

# Prison Entrepreneurship Education: A Systematic Literature Review

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**Abstract:** This article presents a systematic literature review (SLR) on prison entrepreneurship education, aiming to explore existing knowledge about prison education systems that promote entrepreneurial skills recognized by prisoners. Criminal recidivism is a complex, worldwide social problem for which there seems to be no optimal solution, only preventive measures. Its prevention promotes a social benefit for society as a whole. Lack of employment continues to be a factor in the social reintegration of prisoners, increasing the likelihood of recidivism. The few studies that portray the effect of programs involving entrepreneurship and education in prisons indicate that they are successful in being accepted by the prison population based on their proposed educational opportunities. However, this analysis is not conclusive when it comes to the recognition of opportunities by prisoners, and there is a need for more studies to be carried out to gauge an informed response and support the development of new policies to help meet this social need for successful social reintegration. However, in many countries, the educational offer of entrepreneurship programs does not cover all prisoners. This SLR includes results on entrepreneurship education in prisons regarding the recognition of entrepreneurial skills. It also partially explains the effects of entrepreneurship education in the prison system. The results of this SLR highlight the need for more comprehensive public policies and more effective entrepreneurial educational practices. It is necessary to ensure that all citizens deprived of their liberty have access to entrepreneurship education and that these initiatives align with the employment opportunities available in the labor market. Considering the existing limitations in research in this area, namely the small number of academic studies involving prisoners, combined with the difficulty for researchers to “enter” prison systems, we believe that this study is significant, given that the associated issues of criminal recidivism versus social reintegration affect society as a whole.

**Keywords:** Education; Entrepreneurship; Entrepreneurship program; Lifelong learning; Prison; Prisoners.

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## 1. Introduction

This SLR aims to outline the international state of the art of prison entrepreneurship education and its contributions to promoting and recognising entrepreneurial skills. It also aims to learn about existing limitations and explore the path that future research should take to answer the SLR's central question, considering the evidence, gaps, and limitations identified.

Education is a key factor for entrepreneurs and is vital in affecting their bottom line (Van der Sluis, Van Praag, and Vijverberg, 2008). Prisoners are deprived of their freedom, but they retain the right to education, and they must have the skills and knowledge necessary to face the difficulties of (re)entering the job market after their release.

In a broad definition, entrepreneurship education is compared to the general skills considered useful for preparing for life that all students should learn and, in a narrow definition, emphasizes that entrepreneurship education is a specific training course for setting up one's own business, which, with different definitions, teachers find it difficult to convert curriculum content into practice (Fejes et al., 2019). From a different perspective, entrepreneurship education promotes socio-emotional competences while developing important skills and values (Salzano et al., 2006; UNESCO, 2024).

Fayolle and Gailly (2005) understand that teaching programs for entrepreneurship are very diverse and depend a lot on the target audience, the teachers, the objective, and the methodology used. In general, entrepreneurship education programs provoke a change in students' mentality, a change in attitudes, and the development of some entrepreneurial orientation that can be assessed through intentions (Ceresia, 2018; Fayolle and Gailly, 2005).

The primary function of education in the prison system is to increase the qualifications of citizens deprived of their liberty to reduce criminal recidivism (Flynn and Higdon, 2022; Reese, 2019).

The ability to identify entrepreneurial opportunities, the attitude towards risk, and the lack of job opportunities, all influence the intention to set up one's own business (Hil et al., 2024; Raposo and Paço, 2011).

Entrepreneurial skills include acting on opportunities and ideas and turning them into value for society (European Commission [EC], 2019). These skills are based on creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, initiative, perseverance, and teamwork (EC, 2019).

This SLR aims to answer the question: What do we know about prison education systems that promote entrepreneurial skills recognized by prisoners?

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Research Protocol

This aims to identify articles that address the topic of prison entrepreneurship education and discuss their contribution to the promotion and recognition of entrepreneurial skills in adult citizens deprived of liberty. For a robust analysis of the existing articles, the following keywords were validated by a researcher from the field of management and two researchers from the field of education: *Correctional education; Education; Entrepreneurial activity; Entrepreneurial program OR Entrepreneurship program; Entrepreneurship; Detainees OR Convicts OR Inmates OR Incarcerated OR Offenders; Lifelong learning; Prison; Prison education; Reentry programs; Rehabilitation programs; Rehabilitation through education; Self employment OR Self-employment; Social reintegration.*

When developing the SLR, two new keywords were added because they proved relevant when searching the databases: *Vocational education and vocational training.*

The research used Web of Science (WoS), Scopus, and EBSCOhost databases. It examined scientific articles published in Spanish, French, English, and Portuguese between January 2000 and December 2024.

