, and socioeconomic differences of inmate

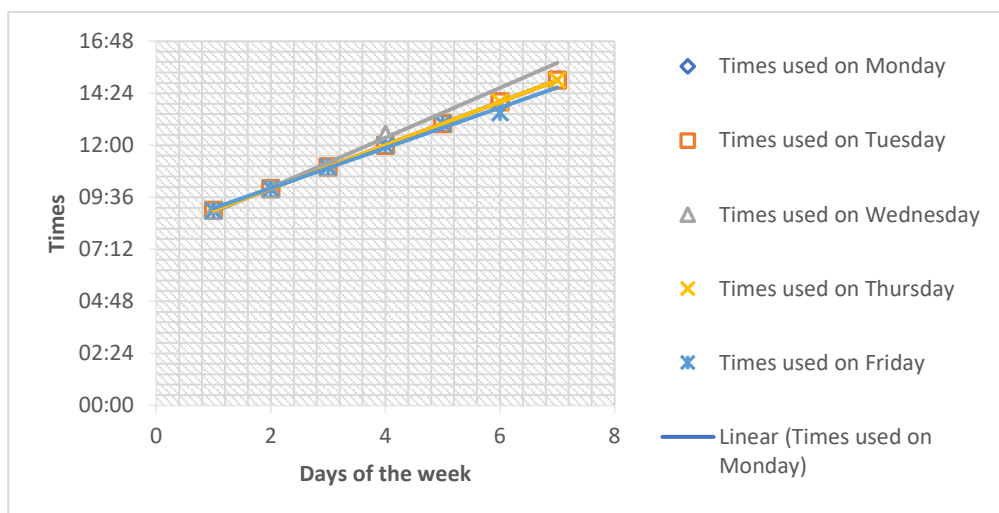
students' time spent must be considered (Larson & Verma, 1999). The individual's choice to study at night demonstrates a purposeful approach to take advantage of the calmness during evening hours and maximize learning possibilities despite the difficulties posed by the jail setting.

Participant(s) said, *"For studying I mostly because when I come for computer lab it is mostly research, and then when I go back to the unit, I always study with other inmates, and it is very difficult when you are studying during the day, because there is a lot of noise. I always studied after nine. At nighttime, because night time it is when the movement are restricted and there is no noise, a lot of people they are sleeping, maybe it is when a person can be able to concentrate more on the books compare to during the day when there is a lot of movement of people that makes it that they can be able to disturb you. I think that is the night-time"*.

Robles-Ramamurthy et al. (2024) found that insufficient sleep and variable sleep timing are associated with emotional dysregulation, worsening mental health symptoms of inmates. This highlighted the fact that incarcerated individuals have challenges of acquiring knowledge during the daytime due to the disruptive noise and distractions prevalent in correctional facilities. A considerable proportion of participants reported that they mostly dedicated their time to studying after 9 o'clock in the evening. They ascribed their predilection for nocturnal study sessions to the serene ambiance and minimal interruptions during that time. The nighttime environment provided an ideal atmosphere for focused and intensive studying, as it encountered fewer interruptions from fellow inmates. Consequently, numerous prisoners opt to utilize their study hours during the nighttime when the prison is tranquil and there is reduced commotion.

Figure 4

Conducive Times Studying Using E-Learning on Mondays to Fridays



Participant(s) said, *"The conducive time for study is normally, it is after 10 o'clock if the colleagues, the offenders, the other offenders, because normally during the day it is noisy, it is disturbing as well, so one need to count on your time whilst it is quiet and most*

of the other offenders are asleep. That is the only time that one is studying. Normally in the morning, when we come here from 9 to 3, or 9 to half past one, then at night time when we normally relax, we take our books, we go through it and then night time from 9 to 12 or to 4 o'clock”.

Chart 4 above shows the conducive times that inmates students use for studying using e-learning on Mondays to Fridays. Student prisoners often need to study at periods of less noise, namely after 10 o'clock at night when other convicts are usually asleep. This opinion highlights the difficulties caused by daytime noise and disturbances in correctional facilities, which makes it necessary to take advantage of peaceful moments for concentrated studying. The study found that numerous inmates dedicate time to studying both during the regimented daytime hours and the tranquil overnight period. Moreover, some individuals even engage in prolonged study sessions that run till the early morning hours. The findings emphasize the adaptive study methods used by jailed learners to optimize learning chances within the limitations of the prison setting.

