

Young adult male ex-offenders' experiences of the transition from incarceration to the
estranged family in a rural community

by

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DECLARATION

I, Lontinah Nchabeleng, declare that *Young adult male ex-offenders' experiences of the transition from incarceration to the estranged family in a rural community* is my own work and that all the sources that I have quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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ABSTRACT

The issue of offenders' re-integration has become an important topic to the Department of Correctional Services in South Africa due to high number of incarcerated individuals who need to return back into the society as law abiding citizens. Around the world, scholars have researched about offenders' re-integration. However, they tend to focus on adult ex-offenders, neglecting young adult male ex-offenders' experiences of the family re-entry process. Scholars neglected that the consequences of being incarcerated at a young age (age 19-34) puts young people at overwhelming risks of future incarceration, unemployment, poor physical and mental health. Therefore, this study focused on seven young adult male ex-offenders in Sekhukhune district, aged between 24 and 34 years who returned to their families after incarceration. Participants were selected using purposive sampling and volunteer self-selection sampling, through the assistance of Tswelopele Ex-Offenders Forums in Sekhukhune area. This study explored, described and interpreted the meaning, benefits, challenges and coping strategies of the young adult males in regard to their family re-entry processes. This goal was achieved by adopting the interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) research design and conducting individual semi-structured interviews with the young adult ex-offenders. The IPA data analysis guidelines were followed to analyse data and the Person-environment (P-E) fit theory grounded this analysis as the emerging themes were further interpreted in light of the assumptions of this theory. The findings show that the process of family re-entry was an emotional rollercoaster for the young men concerning moving forward post their incarceration. They specifically experienced different moments of ambivalence, which was due to reuniting with family members on the one hand, but having to rely on family members for support, on the other hand. While being back in the family led to emotions of happiness and satisfaction, not being able to meet their family expectations and to perform the roles expected of people of their age led to various negative emotions, including sadness and anxiety.

KEY TERMS

Family re-integration; male ex-offender; P-E fit theory; re-entry; rural area; young adult

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to the Almighty God and my two families, Mahlabe's and Nchabeleng's family, this one is for you! Thank you all for your love, support and encouragement. I thank God every day for you.

Acronyms

CMC: Case Management Committee

CSPB: Correctional Supervision and Parole Board

CSVR: Centre for the Study of Violence and Rehabilitation

CWP: Community work Programme

DCS: Department of Correctional Services

IPA: Interpretive phenomenological analysis

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organisations

NICRO: National Institute for Crime Prevention and Re-integration of Offenders

SAIRR: South African Institute for Race Relations

TEP: Tough Enough Programme

TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UNISA: University of South Africa

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CHAPTER 1

STUDY ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the study and provides a background to issues related to offender incarceration and recidivism in South Africa. It further explains the rationale for this study by highlighting the important issues with regards to young adult ex-offenders' transitioning from correctional centres to their homes. The chapter also presents the research questions, aims, objectives, and significance of this study. The delimitation of the study, key concepts, and the outline of the study are presented at the end of the chapter.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Incarceration and recidivism in South Africa

In South Africa, approximately 6000 offenders are released every month from correctional centres to their families and communities at large. Of those offenders, roughly one-third are young adults, aged 30 years or younger (Albertus, 2010). Given the nature of correctional programmes, young people are released from correctional centres with an expectation that they will no longer be involved in criminal activities. However, statistics indicate that this is totally unrealistic- there are ex-offenders that still return to correctional centres after their release (Schoeman, 2010). Although recidivism statistics are still lacking in our country, the number is estimated to be between 55 percent and 97 percent per year (Albertus, 2010; Schoeman, 2010). In recognising that recidivism is exacerbated by the marginalisation of ex-offenders and the failure to facilitate their re-entry into mainstream society as productive citizens, offender re-integration was identified by Muntingh from the University of the Western Cape as an important facet of any long-term crime prevention strategy (Singh, 2016). This view aligns closely with the purpose of the 2005 White Paper on Corrections, which prioritises the rehabilitation and re-integration of offenders. The purpose states that the "purpose of the Correctional system in South

Africa is not punishment, but protection of the public, promotion of social responsibility and the enhancing of human development in order to prevent recidivism or the return to crime” (Department of Correctional Services, 2005, p.74).

As effective re-integration is not easily achievable, owing to the fact that transitions between environments present challenges in relation to coping with and adjusting to the environment, it becomes important for different sectors within society to play a role in making the process of re-integration among ex-offenders successful, and not leave this matter only to the Department of Correctional Services. Among other sectors, the family is perceived as a necessary support system, which offenders and ex-offenders could benefit from during the re-integration process (Muntingh, 2008). Evidence from research suggests that ex-offenders who are successfully re-integrated in their families are less likely to reoffend when compared to ex-offenders who are not successfully re-integrated in their families (Laub & Sampson, as cited in Arditti & Parkman, 2011). Therefore, focus needs to be directed at ex-offenders and their families. In this way, research on re-entry might uncover important details that would lend insight into the process of re-entry, looking also at its success or failure. Hence, this study focused on young adults male ex-offenders’ re-entry into their family. It was imperative to focus on young adult male ex-offenders because when looking at the rate of incarceration in South Africa, young men are incarcerated at the higher rate when compared to young female, therefore even the number of young men who re-enter back to the communities is higher than that of young female. In the same breath, this implies that there are many young men who go through the re-entry process and it is important to know their experiences.

The legal framework in South Africa

In South Africa there is a legislative and policy framework that guides the implementation of the rehabilitation process of offenders up until the release. According to the White Paper on Corrections once the offender is sentenced, immediately there should be a pre-release and rehabilitation programme developed for the offender in consort with mental health, social services, health services, security and administrative staff. The White Paper on Corrections is the principle strategic document aimed at directing the management and service provision of the

Department of Correctional Services over the next twenty years (Department of Correctional Services, 2005).

According to the White Paper on Corrections (2005, p.12) “the Department is convinced that rehabilitation and prevention of repeated offending are best achieved through correction and development as opposed to punishment and treatment. The Department’s approach to rehabilitation is based on the conviction that every human being is capable of change and transformation if offered the opportunity and the necessary resources”.

The Department’s holistic approach to rehabilitation makes it much more than just an attempt to prevent crime; it is also a tool by means of which the Department can contribute to the following:

- i. engendering social responsibility;
- ii. promoting social justice;
- iii. bring about active participation in democratic activities;
- iv. empowering offenders by equipping them with life and other skills; and
- v. making South Africa a better place to live in.

According to the White Paper on Corrections (2005, p.20), the DCS (Department of Correctional Services) also views rehabilitation as a process with three important objectives:

- i. the correction of offending behaviour;
- ii. human development; and
- iii. the promotion of social responsibility and positive social values.