The search was performed in January 2025 and was limited to peer-reviewed scientific articles and academic journals classified as Q1 or Q2 in the Journal Citations Reports (JCR).

One limitation of the research protocol is that the SLR only includes articles published in Q1 and Q2 journals.

The SLR protocol is described in Figure 1.

<b>Research question</b>	What do we know about prison education systems that promote entrepreneurial skills recognized by inmates?
<b>SLR Objective</b>	To analyze and systematize the existing literature in the field of academic research that investigates entrepreneurship and education in the prison system.
<b>Databases</b>	Web of Science; Scopus; EBSCOhost
<b>Keywords</b>	Correctional education; Education; Entrepreneurial activity; Entrepreneurial program OR Entrepreneurship program; Entrepreneurship; Detainees OR Convicts OR Inmates OR Incarcerated OR Offenders; Lifelong learning; Prison; Prison education; Reentry programs; Rehabilitation programs; Rehabilitation through education; Self employment OR Self-employment; Social reintegration; Vocational education; Vocational training.
<b>Articles</b>	Spanish / French / English / Portuguese Peer-review Academic journals
<b>Identification</b>	The articles were identified by searching the databases for results with various combinations of the key words Web of Science, Scopus and EBSCOhost. The period from January 2000 to December 2024.
<b>Screening</b>	After eliminating duplicates, the initial screening included articles with the following keywords in the title or abstract: Entrepreneurship, Education or Lifelong learning, and Prison or Convicts/Inmates/Incarcerated/Offenders. In a second phase, the JCR classification was carried out and only articles published in journals with JCR (2023) Q1 or Q2 were selected.
<b>Eligibility</b>	Full-text reading and analysis of the articles selected in the screening to assess whether they meet the research criteria and contribute to the SLR issue.
<b>Included</b>	Selection and confirmation of the articles to be analyzed and included in the SLR. Exclusion of articles that do not contribute to answering the research question.

Figure 1: SLR Protocol

Nineteen combinations of keywords were used to identify 2297 articles in the database search. A total of 1154 duplicates and eleven articles with unknown authors were eliminated.

The screening phase included 1132 articles and was carried out in two stages. The first considered the inclusion of keywords in the title and abstract, reducing the sample to 150 articles. In the second, the 150 articles were classified according to the JCR ranking of the journal in which they were published, based on the WoS Journal Citation Reports for the year 2023, and 120 articles were excluded. The 30 remaining articles for the eligibility phase were fully read and analyzed, and only 23 were included. Exploring some of the citations of articles that seemed relevant, three more articles were included, bringing the number to 26. Of the articles in the SLR, 25 were written in English and 1 in Spanish.

Reasons for article exclusion:

1. Focus on the prison context during deprivation of liberty, but do not address the development of entrepreneurial skills/education in this context;
2. Temporal and contextual relevance of educational/entrepreneurial programs, focusing only on the effects of ex-prisoners' stigma on finding a job.

To describe the process (see Figure 2), we used PRISMA 2020, a flowchart (Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses), based on Page et al. (2021).