Figure 5
Routine Timetable for Prison Students' Use of E-Learning

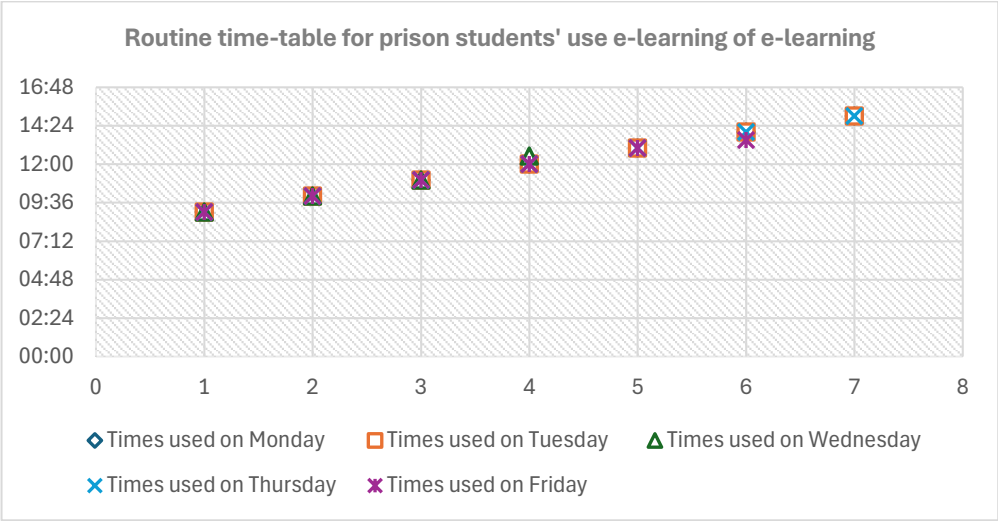


Chart 5 above indicates the study timetable for detained individuals usually runs from 9 AM to 3 PM, with extended hours until 9 PM on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. Although convicts adhere to a regular daily schedule, a significant number of them opt to engage in studying activities throughout the night, typically commencing at around 10 o'clock. This preference is attributed to the quieter environment and fewer distractions caused by the lights being turned off in the cells. This study pattern, which takes place during the night, enables focused research and reading into the early hours, occasionally extending until 3 o'clock in the morning. The nocturnal study environment is seen as more favorable due to less noise and activity, facilitating enhanced concentration in contrast to the bustling day setting. The desire for studying at night is partly related to the limited movement and quieter environment after lock-up, which promotes concentrated learning. In general, individuals who are in prison

prioritize studying during the night in order to make the most of their learning possibilities despite the difficulties they face in prison. The willingness of inmates to dedicate substantial time to studying late into the night and early morning indicates a high level of intrinsic motivation and commitment to their own learning and self-improvement. The extended periods of studying, especially between 9 pm and 3 am, allow inmates to engage in deep, uninterrupted learning, which can be beneficial for knowledge retention and skill development.

Conclusion

Overall, analyzing the learning patterns of incarcerated individuals using e-learning in correctional facilities demonstrates a clear inclination towards studying during the nights. Despite the planned study hours during the day, convicts frequently find the nighttime setting more favorable for concentrated learning because of decreased noise and disruptions. By adopting a nighttime study routine, prisoners are able to take advantage of the peaceful hours after lock-up, so maximizing their educational chances in the midst of the difficulties of prison life. Comprehending these learning patterns is essential for maximizing online educational efforts in correctional environments, guaranteeing that educational programs adequately cater to the requirements and inclinations of jailed students. Therefore, it is crucial for future research and program creation to continue investigating inventive approaches to assist and improve prisoner education, ultimately aiding in their rehabilitation and effective reintegration into society after their release. An analysis of the duration during which convicts engage in e-learning while incarcerated provides valuable observations about the educational environment in correctional facilities. Implementing e-learning programs in correctional facilities offers both obstacles and prospects for jailed individuals aiming to engage in education and rehabilitation.

Upon careful analysis, it is evident that the successful deployment of e-learning programs in correctional settings relies on three crucial factors: flexible study schedules, sufficient infrastructure, and the promotion of digital literacy. Correctional institutions can foster a favorable environment for productive e-learning experiences by catering to the preferences of incarcerated learners and providing them with the appropriate resources and assistance. Moreover, it is crucial to promote collaboration with educational partners and establish reintegration support programs in order to ensure that the educational progress achieved through e-learning initiatives leads to concrete opportunities for successful reintegration into society after release. The study of e-learning among jailed individuals highlights the significance of utilizing technology to improve educational opportunities and aid in the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners. Through the strategic management of the specific difficulties and advantageous circumstances associated with e-learning, correctional institutions and policymakers have the ability to enable jailed individuals to achieve their educational objectives and significantly enhance their future prospects, both inside and outside of the prison environment.