The Correctional Services Act (Act no. 111 of 1998) also places an enormous responsibility on the Department of Correctional Services to provide rehabilitation programmes. Correctional Services Act (Act no. 111 of 1998) defines the purpose of the South African correctional system, which is to contribute to maintaining and protecting a just, peaceful and safe society by:

- i. enforcing sentences imposed by the court in a manner prescribed by the Act;

- ii. detaining all prisoners (currently referred to as offenders) in safe custody whilst ensuring their human dignity; and
- iii. promoting the social responsibility and human development of all persons subject to community corrections [Section 2 of Correctional Services Act (Act no.111 of 1998)].

The Act defines rehabilitation as one of the two key activities of the DCS; thus, the Department is obliged to develop a full range of programmes that shall meet the specific requirements of the offenders.

Parole or release is the next logical step in the total development of the process of rehabilitation. According to Correctional Services Act (Act no.111 of 1998), the Parole Board must advise the communities they serve of their programmes and decision-making powers to release offenders. In terms of Correctional Services Act (Act no. 32 of 2001, Section 6), any decision of the Parole Board must be taken by resolution of the majority of the members present at any meeting of that Parole Board and, in the event of equality of votes, the person presiding shall have the casting vote as well as a deliberative vote.

For the Parole Board to make a decision they need submission of recommendation (G326 profile report) for placement by Case Management Committee (CMC) in terms of Section 42 (2) of the Correctional Services Act (Act no. 111 of 1998). The Correctional Supervision and Parole Board (CSPB) makes a decision and informs the offender of the contents of the report submitted by the Case Management Committee which gives the offender the opportunity to submit written representations and acknowledgments. Parole conditions serve two distinct purposes: facilitation of rehabilitation and re-integration into the community; and protection of society (Department of Correctional Services, 2005).

Parole or release provides a means whereby an offender make a transition from life in a correctional centre to living in a community, commonly known as re-integration. Re-integration of ex-offenders often poses challenges as it is done in an environment which is hostile. Communities and families know little about the re-integration and they have false perceptions about offenders' re-integration (Muntingh, 2005). This means that the Department of

Correctional Services, communities, families and private sectors should work together in order to have successful re-integration and reduce recidivism (Department of Correctional Services, 2005).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The rate of incarceration among young men in South Africa today is said to be exceedingly higher than that of women (Jules-Macquet, 2014). As the number of young men found in the correctional system increases, so too does the number of young men who have to navigate their journey from behind the walls of correctional centres back to their families and communities at large. Given that more and more young men are making their way back to their families, through the process of re-integration, it is becoming increasingly important to understand their experiences with their families – since the family plays an important role in the re-integration process of ex-offenders (Arditti & Parkman, 2011; Department of Correctional Services, 2005).

Previous research shows that sometimes when offenders return to their communities and families, they find that much has changed – therefore, they have to try and fill in the gaps that were created while they were incarcerated, and fit in as well. The process of trying to adapt to the new environment is emotionally taxing, especially when they do not get the support from their families and communities (Travis, 2005). Based on these reasons, it is reasonable to imagine that young adult male ex-offenders would be vulnerable to stress during this significant life event of transitioning, and that some may experience benefits and challenges in trying to adjust to their new environments (Fenzel, 1989).

While research has been conducted on re-integration in other countries, most studies focused only on adult women and men, and turned a blind eye to the experiences and perceptions of young adult male ex-offenders. For example, previous quantitative studies indicated that only adult ex-offenders were experiencing challenges, as far as finding employment, resisting drugs and alcohol, disassociating from criminal peers and reestablishing interpersonal relationships while adapting to the new environment after incarceration are concerned (Oliver & Hairston, 2008; Travis & Petersilia, 2001). Scholars from previous studies also indicated that most ex-offenders rely on assistance from family and friends to make ends meet during their re-entry.

Historical and current studies show the following regarding research on ex-offenders' re-integration process: A comprehensive study of ex-offenders as they navigate the re-entry process was conducted by Nelson, Dees and Allen (1999) at the Vera Institute of Justice. The researchers were able to interview 49 offenders, 33 males, and 16 females, who were scheduled to be released soon from the New York City Department of Corrections. The participants were interviewed before they were being released and after they were released. These researchers concluded that the families of returning former offenders played a major role in influencing the former offenders' success or failure within one month of release. They discovered that individuals with strong, self-defined family support were found to be more likely to succeed than those with weaker or no family support networks. According to the findings of a study by Nelson et al. (1999), the available support that family members were able to offer in terms of financial, emotional and structural needs of ex-offenders contributed to the former offenders' ability to regain pro-social connections and routines.

A study conducted by Arditti and Parkman (2011) in Virginia focused on young adult male ex-offenders, however the focus was on the parolees and their caregivers. The study explored the meanings the formerly incarcerated young adult men and their caregivers made with regards to their re-entry, caregivers' ability to meet re-entry needs, perceptions about reliance on family and the implications of a young adult child "returning home" within the context of release from incarceration. The study was qualitative in nature and focused on the young adult parolees from urban areas.

In South Africa numerous studies on issues related to correctional matters were conducted – however, few of these studies focused on offender re-integration and rehabilitation (Singh, 2016). Many studies focused on the classification of criminals, rehabilitation and conditions in correctional facilities (For example see Abgoola, 2016; Batley, 2008; Singh, 2016). A study conducted by Zondi (2012) in KwaZulu-Natal focused on the re-integration of ex-offenders, but the main focus was only on the community's knowledge and perceptions of ex-offender re-integration. What the study neglected and overlooked was ex-offenders' knowledge, perceptions and experiences of the re-integration process. The study analysed the information and knowledge

that community members had on their role in the re-integration of ex-offenders into the community – and it was found that community members needed to be educated on their role in the re-integration of ex-offenders, and that this should be an on-going project. In another study, also conducted in South Africa, Chikadzi (2017) revealed that upon release from correctional centres, adult ex-offenders (ages 30-40) from Gauteng province are faced with a lot of challenges that hinder the possibility of successful re-integration, that predispose them to reoffending. The findings showed that ex-offenders struggle to adjust because of the dysfunctional and broken families, lack of good community relationships, unemployment and lack of after-care services. As illustrated above, numerous research studies in our country and abroad focused on adult ex-offenders who re-enter their communities rather than ex-offenders, especially young adult ex-offenders who re-enter their families. In other words, most studies, if not all tend to disregard young adult male ex-offenders' experiences of re-integration. Therefore, as a point of departure for the current study, it was crucial and also inevitable to pay attention to that “almost forgotten” group of young adult male ex-offenders who re-enter their families in the rural areas. This study specifically focused on the young adult male ex-offenders in the rural Sekhukhune area in the Limpopo Province.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

My interest in conducting a study on young adult male ex-offenders and their post-release experiences with their families was based on my assumptions and the following reasons gathered from literature:

- i. Developmental studies reveal that correctional centres provide an environment that is highly regulated, rigid and structured in such a way that it does not expose young adults to the responsibility to make independent decisions, to attain skills needed to accomplish roles and responsibilities associated with being an adult after release, and interactions in the free world (the world outside incarceration) (Arditti & Parkman, 2011). Therefore, it was important for me to focus only on young adult male ex-offenders because I understood that their return to their homes could come with a need to establish

independence and self-reliance in order to lead the expected lives, and that this could be challenging – given the consequences of being incarcerated at their age.