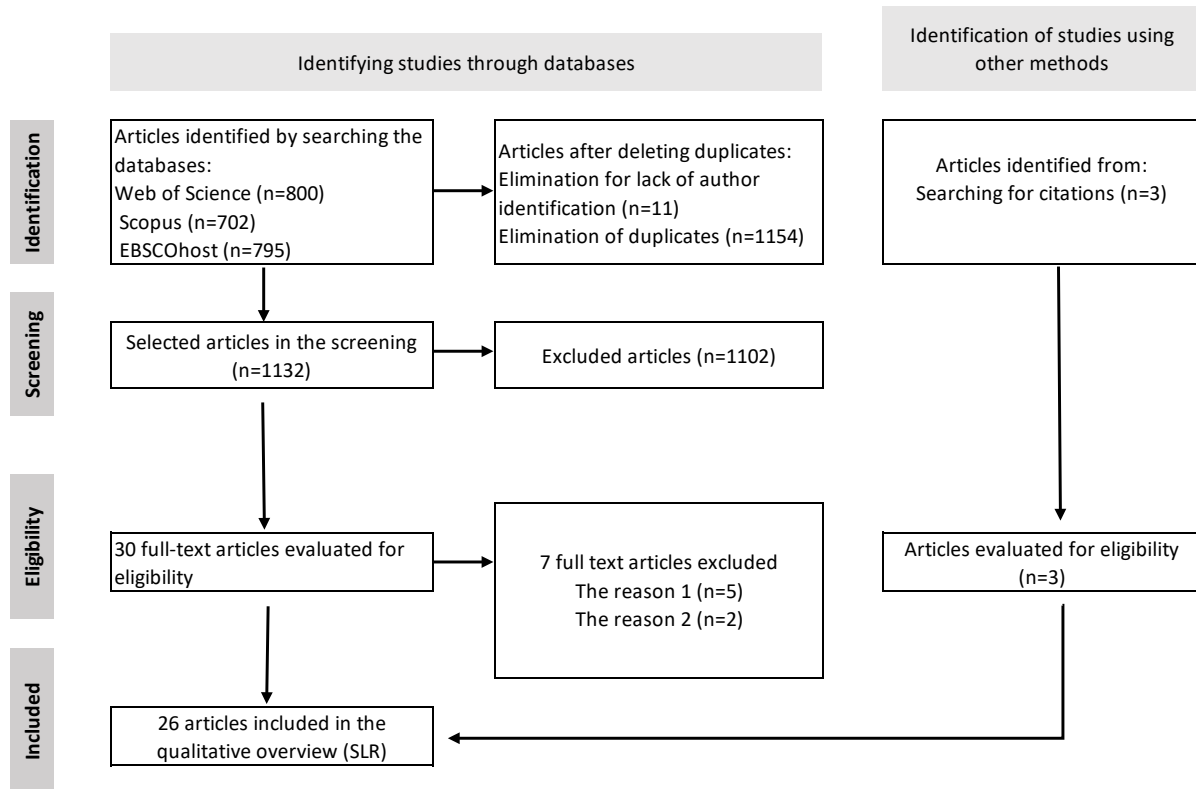


Figure 2: Flow chart - PRISMA 2020

## 2.2 Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 identifies the included articles.

**Table 1: Identification of the articles included in the SLR**

Title	Authors/year	Academic journal	Ranking (JCR)	Method	Country / Continent
A meta-analysis of corrections-based education, vocation, and work programs for adult offenders	Wilson et al. (2000)	Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency	Q1	Quantitative	n.a. (Meta-analysis)
Prison's Dilemma: Do Education and Jobs Programmes Affect Recidivism?	Sedgley et al. (2010)	Economica	Q1	Quantitative	United States of America
The role of adult education in the integration of inmates into society after a jail term: Practical experiences from Swaziland	Biswalo (2011)	International Journal of Lifelong Education	Q2	Qualitative	Swaziland
Corrections education and employment assistance 'down under': Current and emerging practices and paradigms	Graffam et al. (2014)	London Review of Education	Q2	Qualitative	Australia
Overcoming the Walls That Constrain Us: The Role of Entrepreneurship Education Programs in Prison	Patzelt et al. (2014)	Academy os Management Learning & Education	Q1	Qualitative	Europe
The Aspirations and Realities of Prison Education for Under-25s in the London Area	Rogers et al. (2014)	London Review of Education	Q2	Qualitative	United Kingdon
Effects of prison work programmes on the employability of ex-prisoners	Alós et al. (2015)	European Journal of Criminology	Q1	Quantitative	Spain
The role of art education in adult prisons: The Western Australian experience	Giles et al. (2016)	International Review of Education	Q1	Quantitative	Australia
Adult higher education in a Portuguese prison	Moreira et al. (2017)	European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults	Q2	Qualitative	Portugal
La educación superior a distancia y el e-Learning en las prisiones en Portugal / Higher education distance learning and e-Learning in prisons in portugal	Moreira et al. (2017)	Comunicar	Q1	Qualitative	Portugal
Education in Prison and the Self-Stigma: Empowerment Continuum	Evans et al. (2018)	Crime & Delinquency	Q2	Qualitative	United States of America
Makeright—Bags of Connection: Teaching Design Thinking and Making in Prison to Help Build Empathic and Resilient Communities	Gamman and Thorpe (2018)	She Ji-The Journal of Design Economics and Innovation	Q1	Qualitative	United Kingdon and India
Prison Break. Education of Young Adults in Closed Prisons--Building a Bridge from Prison to Civil Society?	Mertanen et al. (2018)	Education Inquiry	Q2	Qualitative	Finland
Application of the Literacy Training Service component of the National Service Training Program in New Bilibid Prison (Philippines)	Lopez (2019)	International Review of Education	Q1	Mixed method	Philippines
The Prison Education Project	Reese (2019)	International Review of Education	Q1	Qualitative	United States of America
Why do not more prisoners participate in adult education? An analysis of barriers to education in Norwegian prisons	Manger et al. (2019)	International Review of Education	Q1	Quantitative	Norway
Prison education in Norway - The importance for work and life after release	Tonseth and Bergsland (2019)	Cogent Education	Q2	Qualitative	Norway
The transformative effect of correctional education: A global perspective	Vandala (2019)	Cogent Social Sciences	Q2	Mixed method	South Africa
From Prison to Entrepreneurship: Can Entrepreneurship be a Reentry Strategy for Justice-Impacted Individuals?	Hwang (2022)	Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science	Q1	Qualitative	United States of America
Replanting life: ecological and human restoration	Abreu et al. (2022)	Restoration Ecology	Q2	Qualitative	Brazil