Recommendations

Correctional institutions will be required to establish policies that promote and facilitate the incorporation of e-learning into their educational programs. This involves providing resources for the advancement and execution of e-learning projects, as well

as setting protocols for the utilization of technology in correctional facilities. Correctional institutions would allocate resources and establish the required infrastructure to facilitate e-learning programs, including computer laboratories, internet connectivity, and educational software. In addition, it is crucial for staff members to get training on efficiently facilitating e-learning programs and provide support to incarcerated learners. Correctional rules would have flexible study hours that cater to the desires of jailed inmates, encompassing both daytime and nocturnal study sessions. Prisoners are allowed to study during periods when they are most efficient and concentrated, which results in improved educational achievements. Correctional facilities should prioritize the advancement of digital literacy abilities among jailed individuals to assure their proficient utilization of e-learning resources. This includes delivering instruction on fundamental computer skills, navigating the internet, and employing online research techniques. Correctional facilities ideally would form partnerships with educational institutions, charitable groups, and other stakeholders to enhance the availability of e-learning possibilities for convicts. This partnership has the potential to offer a wide variety of educational courses and resources specifically designed to meet the requirements of individuals who are incarcerated. Correctional facilities could conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of e-learning initiatives to assess their effectiveness in facilitating prisoner education and rehabilitation. This would include the gathering of input from incarcerated individuals, monitoring their educational advancements, and evaluating results such as the rate of reoffending and employment status after release. Policymakers would give top priority to the establishment of reintegration programs that specifically cater to the educational and occupational aspirations of those who have been previously jailed. This involves granting access to ongoing educational and training opportunities after release to aid in the successful reintegration into society.

To effectively utilize e-learning and improve educational possibilities for jailed individuals, correctional institutions and policymakers would apply these policy guidelines and practical solutions. This will also contribute to the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of these individuals into society.

Correctional institutions need to consider implementing flexible study schedules that cater to individuals' preferences for studying throughout both daytime and overnight hours. This may entail granting offenders' access to educational resources and facilitating self-directed learning outside of regular hours, enabling them to study during periods when they are most attentive and efficient. Correctional institutions would then allocate resources towards implementing comprehensive e-learning platforms and resources that address the varied educational requirements and preferences of jailed inmates. This encompasses offering access to a diverse array of internet-based courses, interactive educational resources, and tools that foster active participation and the enhancement of skills.

Correctional personnel need to model and acknowledge the significance of nocturnal study sessions and offer assistance to incarcerated individuals who opt to study during these hours. This may entail the implementation of policies that establish specified quiet hours, guaranteeing sufficient illumination and availability of study materials, and establishing specific areas within jail institutions dedicated to studying. Correctional personnel need to undergo training that specifically addresses the distinct requirements and difficulties faced by jailed individuals who are engaged in e-learning programs. This encompasses instruction on efficiently facilitating online learning,

offering academic assistance, and fostering digital literacy skills among incarcerated individuals.

Correctional institutions ideally would form partnerships with educational institutions, charitable organizations, and other relevant parties to enhance the availability of e-learning possibilities for jailed inmates. This may entail establishing collaborations to offer web-based courses, tutoring services, and certification programs specifically designed to meet the requirements of incarcerated individuals. Correctional facilities can then conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of e-learning initiatives to assess their effectiveness in facilitating prisoner education and rehabilitation. This includes the gathering of input from incarcerated individuals, monitoring their educational advancements, and evaluating results such as the rate of reoffending and employment status after release. By applying these suggestions, correctional facilities can enhance their support for prisoner education and facilitate effective reintegration into society through e-learning projects.

References

- Aini, F., Fitria, H., & Wahidy, A. (2024). Implementation of ICT-based management information systems in increasing the effectiveness of students' learning at state vocational School 1 Gelumbang, *Journal of Social Work and Science Education*, 5(1), 219-234. <https://doi.org/10.52690/jswse.v5i1.715>
- Badejo, J. A., Chakraborty, J., & Forbes, M. (2024). A digital inclusion and technological barriers: Investigating the challenges faced by formerly incarcerated populations in adopting and accessing technology. In *VISIGRAPP(1), GRAPP, HUCAPP, IVAPP* (pp.464-470). <https://doi.org/10.5220/0012360800003660>
- Brophy, M., Pérez-Luño, A., & Cooney, T. M. (2024). Competency-based training within the prison system: enhancing the likelihood of entrepreneurial activity upon release. *Journal of Education and Work*, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080.2024.2335466>
- Chatzipolakis, P., Yasuoka, M., & Georgoulakis, C. (2024). To prove there is another way": A qualitative study on digital tools for education in the storstrøm prison of Denmark. *Proceedings of the 57th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*, 44-53. <https://hdl.handle.net/10125/106382>
- Ellison, J. M., Cain, C. M., Baker, B., & Paige, B. (2024). The dangers of short-term confinement: Indicators of safety risks among individuals in Jail. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 68(8), 825-848. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X221110808>
- Franich, G., & Martinovic, M. (2024). Deployment of digital devices in prisons in New South Wales in Australia: Exploring the benefits, challenges, and opportunities for incarcerated women. *Feminist Criminology*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/15570851241235122>
- García-Valenzuela, V.M., Jacobo-Hernandez, C.A., & Flores-López, J.G. (2024). Dynamic capabilities and their effect on organizational resilience in small and medium-sized commercial enterprises. *Management & Marketing*, 18(4), 496-514. <https://doi.org/10.2478/mmcks-2023-0027>
- Goodley, G., & Pearson, D. (2024). Monitoring prisoners preparing for release: Who 'fails' in open prison conditions? *European Journal of Criminology*, 21(2), 251-273. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14773708231183570>