- ii. Furthermore, research indicates that the family plays a vital role in supporting young adult ex-offenders so that they do not drain, either by harming themselves or members of the society (Arditti & Parkman, 2011). Therefore, exploring the experiences of young adult male ex-offenders of family re-entry was important because this would shed some light on how young adult male ex-offenders viewed their families with regard to their re-integration into the families, especially that Wodahl (2006) states that there are limited support centres for ex-offenders and their families in rural areas. Therefore, this shaped the following research questions, aim and objectives of the study:

AIM OF THE STUDY

This study aimed at exploring the lived experiences of formerly incarcerated young adult men with regard to family re-entry in the rural area of Sekhukhune in the Limpopo Province.

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

- i. What are the lived experiences of young adult male ex-offenders during the family re-entry process in the Sekhukhune District?

SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. What are the young adult male ex-offenders' benefits and challenges during the family re-entry process?
- ii. What are the coping strategies that young adult male ex-offenders use during the family re-entry process?
- iii. What are young adult male ex-offenders' subjective meaning to the process of family re-entry?

- iv. How does the Person-Environment fit theory contextualise and understand the findings of the study?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were:

- i. To describe the benefits and challenges of young adult male ex-offenders during their family re-entry process.
- ii. To describe the coping strategies that young adult male ex-offenders use to adapt to changes and expectations when they re-enter their families; and
- iii. To interpret the subjective meanings that young adult male ex-offenders attribute to their process of family re-entry; and
- iv. To use the Person-Environment Fit theory to contextualise and understand the findings of the study.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study was significant in the sense that it can shed some light on the family re-entry process from the experiences of young adult male ex-offenders who were included in the study as participants. For this reason, this study can contribute to informing re-entry programmes and intervention efforts in South Africa that are aimed at assisting young adult male offenders before and during the re-entry process. Furthermore, this study also demonstrates some potential in terms of making a contribution to the literature on the current topic, specifically by looking at different factors that play a role in facilitating and inhibiting young adult male ex-offenders' family re-entry. These factors can be individual, relational, environmental, and cultural factors, which have an impact on the process of transition among young men exiting correctional facilities (Bernier, 2010). From the findings of this study, policies could be implemented or modified to comprehensively address all factors, which affect the re-integration of young adult male ex-offenders in the rural areas.

Moreover, this study can contribute to the field of community psychology because it addresses the needs of vulnerable members of the population, offenders and ex-offenders. According to Bernier (2010), community psychology as a sub-discipline prides itself in working with and addressing the needs of vulnerable members of the population (for example, the homeless, individuals with mental health issues, and various marginalised cultural groups). To this end, I am not aware of any study conducted on ex-offenders from a community psychology perspective in South Africa. Therefore, this study can contribute to the existing body of knowledge by exploring the experiences of this vulnerable population (young adult ex-offenders) and their family re-entry process. This study was designed to help professionals in the public sector as well as professionals in private practice, families and friends of ex-offenders to identify benefits enjoyed by young male ex-offenders of being with their families, and the challenges they are faced with during their re-integration. The findings of the study can also assist these professionals to devise strategies suitable for the young adults' male ex-offenders to re-integrate successfully in rural areas.

METHODOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In approaching this study, I borrowed the relativist ontological ideas that for every lived experience there are multiple realities; there is no “more” or “less” truth about lived experiences of the phenomenon under study. Therefore, I captured every participant's experience as shared by them (Creswell, 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This ontological position influenced my epistemological position, interpretivism, and my research methodologies as well. This study was qualitative in nature. I followed the theoretical perspective of interpretivism alongside the conceptual commitments of interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) to understand how young adult male ex-offenders describe the experiences of family re-entry. As IPA allows interpretation, based on the researcher's presuppositions and knowledge (Smith & Osborn, 2007), I used the Person-environment Fit theory to interpret participants' experiences of the phenomenon under study.

Using semi-structured interviews, I explored each young adult male ex-offender's descriptions and meanings of family re-entry in a rural area of Sekhukhune district. Participants were selected

using purposive sampling and volunteer self-selection sampling, through the assistance of Tswelopele Ex-Offenders Forums in Sekhukhune area. Informed consent was obtained from each participant before the interviews. Field notes were also taken before, during and after each participant's interview, and were used during data analysis. The analysis of data followed immediately after I had transcribed the interviews verbatim and translated the transcripts. The texts were then analysed using IPA guidelines by Smith and Osborn (2007). More details on all these aspects are discussed in Chapter 3.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In approaching this study, the following ethical considerations were considered: First, I was granted permission by the ethics committee of the Department of Psychology at the University of South Africa. Every participant in this study completed a consent form – thus their participation was voluntary. The informed consent covered issues of confidentiality, anonymity, Respect for participants, benefits and risks involved in participating in the study. For example, participants were informed that they will be audio recorded merely to capture their exact words in the interviews and nothing else, and that the audio recorder would not be shared with anyone else other than my supervisor, who monitors and evaluates the authenticity of this study. Furthermore, participants were also told that pseudonyms would be used in reporting the study findings. A more detailed section on the ethical considerations is discussed in Chapter 3.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Only African, young adult male ex-offenders in the Sekhukhune district in the Limpopo Province, South Africa participated in this study. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to young adult females in South Africa, or other parts of Africa as conditions may differ. However, the dissemination of the research findings may influence further discourse around research on ex-offender re-integration.

DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Community: the term community is defined in the concrete and abstract manner. In a concrete sense, a community refers to a group of people in any area, united by a common culture and share common interest (s), as well as the geographic area, for example, a township. In an abstract sense, a community refers to a group of people drawn together by a common interest (Kappeler & Gaines, 2011).

Crime/criminal offence: “a violation of the law that warrants punishment by the state” (Stevens & Cloete 1996, p. 01).