The influence of correctional education, skill proficiency, and lifelong learning on social outcomes of incarcerated individuals: Results from PIAAC	Galeshi and Bolin (2022)	Social Science Journal	Q2	Quantitative	United States of America
Examining prison entrepreneurship programs, self-efficacy and entrepreneurial resilience as drivers for prisoners' entrepreneurial intentions	Ciptono et al. (2023)	International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research	Q1	Quantitative	Indonesia
Incarcerated individuals and education programmes in Nigeria: A task for social workers	Uche et al. (2023)	Plos One	Q1	Qualitative	Nigeria
Female's self-concept as online learners in the context of lifelong learning in prisons	Monteiro et al. (2023)	International Journal of Lifelong Education	Q2	Mixed method	Portugal
Are Schools in Prison Worth It? The Effects and Economic Returns of Prison Education	Stickle and Schuster (2023)	American Journal of Criminal Justice	Q2	Qualitative	United States of America
Competency-based training within the prison system: enhancing the likelihood of entrepreneurial activity upon release	Brophy et al. (2024)	Journal of Education and Work	Q2	Qualitative	Ireland

### **3. Results**

The results are presented according to the type of education the articles fall under. The definition of each educational term was drawn up based on the International Standard Classification of Education, which harmonizes educational information and covers almost all countries, and is supported by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (Schneider, 2013).

#### **3.1 Lifelong Learning**

Lifelong learning encompasses all ages in all contexts, includes various modalities, such as formal, non-formal, and informal, and covers multiple learning needs and requirements (UNESCO, 2024).

Biswalo (2011) identifies a gap between the practical skills developed by prisoners and the need for additional skills, recommends improving education programs for adults serving time in prison, and highlights the importance of acquiring entrepreneurial skills for successful social reintegration.

Mertanen and Brunila (2018) comment that through education, work, and training, inmates see themselves as free citizens without the inconveniences of everyday reality, inequalities, and obstacles. The authors consider that education, which is made possible for these citizens, has ambivalent objectives since it makes them more responsible and increases their self-esteem, thinking, and emotional skills. Still, they point out that the risk of failure is always present.

Lopez (2019) designed a framework for the Alternative Learning System program, noting that inmates attending the program are provided with lifelong learning as a survival tool, highlighting the importance of the government investing in education in the prison system.

Reese (2019) carried out a study in which he compared the United States of America (USA) prison system with progressive correctional systems around the world, namely the development of the Prison Education Project, which began in 2011. Reese (2019) notes that the lack of education is a common factor in the prison system, leading to serious social consequences.

Manger et al. (2019) studied the development of the Perceived Barriers to Prison Education Scale and why prisoners do not participate in education during their time in prison. They consider barriers to education to be important in decision-making and choice of participation and identify three barriers to education: institutional, situational, and dispositional.

Galeshi and Bolin (2022) conducted a study based on data from the 2014 United States Prison Survey of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies. The authors show that education promotes access to information, which, in turn, helps citizens deprived of their liberty to make well-informed decisions and become more resilient in a constantly changing society.