- Heasly, B., & Iliško, D. (2023). Editorial: Navigating leadership challenges in the post-pandemic world. *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education*, 14(2), 1-4. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2478/dcse-2023-0013>
- Heasly, B., Iliško, D., & Lindner, J. (2024). Co-creating transformations towards sustainability: Embracing innovations, honouring traditions. *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education*, 15 (1), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.2478/dcse-2024-0001>
- Hofinger, V., & Pflegerl, P. (2024). A reality check on the digitalisation of prisons: Assessing the opportunities and risks of providing digital technologies for prisoners. *Punishment & Society*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/14624745241237190>
- Kyambadde, J., & Khumalo, S. S. (2023). Universalization, sustainability and “Justiceness” of primary education: Perspectives and lessons from Uganda. *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education*, 4(2), 144-160. <https://doi.org/10.2478/dcse-2023-0023>
- Larson, R. W., & Verma, S. (1999). How children and adolescents spend time across the world: Work, play, and developmental opportunities. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125(6), 701-736. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.125.6.701>
- Leon, C., Perez, G., Lowman, J., Schultz, L., Babakhani, A., Addison, D., & White, B. (2024). The more connection the better: Bounded relationships and uneasy alignments in prison education, *Journal of Health Care Law & Policy*, 27(5), 150-182.
- Lim, Zhi Yong, Jun Hong Yap, Joel Weijia Lai, Intan Azura Mokhtar, Darren J. Yeo, & Kang Hao Cheong (2024). Advancing lifelong learning in the digital age: A narrative review of Singapore’s skills future programme. *Social Sciences*, 13(73), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci13020073>
- Machado, A., Monteiro, A., & Moreira, J. A. (2023). E-Learning and digital technologies in lifelong learning in Portuguese prisons. In *The 7th IEEE Congress on Information Science and Technology* (pp. 483-491). <https://doi.org/10.1109/CiSt56084.2023.10409878>
- Mafilika, M., & Marongwe, N. (2024). Challenges hindering rendering of formal education programs at correctional centers in South Africa. *IntechOpen*. doi: 10.5772/intechopen.1004400
- McKay, C., & Macintosh, K. (2024). Digital vulnerability: People-in-prison, videoconferencing and the digital criminal justice system. *Journal of Criminology*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/26338076231217794>
- Mojtahedzadeh, R., Hasanvand, S., Mohammadi, A., Malmir, S., & Vatankhah, M. (2024). Students’ experience of interpersonal interactions quality in e-Learning: A qualitative research. *PloS one*, 19(3), e0298079. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0298079>
- Monica, M. (2024). The future of rehabilitation: AI and the transformation of education in prisons. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(2), 916-922. <https://doi.org/10.53555/kuey.v30i2.2996>
- Nisser, M., Gaetz, M., Fishberg, A., Soicher, R. N., Faruqi, F., & Long, J. (2024). From prisons to programming: Fostering self-efficacy via virtual web design curricula in prisons and jails. In *Proceedings of the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1-13). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3613904.3642717>
- Robles-Ramamurthy, B., Zaki, S., Sandoval, J.F., Dube, A.R., Hlozek, S., Fortuna, L.R., & Williamson, A.A. (2024). Improving adolescent sleep in long-term juvenile correctional settings: case examples with clinical, research, and policy

implications, *SLEEP Advances*, 5(1)1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sleepadvances/zpae006>

Raher, S. (2024). Data privacy in carceral settings: The digital panopticon returns to its roots. *Northwestern University Law Review*, 119, 73-104.

Uche, I. B., Okafor, A. E., & Uche, O. A. (2024). Graying incarcerated persons and education programs in Nigerian correctional Centre. *Journal of Prison Education Research*, 8(1), 1-16. <https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/joper/vol8/iss1/3>

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Vimbi Petrus Mahlangu, University of South Africa, e- mail: mahlavp@unisa.ac.za