Coping: the term “coping” denotes a person’s attempts to “...master, tolerate, or decrease the negative effects of a stressful situation” (Baron & Byrne, 2000, p. 548).

Coping mechanisms/strategies: methods or strategies people employ to deal with minor or major stress, trauma, pain and natural changes that they experience in life (Thoits, 2011).

Correctional centre/facility: is an institution for reception, detention, confinement, training or treatment of persons liable to detention in custody or to placement under protective custody until the end of the sentence (Department of correctional services, 2008).

Correction: means provision of services and programmes aimed at correcting the offending behaviour of sentenced offenders in order to rehabilitate them (Department of Correctional Services, 2008).

Ex-offender: a person who has been released from a correctional centre after serving his or her sentence (Bednar, 2001). In this study, ex-offender does not relate to those who are released under parole boards.

Family: refers to a group consisting of a set of parents and children. It is a group of people related to one another by blood, marriage, adoption or socialisation (Merriam, 2011).

Incarceration: according to Mabuza and Roelofse (2013), incarceration refers to the admitting, incarceration and detention of a convicted person until his or her sentence expires.

Offender: an inmate who has been convicted and/or sentenced to incarceration (Department of Correctional Services, 2003).

Parole: a period whereby an offender who has served the prescribed minimum detention period of his sentence in a correctional centre is conditionally released to serve the remaining sentence outside of correctional centre under the supervision and control of the Department of Correctional Services (Department of Correctional Services, 2003).

Recidivism: is defined as the return to detention for a criminal offence or the commitment of a new crime other than a technical violation of parole. Technical violations, such as failing to report a change of address, involve non-criminal behaviour (Clear & Dammer, in Mabuza & Roelofse, 2013).

Re-entry: a term used to refer to the process in which an offender is released from correctional centres and returns to his/her family or community (Roman & Travis, 2006).

Rehabilitation: this is a process of providing offenders with a variety of services for development and treatment programmes, while under the control of the Department of Correctional Services, designed to reduce the probability of future criminality, and to ensure that once released, offenders become productive members of society (Muntingh, 2005).

Release: according to English Oxford Dictionary (1997) “release” means to set free something or someone. For the purpose of this study, release refers to the setting free of offender/s from incarceration.

Restorative justice: “is about addressing the hurts and the needs of both victims and offenders in such a way that both parties, as well as the communities which they are part of, are healed” (Batley, 2005, p. 21).

Sentence: a decision of the court which declares a punishment allotted to a person convicted in a criminal trial (Department of Correctional Services, 2008).

Social re-integration/re-integration: a systematic and evidence-based process by which actions are taken to work with the offender in custody and on release, so that communities are

better protected from harm and re-offending, which significantly reduces crime (Muntingh, 2005).

Victim: refers to a person who has suffered some kind of misfortune. A victim of crime is any person who directly or indirectly suffers injury or damage through the unlawful actions of another person (Walklate 2007).

Young adult: according to Arnette, Kloep, Lendry and Tanner (2011), young adult people are those who are between 19 and 34 years. It is at this stage where young adult people are universally oriented to the resolution of self in relation to others (intimacy) and society (through being part of the workforce). This is because they assert that the lives of young people today have changed almost beyond recognition, compared to a half century ago. For example, the age of marriage, which in the past was the late teens or early 20s, is now closer to age 30 in every industrialised country (Douglass, as cited in Arnette et al, 2011).

OUTLINE OF THE STUDY CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 is devoted to the orientation of this study. The chapter outlines the background of this study, the statement of the problem and the rationale for and significance of the study. The chapter also states the research questions and outlines the aim and objectives of the study. The research methodology and ethical considerations are also briefly discussed. The chapter concludes with the definition of key concepts used in the study and a description of the study chapters.

Chapter 2 reviews articles, books and other sources relevant to the young adult male ex-offenders' family re-integration process. The chapter also discusses in detail the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter 3 delineates the methodology used in this study.

Chapter 4 delineates the detailed findings of the study, including the demographic information of study participants, as well as their experiences of the phenomenon under study.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings, draws conclusions, expounds on the limitations of the study, and makes recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented an overview of the study, including the background to the research problem, rationale for the study, and its significance. The chapter also highlighted the research questions, as well as the aim and objectives of this study. The chapter also briefly introduced the methodology employed in this study and the ethical considerations adhered to in this study. Lastly, the chapter defined concepts used in the study. Chapter 2 discusses the literature reviewed, and the theoretical framework applied.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the literature reviewed in relation to ex-offenders' family re-integration process. The first section defines the term offender re-integration and its elements in South Africa and beyond, followed by a theoretical explanation of the re-integration process, based on the Person-environment fit theory and the Ecological system model. The chapter also presents discussion on the re-integration of ex-offenders in general as well as the discussion on the re-integration of young adult ex-offenders specifically. The South African re-integration services, the family as a buffer and the preserver of the successful re-integration of ex-offenders as well as coping mechanisms used during the re-integration process are discussed in this chapter.

THE CONCEPT OF OFFENDER RE-INTEGRATION

While re-integration can be broadly explained as a process of leaving a correctional centre and re-joining society; literature on the other hand, indicates that scholars have different definitions of the term re-integration. Maruna, Immerglieu and LeBel (2004, p. 5) defined offender re-integration as:

“a systematic and evidence based process by which actions are taken to work with the offender in custody and on release, so that communities are better protected from harm and re-offending is significantly reduced. It encompasses the totality of work with offenders, their families, significant others (and victims) in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations”.

Others note that offender re-integration is the natural and expected by-product of incarceration, because every incarcerated individual who is not sentenced for life and who did not die in correctional centre will re-enter the community at some point (Nunez-Neto, 2009). This

maintains the idea that re-integration, simply defined “includes all activities and programming conducted to prepare offenders to return safely to their communities and to live as law abiding citizens” (Nunez-Neto, 2009, p. 190).

South African scholars asserts that re-integration resonates with the ability of the ex-offender to function within the community, the family, employment as well as his/her ability to manage circumstances in a manner that circumvents risk and additional conflicts with the law. This is based on the reduction of the rate of recidivism (Singh, 2016).

Bereswill (2011) asserts that the process of being released from correctional centre can often be experienced as a severe disruption in the lives of ex-offenders. Supporting this is Waller (1974), who observed that there are various emotions experienced by ex-offenders upon release, which may include a sense of relief, daze, depression, fear and/or anxiety. These emotions might last beyond the first day.