Monteiro et al. (2023) conducted a study in a women's prison in Portugal. They identified some negative aspects related by inmates, such as difficulty understanding some content, being unable to explore the internet freely, and preferring the teacher's physical presence (Monteiro et al., 2023). The positive aspects mentioned are diversification and the opportunity to attend courses while deprived of liberty. They concluded that the participants recognize the importance of lifelong learning in a non-formal context.

The studies converge in their emphasis on the importance of Lifelong Learning as an essential tool for prisoners.

#### **3.2 Education and Correctional Education**

Education involves communication to promote learning and transmit knowledge, information, understanding, attitudes, values, skills, competencies, and behaviors accumulated over generations (UNESCO, 2024).

Correctional education involves education or training programs provided in correctional institutions (UNESCO, 2024).

The study of Sedgley et al. (2010) concludes that prison system programs, including jobs inside and outside prison and education programs, contribute significantly to reducing the recidivism rate. The authors mention that well-structured programs that offer vocational skills and education help inmates see their future with more optimism, supporting, even indirectly, potential entrepreneurial activities.

Moreira, Monteiro and Machado (2017a) carried out a study in a prison, and the results point to the existence of motivation to complete the course since inmates perceive a more inclusive future after release. Following the previous study, Moreira, Monteiro and Machado (2017b) show that inmate students consider distance learning favorable since they have no other option for higher education, and are allowed to complete their studies in any prison in the country.

Evans, Pelletier, and Szkola (2018) interviewed eighteen ex-prisoners who had served a custodial sentence and attended higher education during that period. They recognized the empowerment that education had offered them, and other respondents assumed that participating in education programs helped them develop a work ethic, study routines, and critical thinking. The authors conclude that the study does not prove that education is the definitive solution to successful social reintegration, but reflects the value ex-prisoners place on the education they received during prison.

Tonseth and Bergsland (2019) conducted a study to understand how formal education in prison has affected inmates' lives after release. They concluded that education in prison contributes to social benefits, self-determination, and accountability, allowing ex-prisoners to improve their mastery and self-esteem. Most interviewees highlighted the importance of education in prison (Tonseth and Bergsland, 2019).

Vandala (2019) studied the transformational effect of correctional education and concluded that it promotes inmates' rehabilitation, develops their self-esteem and self-confidence, strengthens professional skills, improves cognitive abilities, promotes growth, and improves literacy levels.

Uche et al. (2023) investigate how citizens deprived of liberty perceive education programs. The authors conclude that although correctional education is seen as an asset for social reintegration, its effectiveness is limited by the quality of teaching and the negative perception that citizens deprived of liberty have about employment opportunities after release.

Stickle and Schuster (2023) conducted a meta-analysis and confirmed that education in prison is effective and promotes a reduction in recidivism, increasing the likelihood of employment and wages after release.

Uche et al. (2023) consider that the action of correctional education is limited due to the lack of quality of education, diverging from other studies which indicate that correctional education contributes to reducing the rate of recidivism and promotes social and professional skills.

### **3.3 Entrepreneurship Education**

Entrepreneurship education refers to education elected to inform, train, and educate any citizen who wishes to contribute to social and economic development through initiatives that promote knowledge about entrepreneurship (UNESCO, 2024). Entrepreneurial education is viewed more broadly and aims to boost citizens' self-esteem and confidence by harnessing talent and creativity while developing important skills and values (Salzano et al., 2006; UNESCO, 2024).

Graffam, Shinkfield and Lavelle (2014) comment on the challenges of the prison system and state that transformative change is at the heart of the social reintegration paradigm. They note that short-term rehabilitation programs or intensive assistance are sufficient to produce lasting results and consider education and employment crucial for successful social reintegration.

While attending an entrepreneurship education program, 5 of the 12 inmates interviewed by Patzelt, Williams and Shepherd (2014) dropped out. The authors note that, during the interview, the prisoners who dropped out were those who blamed others for serving their sentence. They confirm that inmates who attended the entrepreneurship education program showed a strong appetite for starting their own business. (Patzelt, Williams and Shepherd (2014) consider recognizing entrepreneurial opportunities based on the inmates' understanding of their condition, their motivation for their future after release, and their persistence in completing the program.