According to Griffiths, Dandurand and Murdoch (2007), there are three types of offender re-integration programmes that is, institution-based re-integration programmes, surveillance-based re-integration programmes and assistance-based re-integration programmes and these are defined as follows:

- i. **Institution-based re-integration programmes:** these are programmes designed to prepare offenders to re-enter society. They include programmes such as education, mental health care, substance abuse treatment, job training, counselling, and mentoring. However, it is noted that as these programmes are voluntary, and that a large numbers of offenders do not participate in them and are thus released back into their communities without any pre-release preparation.
- ii. **Surveillance-based re-integration programmes:** these are described as programmes centering on the supervision of the offender in the community after release, this is essentially parole supervision. This may also involve strengths based rehabilitation in the performance of reparation work.

- iii. **Assistance-based re-integration programmes:** these include services aimed at assisting mentally-ill offenders after their release, with employment/job market/re-entry assistance, lodging and financial assistance, family support, and substance abuse interventions.

Nonetheless Griffiths et al. (2007) maintain that these programmes should be implemented continuously and consistently throughout the transition period from incarceration through their re-entry into the community. Successful re-integration programmes should begin prior to the offender's release, and continue throughout the transition period until the point of his or her stabilisation in the community.

In South Africa and globally, it is argued that the values and principles of restorative justice provide a sound framework for the development of programmes geared towards the rehabilitation, treatment and re-integration of offenders (Skelton & Batley, 2008). The ethos of restorative justice focus on repairing the harm caused by the act in order to restore the victim, offender and the community which lies at the heart of offender re-integration (Singh, 2016). According to Batley and Maepa (2005), although there are a number of definitions for the phrase restorative justice, they all contain the following principles:

- i. Crime is seen as something that causes injuries to victims, offenders and communities. It is therefore, in the spirit of Ubuntu that the criminal justice process should seek the healing breeches, the redressing of imbalances and the restoration of broken relationships.
- ii. Not only the government, but the victims, offenders and communities should be actively involved in the criminal justice process at the earliest point and the maximum extent possible.
- iii. In promoting justice, the government is responsible for preserving order and the community is responsible for establishing peace.

Although efforts are being made to ensure that restorative justice is feasible in South Africa, there are always some challenges associated with applying this approach (Batley, 2005). At first, evidence from literature shows that many individual victims are not prepared to participate in

restorative justice processes, but are instead, prepared to settle for compensation. Therefore, victims want retribution not restoration (Batley & Maepa, 2005).

Secondly, some feminists are against the restorative justice approach, especially where serious cases such as rape, murder and domestic violence are concerned. Their argument is that there are significant power imbalances between genders and that it cannot be presumed that reconciliation with the offender who committed such a crime is desirable. In this way, they argue that restorative justice overlooks and minimises the seriousness of such crimes (Batley & Maepa, 2005).

Lastly, the level of anger in communities is so high that people are not ready to embrace restorative justice processes. This is evidenced by Padayachee (2011), who indicates that the public over-cry that offenders should be locked in forever.

All these challenges, taken together hinder the process of applying the restorative justice approach in some instances, if not all at all. Nonetheless, South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) demonstrated that restorative justice is effective for offender re-integration, and can be used in a wide variety of contexts, and that it is effective, not only in the case of "ordinary crime" (Skelton & Batley, 2006).

All these definitions in essence provide a framework, which should underpin programmes that aim to facilitate the successful re-integration of offenders (Singh, 2016). Table 2.1 below summarises the main aspects that the process of re-integration of offenders should take into account:

Table 2.1: Characteristics of the concept of the re-integration of offenders

Element of offender re-integration	Characteristics
Systematic and evidence-based process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with offender in custody and on release

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect community • Reduce offending
Community based-programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aftercare programmes • Community supervision • Post release interventions

It is clear that re-integration programmes are condensed into two main categories (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2007), namely:

- i. Programmes and interventions offered in the institutional setting itself, ahead of the offender's release to help them resolve issues, address risk factors associated with their criminal behavior and acquire the necessary skills to lead their lives as law-abiding and self-supporting citizens.
- ii. Programmes and interventions offered in the community setting itself, to facilitate the re-integration of the offender after their release from custody. Programmes rest on the provision of some form of community supervision as well as various forms of support and assistance to the offenders and sometimes also their family.

THEORETICAL EXPLANATION OF OFFENDER RE-INTEGRATION

Person-environment (P-E) fit theory

The Person-environment (P-E) fit theory traces its roots back to the vocational congruence idea proposed by Parsons (1909), and took shape with the work of influential writers such as French, Rogers and Cobb (1974); French, Caplan and Harrison (1982); McGrath (1970); Rasek (1979); Schuler (1980) and others. The P-E fit theory is, therefore, based on an interactional perspective, which states that an interaction between an individual and his or her environment helps shape various outcomes (Sekiguchi, 2004). Most of the research on this theory has focused on the work environment stress (Cable & Edwards, 2004). A good fit usually results in positive outcomes for the employee and the organisation, whereas a poor fit generally results in deleterious psychological, physiological and behavioural outcomes (Kristof, 1996).

The notion of Person-environment fit theory has also long been an orienting framework for psychologists interested in how settings affect behaviour. In the early psychology field, especially industrial psychology, understanding a person's behaviour was seen as requiring an analysis of the interaction between an individual's capacity and the demands of settings (Lewin, 1951; Murray, 1938).

A Person-environment fit theory can be regarded as a specific type of person-environment interaction that involves a match between corresponding person and environment dimensions (Caplan, 1987; French, Rodgers & Cobb, 1974). Even though person-environment interactions as they relate to fit have been discussed in the scientific literature for many years, the field has yet to reach consensus on how to conceptualise and operationalise the person-environment fit. This is because the Person-environment fit theory encompasses a number of subsets (see table 2.2 below), which are conceptually distinct from one another, and could not be applied in every situation (Edwards & Shipp, 2007; Kristof, 1996). Nevertheless, it is generally assumed that the person-environment fit leads to positive outcomes, such as satisfaction, performance, and overall well-being (Caplan, 1987).

Table 2.2: Summary of subsets for P-E fit theory as applied in industrial psychology

Person-organisation fit	Person-group fit	Person-supervisor fit	Person-job fit	Person-vocation fit
The most popular definition of person-organisation fit is the compatibility between individuals and organisations,	Person-group fit refers to the relationship between an individual and a work group or team. This type of fit often draws on teams and teamwork	Person-supervisor fit refers to an individual's compatibility with his or her boss or immediate superior. This type of fit often	Person-job fit refers to the compatibility of the individual and the tasks, requirements, knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes of a	Person-vocation fit refers to the relationship an individual has with his or her chosen career field or industry. This area of research is often omitted from

where compatibility may refer to either supplementary or complementary fit (Kristof, 1996)	literature, as well as group and social psychology (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman & Johnson, 2005).	draws on teams and teamwork literature, as well as group and social psychology (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005)	specific job (Carless, 2005).	personnel psychology research, excluded from meta-analysis and reviews and often only examined by career and vocational counselling specialists (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005).
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The P-E fit theory has two basic versions: the demand–abilities fit (D-A fit) and the needs–supply fit (S-V fit). The first version involves the fit between the demands of the environment and the abilities of a person. Demands include quantitative and qualitative job requirements, role expectations, and group and organisational norms, whereas abilities include aptitudes, skills, training, time, and energy the person may master to meet demands. The second type of P-E fit theory entails the match between the needs of an individual and the supplies in the environment that pertain to the person’s needs. P-E fit theory characterises needs in general terms, encompassing innate biological and psychological requirements, values acquired through learning and socialisation, as well as motives to achieve the desired ends (Harrison, 1985). Supplies refer to extrinsic and intrinsic resources and rewards that may fulfil an individual’s needs, such as food, shelter, money, social involvement, and the opportunity to achieve (Harrison, 1985).

For both needs-supplies fit and demands-abilities fit, P-E fit theory requires that person and environment constructs be commensurate, meaning they should refer to the same content

dimension. For example, needs-supplies fit regarding achievements should entail the comparison of a need for achievement, with opportunities optimal for achieving in the environment. Likewise, demands-abilities fit regarding quantitative workload would involve comparing the amount of work to be done with the amount of work the person can actually do. Without commensurate dimensions, it is impossible to determine the proximity of the person and environment to one another and the notion of P-E fit becomes meaningless (Harrison, 1985). The present study utilised both needs-supplies fit (S-V fit) and demands-abilities fit (D-A fit) versions to understand and interpret the findings of this study.

With the above given versions, the P-E fit depicts core basic distinctions in each. The first and most basic distinction is between the person and the environment. This distinction is a prerequisite for the conceptualisation of P-E fit and provides the basis for examining reciprocal causation between the person and the environment. The second distinction is between objective and subjective representations of the person and the environment. The objective person refers to attributes of the person as they actually exist, whereas the subjective person signifies the person's perception of his or her own attributes (for example, the person's self-identity or self-concept). Analogously, the objective environment includes physical and social situations and events as they exist independent of a person's perceptions, whereas the subjective environment refers to situations and events as encountered and perceived by the person (Harrison, 1985).

As shown in figure 1 below, the objective person and environment are causally related to their subjective counterparts (Harrison, 1985). These relationships are imperfect due to perceptual distortions (for example, repression, denial), cognitive construction processes, limited human information processing capacities, as well as organisational structures that limit access to objective information (Caplan, 1987; Harrison, 1985). This is the central thesis of the P-E theory, and that the subjective S-V fit or D-A fit, and will produce negative psychological, physiological and behavioural outcomes when not satisfied. This is because the individual subjectively evaluates the environment and the effects of these evaluations, whether positive or negative are felt by him or her (See the figure 1 below) (French, Caplan & Harrison, 1982).

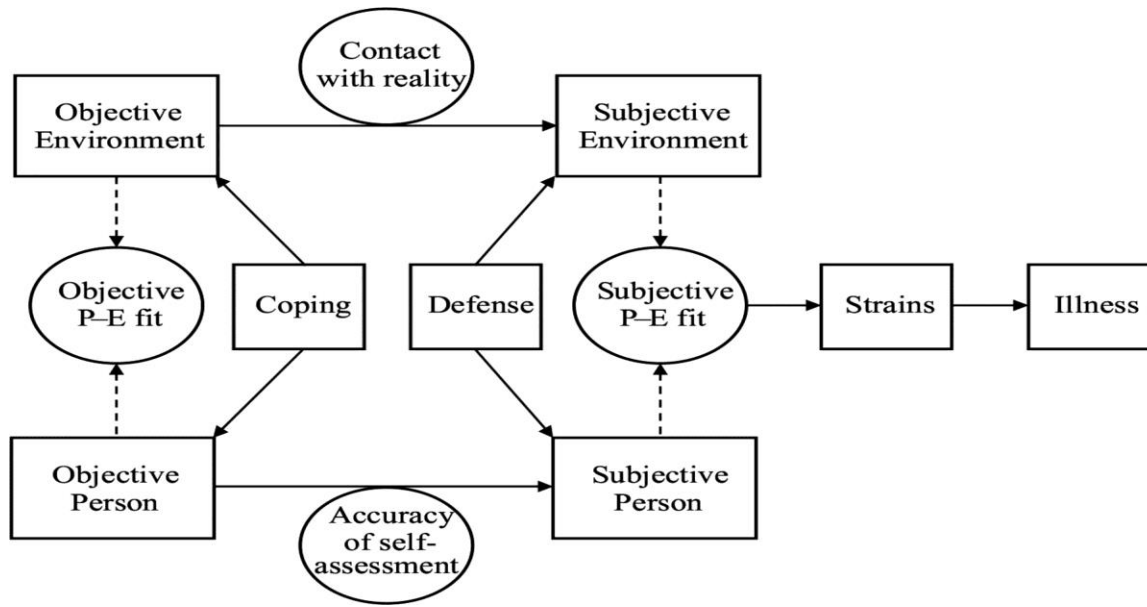


Figure 1: The core basic distinctions of P-E fit theory

Source: Harrison (1985)

The two distinctions described above combine to produce four types of correspondence between a person and environment constructs: (1) objective P-E fit, which refers to the fit between the objective person and the objective environment; (2) subjective P-E fit, or the fit between the subjective person and the subjective environment; (3) contact with reality, meaning the degree to which the subjective environment corresponds to the objective environment; and (4) accuracy of self-assessment (or accessibility of the self), representing the match between the objective person and the subjective person (Caplan, 1987; French et al., 1974; Harrison, 1985).

Initial presentations of P-E fit theory (French et al., 1974; Harrison, 1985) indicates that good mental health is signified by minimal discrepancies on objective P-E fit, subjective P-E fit, contact with reality, and accuracy of self-assessment. However, subsequent refinements of the theory (Caplan, 1987; French et al., 1982; Harrison, 1985) point out that objective P-E fit has little impact on mental health – unless it is perceived by the person and thereby translated into subjective P-E fit (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Moreover, Caplan (1987) notes that when stressors are potentially overwhelming, some disengagement from objective aspects of the situation or self may dampen anxiety and facilitate adaptation, thereby promoting mental health.

Hence, current treatments of P-E fit theory emphasise subjective P-E fit as the critical pathway to mental health and other dimensions of well-being, as advocated in this study which researched ex-offenders' subjective experiences of re-entry into their estranged families.