Giles, Paris and Whale (2016) conducted a study on correctional education in general and arts education in particular and reported that inmates have acquired the necessary skills for short or vocational courses.

Gamman and Thorpe (2018) implemented a socially responsible design course called "Makeright" to engage and provide transformational learning for inmates and enable them to develop resilience and entrepreneurial skills. During the course, the inmates identified opportunities, and a certification process was created to recognize their learning and contribution to the program (Gamman and Thorpe, 2018).

Given the difficulties citizens who have served a custodial sentence have in finding a job, Hwang (2022) explores an alternative way to overcome this difficulty: entrepreneurship. He states that providing citizens deprived of their liberty with entrepreneurial skills is necessary. Considering entrepreneurship programs in the prison system do not cover all prisoners, Hwang (2022) stresses the importance of balancing support for entrepreneurship with integration into the labor market for citizens who have served a prison sentence.

After testing some hypotheses, Ciptono, Anggadwita and Indarti (2023) demonstrate the importance of entrepreneurship education and identify the factors that support inmates' entrepreneurial intentions, namely entrepreneurship programs, self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial resilience.

Brophy, Pérez-Luño and Cooney (2024) explore a training approach based on competencies, knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary for citizens deprived of liberty to improve their entrepreneurial prospects. The authors found that the participants evoked a lot of knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary for entrepreneurship during the interviews. However, these skills seem to be underdeveloped among prisoners, and they are not sure that they will be suitable for the job market when they are released. The opportunity recognition and evaluation, as entrepreneurial skills of prisoners, need to be further explored if prisoners are to become successful entrepreneurs after their release (Brophy, Pérez-Luño and Cooney, 2024).

Studies show that entrepreneurship education is essential for prisoners to be successful both in finding a job and in setting up their own business after release.

### **3.4 Education and Vocational Training**

According to UNESCO (2024), vocational training is work-related learning in vocational and technical schools, training centers or institutes, and even the workplace.

Wilson, Gallagher and MacKenzie (2000) performed a meta-analysis and evaluated the effectiveness of prison education, vocational training and work programs. The main conclusions of the authors were that post-secondary education and vocational training had the most positive effects on reducing the recidivism rate and employment rates after serving a prison sentence.

A study by Rogers et al. (2014) analyzes prison education for young adults deprived of their liberty and reveals that despite the prison system's efforts to provide good training, education has limitations regarding the variety, duration, and level of courses. The authors highlight the importance of education and vocational training for developing entrepreneurial skills.

Alós et al. (2015) used Spanish Social Security data to study a group of citizens who had served prison sentences. The authors conclude that the results show the positive effect of prison work on employability, the little impact that vocational training has on improving job opportunities, given the low professional content that makes them more ambiguous, and the fragility of integration into the labor market. Alós et al. (2015) state that prison work programs and vocational training need to be aligned with the needs of the labor market.

In Brazil, during the implementation of the Replanting Life Program (*Programa Replantando Vida - PRV*), Marques de Abreu et al. (2022) evaluated the environmental benefits of the PRV motivation and the perception of personal changes after finishing work in the program. The authors concluded that vocational training courses have helped achieve the PRV's objectives, and with work practice, training increases prisoners' sense of entrepreneurship.

## **4. Discussion**

The studies included in the SLR converge in the sense that education and entrepreneurship are interconnected and reveals that participation in entrepreneurship education programs not only increases the likelihood of prisoners becoming entrepreneurs, but also equips them with essential skills (critical thinking, problem solving, communication, teamwork) that are crucial for successful social reintegration (Patzelt, Williams and Shepherd, 2014; Giles, Paris and Whale, 2016; Evans, Pelletier and Szkola, 2018; Gamman and Thorpe, 2018; Lopez, 2019; Hwang, 2022; Marques de Abreu et al., 2022).

Studies show that attending entrepreneurship education programs develops entrepreneurial skills and, in some cases, helps overcome personal and psychological situations, making inmates accept their past and look optimistically to the future (Patzelt, Williams and Shepherd, 2014; Ciptono, Anggadwita and Indarti, 2023). These programs support the identification of entrepreneurial skills in prisoners and the ability to identify entrepreneurial opportunities (Gammam and Thorpe, 2018). Prisoners who attend these programs are more

likely to become entrepreneurs, starting their own business (Brophy, Pérez-Luño and Cooney, 2024; Patzelt, Williams and Shepherd, 2014).