The P-E fit theory was previously applied in the field of correctional settings, however, the focus was only on correctional officials and excluded the offenders and/or ex-offenders. In an exploratory study Lambert, Altheimer, Hogan and Barton-Bellessa (2011) examined several propositions of the person–environment fit theory in an adult Midwestern correctional facility oriented toward treatment. Special attention was paid to the manner in which the person–organisation fit influence correctional staff outcomes. Drawing from the need–supply fit framework of the person–environment fit theory, the authors predicted that correctional staff, whose values and objectives were congruent with those of the institution, would experience better outcomes than staff whose values and objectives were not congruent. Their findings generally supported these propositions. Staff who supported punishment had higher levels of role stress and work family conflict, had lower levels of life satisfaction and moral commitment, and was more likely to perceive the organisation as unfair.

Generally, there is limited literature with regard to the P-E fit theory and offending. However, according to McMahon, Wernsman and Rose (2009), the multiple systems such as school, family and community, which affect recidivism may be explained from the P-E fit perspective, where youth re-entry outcomes (recidivism) are shaped by the fit between the needs of the youth and the responses of the various systems to which they return. McMahon, Wernsman and Rose (2009) further indicates that in the event that systems adequately address the needs that youth possess upon release to the community, theory suggests that these youths will discontinue their involvement in the juvenile justice system. However, when systems do not address the needs of these youth, theory implies that they are likely to continue with their involvement in the juvenile justice system. This is supported by the notion that a person-environment fit perspective can explain the role of young offenders' needs in their re-entry experiences and outcomes (Trickett, Kelly & Vincent, 1985).

Although to date research has not explored the manner in which the fit between young offenders' needs and system response affects youths' re-entry outcomes (for example, recidivism), it has however, has established the importance of ensuring a good fit between the needs of adolescents and system response in relation to other outcomes, such as academic achievement and motivation (Eccles, Wigfield, Buchanan, Reuman & Flanagan, 1993).

For example, in an effort to explore the importance of goodness of fit between early adolescents' developmental needs and the social environments of junior and middle high schools, Eccles et al. (1993) conducted a longitudinal study during students' transition from sixth to seventh grade in the United States of America. In this study, 1,500 adolescents and their teachers from 12 separate school districts in middle-income Midwestern communities rated student involvement in making classroom decisions (for example, decisions regarding seating arrangements and classroom rules). Students additionally reported their preferences to be involved in decision-making opportunities in the classroom. The study found that students, who desired to participate in classroom decision-making and reported that opportunities for such participation were limited, also reported higher rates of truancy and school misconduct. Theoretically, the mismatch between students' desire to participate in classroom decision-making and the school setting limited provision of opportunities to do so negatively affect student's behaviour in school.

Such research, while limited, supports the notion that the fit between person and the environment, particularly as it relates to individual needs and systemic response to those needs, is important in adolescent development, and it will likely prove valuable to consider the fit between person and the environment in examining young adult ex-offenders' re-entry (McMahon, Wernsman and Rose, 2009). In this study, this theory was used to unpack young adult male ex-offenders' experiences of being back in their family environment. The environment was not only referred to the physical place of the family, but also family members' interactions, and that resembled person-group subsets of the P-E fit theory (Harrison, 1985). The P-E fit theory's subsets do not explain the fit in other environments, for example there are some situations where the match or mismatch can occur in an environment, due to external factors not found in the immediate environment. For instance, a father who cannot work because he has a criminal record can identify with the mismatches in the family. As I scrutinised this potential

mismatch in the present study, what I picked up as a challenge is that the system of hiring exclude people with a criminal record and this has an impact on the family interactions and functioning since the father would not be able to support the family. The hiring system is the external factor which is not found in the family but affect the family functioning, and thus it influences how a person matches or mismatches with their immediate family environment. The shortcoming of the P-E fit theory is that it does not take into account this factor. Nonetheless, in this study the theory was used to give analytical interpretations of external factors, which have an impact on how young adult male ex-offenders relate to their families.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model was also considered as a relevant theory in understanding family re-integration in this study and it is discussed under the section, South Africa's social re-integration, later in the chapter where it is more logically placed. However, the findings of this study were interpreted using only the P-E fit theory.

EX-OFFENDER RE-ENTRY BENEFITS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND GLOBALLY

Literature does not reveal much about the benefit of re-integration for ex-offenders. However, there is evidence, albeit based on both old and current research, that ex-offenders who are released to halfway houses enjoy certain benefits, which other ex-offenders do not have. The study conducted by Van Buskirk and McGrath (1999) provides evidence that halfway houses offer opportunities to ex-offenders to improve their educational skills base. Education seems to birth the realisation of particular abilities and facilitates the emergence of a true self - a self that is hopeful of a brighter future. It also seems that providing educational opportunities makes it possible for many ex-offenders to explore the yet unknown aspects about themselves and foster in them a sense of mastery that builds their self-worth.

Furthermore, in highlighting the core importance and benefit of the halfway house, Winnicott (1960) contents that the halfway house seeks to completely meet the ex-offender's needs once they are living there. The halfway house provides for physical needs of the ex-offender, such as food, shelter, clothing and other essential commodities that ex-offenders would need to feel well-

cared for and valued. These basic needs are provided for free, until such time ex-offenders find employment.

Some of the benefits provided at the halfway house can be met at the family level, where the ex-offenders are returning to, however this can come as a burden to some families as most of the ex-offenders' families are poor (Muntingh, 2008). A study conducted by Travis (2004) supports this notion by highlighting that families take a strain by providing shelter, food and financial support to their members who are ex-offenders.

EX-OFFENDER RE-ENTRY CHALLENGES IN SOUTH AFRICA AND GLOBALLY

Ex-offender risks factors

One of the critical challenges facing ex-offenders is risk factors which predispose them to re-offending. Research indicates that the risk factors are criminogenic needs and possible interventions should be implemented to tackle risk factors in order to reduce recidivism (Travis, 2005). In the same breath, it may be inferred that risks factors contributes to the high prevalence of crime in South Africa and that real opportunities for offenders' re-integration are a matter of priority (Albertus, 2010). This is because the challenges of offender re-entry begin long before the offender is released. Offenders have been found to have several risks factors that impact their lives and their ability to successfully re-enter into their families and communities. A study conducted by Fazel, Sjöstedt, Langström, and Grann, (2006) in the United Kingdom shows that compared to the general population, offenders are:

- ii. Three times as likely to have been placed in care as a child;
- iii. Thirteen times more likely to be unemployed;
- iv. Ten times more likely to have been a regular truant at school;
- v. Two and a half times more likely to have dysfunctional families and other family member convicted of a criminal offence;
- vi. Six times more likely to have been a young father; and
- vii. Fifteen times more likely to be HIV-positive;

Research conducted by Fazel et al. (2006) further shows that:

- viii. Eighty percent of offenders have the writing skills, 65 percent the numeracy skills, and 50 percent the reading skills of or below the level of an eleven-year-old child;
- ix. Sixty to 70 percent of offenders were using drugs before incarceration;
- x. Over 70 percent suffered from at least two mental disorders; and
- xi. Twenty percent of the male offenders and 37 percent of female sentenced offenders have attempted suicide in the past.