The studies analysed show a lack of entrepreneurship education programs that can reach the majority of citizens deprived of their liberty (Biswalo, 2011; Reese, 2019). It is uncertain that the skills and/or opportunities recognized by inmates are adapted to the job market since the reality outside the prison walls has changed during their time in prison (Reese, 2019).

Studies carried out in North America, particularly in the USA, highlight the need to invest in education in prisons (Sedgley et al., 2010), not only as a way of mitigating the stigma of being an ex-prisoner (Evans, Pelletier and Szkola, 2018), but also because social reintegration is more likely to be successful (Reese, 2019), as opportunities to enter the job market increase (Galeshi and Bolin; 2022; Hwang, 2022; Stickle and Schuster, 2023). In South America, in Brazil, most prisoners who attended vocational training at the PRV showed an entrepreneurial attitude (Marques de Abreu et al., 2022).

Studies carried out on the African continent, Swaziland, South Africa and Nigeria, highlight the importance of education programs in the lives of prisoners (Biswalo, 2011; Vandala, 2019) and the importance of their quality (Uche et al., 2023).

Studies in the countries of the Asian continent, India, the Philippines and Indonesia, point to the relevance entrepreneurship education (Ciptono, Anggadwita and Indarti, 2023; Gamman and Thorpe 2018) and the impetus it provides for self-employment (Lopez, 2019). In Australia, studies show the positive effects of short-term educational programs and vocational training (Giles, Paris and Whale, 2016; Graffam, Shinkfield and Lavelle, 2014).

Studies from the European continent, Spain, Ireland, Finland, Norway, Portugal and the United Kingdom, reflect the positive effects that prison work has on inmates (Alós et al., 2015; Mertanen et al., 2018; Rogers et al., 2014) and the importance of education (Monteiro et al., 2023; Moreira, Monteiro and Machado, 2017a, 2017b).

## **5. Conclusions**

The results obtained are not conclusive regarding the premise that prison systems promote entrepreneurial skills and that citizens deprived of their liberty identify and recognize these skills (Biswalo, 2011; Brophy, Pérez-Luño and Cooney, 2024; Ciptono, Anggadwita and Indarti, 2023; Hwang, 2022). However, some studies show that prisoners recognize the benefits of education (Brophy, Pérez-Luño and Cooney, 2024; Evans, Pelletier and Szkola, 2018; Galeshi and Bolin, 2022; Gamman and Thorpe, 2018; Lopez, 2019; Mertanen and Brunila, 2018; Monteiro et al., 2023; Patzelt, Williams and Shepherd, 2014; Sedgley et al., 2010; Tonseth and Bergsland, 2019). Some inmates' failure to recognize entrepreneurial opportunities after release seems to be linked to a lack of entrepreneurship education or vocational training programs that reflect the needs of the labor market (Alós et al., 2015; Brophy, Pérez-Luño, and Cooney, 2024; Hwang, 2022; Uche et al., 2023).

From a lifelong learning perspective, entrepreneurship education provides relevant skills for reintegration into the labor market (Galeshi and Bolin (2022; Lopez, 2019).

Attending higher education in prison is an important factor for many inmates, as they see their opportunities to enter the job market increase and the possibility of continuing their studies after their release (Monteiro et al., 2023; Moreira, Monteiro and Machado, 2017a, 2017b).

According to some authors, in some countries, either due to lack of interest or other unidentified transversal reasons, educational offer of entrepreneurship programs doesn't cover all prisoners, as the case in the Australia (Graffam et al., 2014), Norway (Manger et al., 2019; Tonseth & Bergsland, 2019), Philippines (Lopez, 2019), South Africa (Vandala, 2019), UK (Rogers et al., 2014), USA (Sedgley et al., 2010; Evans et al., 2018; Ciptono et al., 2023).

The published studies do not provide a definitive answer to the question of SLR: What do we know about prison education systems that promote entrepreneurial skills recognized by prisoners?. More studies need to be carried out that focus on this aspect, as well as present studies carried out inside prisons and after release. By cross-referencing data gathered within the prison system, through statements by prisoners, with data gathered after release, and with testimonies from former prisoners, a more holistic view of entrepreneurship and education in prison will be possible.

## Ethics Declaration

I declare that ethical authorization was not required for this research.

## AI Declaration

Use of AI for Grammarly and DeepL Translate during document translation.

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