While there are differences between the population of South African offenders and the UK population of offenders, Muntingh (2008) suggests that there is no point in not believing that these UK research findings resembles the same corrections population in South Africa. Therefore, these risks factors that offenders face long before they are released should be taken into consideration in order to understand issues at hand during re-entry – specifically with regards to chances of recidivism. Failure to take these risks into consideration during re-integration programmes and re-entry of the ex-offender will lead to recidivism amongst ex-offenders (Muntingh, 2008).

Ex-offender stigmatisation

In addition, there is evidence in literature that suggests that most ex-offenders contend with stigmatisation and discrimination during their re-entry process that has a likelihood of hampering their successful re-entry into society (Link & Phelan, 2001). Stigma can be defined as an undesirable label or a mark placed on an individual or a group and association with uninspiring characteristics (Link & Phelan, 2001). Self-stigmatisation can be differentiated from public-stigma, with the former being the case when the minority group (in this case ex-offenders), internalises beliefs against itself. Once the negative label has been internalised, the labeled person may adjust his or her behaviours to match these negative labels (Corrigan & Watson, 2002). Stigmatisation then, refers to the discrimination imposed by more powerful groups such as the community or government on the labeled group (Link & Phelan, 2001).

In the study conducted by Lebel (2012), young male ex-offenders had self-stigmatization where they felt that they were not trusted as compared to other family members, following to their families' negative treatment, which young men internalised and made it their truth. In this way, the young men felt less worthy and less competent than others in the family and thus had self-stigmatising cognitions. Self-stigma often leads to extreme negative self-concepts, including lower self-esteem, weaker social unity and poor health.

In this way, the overall responses ex-offenders get from society after their release strongly influence their development of a pro-social identity (Maruna 2001). This is supported by Braithwaite (1989) who asserts that western cultures are reluctant to promote law abiding behaviour because they shame and disregard actions that violate rules when compared to other countries, and as such they are not good in the re-integration of the offenders.

According to scholars, stigma often leads to discrimination of minority groups because it influences how people tend to treat others (Link & Phelan, 2001). It is unfortunate that ex-offenders (concealed minority group) always face the dilemma of either the prospect of being stigmatised or walking away from an employment opportunity due to stigma (Link & Phelan, 2001). More especially, during the job application process, where employment forms often require individuals to make their criminal record known to their prospective employers (Graffam, Shinkfield & Lavelle 2012).

Ex- offender Employment

Employment discrimination is regarded as one of the most significant barriers to successful offender re-entry. Work often plays a central role in helping offenders escape patterns of isolation and dependence (Browne, Miller & Maguin, 1999). However, in many countries, especially in South Africa, the employment of former offenders is a very sensitive issue and government keeps closed doors for many offenders (Graffam , Shinkfield & Lavelle 2012).

For example, according to the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (2009, p. 5), the Criminal Procedure Amendment Act (Act 65 of 2008) sets out that an ex-offender can

apply for the expungement of their criminal record 10 years from the date of conviction provided they have not been convicted of any other offence during the 10-year period. This period is too long because ex-offenders might struggle to make a living while they are still waiting to be cleared. This is supported by Mujuzi and Tsweledi (2014), who assert that discrimination based solely on criminal record can be unfair and does infringe on human dignity.

The issue of hiring or not hiring ex-offenders was previously researched to highlight the conditions that lead to the discrimination of ex-offenders during hiring. A quantitative study conducted by Giguere and Dundes (2002) provided evidence that prospective employers' concerns were that former offenders may not have the necessary skills, especially people skills necessary for contact with customers. Customers may feel uncomfortable if they knew that a former offender worked there. In addition, co-workers may also experience discomfort in working with an ex-offender. Furthermore, about 87 percent of respondents reported that the gender of the ex-offender made no difference in the decision whether or not to hire an ex-offender – however, 12 percent of employers said they were more likely to hire a female ex-offender than a male one. This leads to more men being unemployable – and thus making re-entry for men impossible (Giguere & Dundes, 2002).

Indeed, in a study conducted on male youths transitioning from incarceration to the community, Bullis and fellow researchers (2002) show that more than half of the youth were engaged in school or employment 6 months before their release, and that the number dropped to 30 percent when they were released from correctional centres for 12 months. The expectations of incarcerated youths of attaining employment upon their release are often not met (Arditti & Parkman, 2011).

In South Africa, a study conducted by Chikadzi (2017) provided evidence that ex-offenders face many challenges during re-entry with unemployment being at the forefront of those challenges. One of the participants reported that he secured three jobs, but eventually got fired from those jobs when employers learned he had a criminal record. A participant quote from Chikadzi's (2017, p. 8) study says thus:

“When I got a job they dismissed me and when I found another job the very same thing happened; they did police verification and dismissed me and told me that I should sort out my things.”

Employers are truly sceptical about hiring individuals with criminal records. Fahey, Roberts and Engel (2006) conducted 4 focus group discussions with 28 employers in Great Boston on hiring ex-offenders and found that managers had different views on this matter. Some employers stated that a job candidate with a criminal record was not the desired candidate. Others said that if it were on their curriculum vitae, they (the ex-offenders) would not be considered, but if this came up on the second or third interview and the ex-offender was one of the best candidates, they would be considered. It is immaterial for candidates to state on their curriculum vitae whether they have criminal record or that they served some time in correctional facilities given that most employers do background checks on prospective employees. This makes such individuals significantly less employable, more so for young adult ex-offenders as they are constantly searching for employment after their release (Pager, 2003).

Furthermore, other challenging aspects that stand in the way of young adult ex-offenders seeking for jobs are lower education, lack of work-related skills and employers' rigid hiring rules, which deny formerly-incarcerated individuals of employment opportunities. For instance, in my observation, in South Africa most of the government departments and private sector institutions make use of employment forms, which require ex-offenders to tick an applicable box regarding their criminal record in order to eliminate the candidates, based on their criminal records and not on their knowledge and skills.

YOUNG ADULTS EX-OFFENDER TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

At present, the rate of incarceration among men in South Africa is reported to exceed by far that of older men and women. There are approximately 109 804 sentenced males in South Africa's correctional centres (Jules-Macquet, 2014). As the number of men found in the correctional system increases, so too does the number of men who have to navigate their journey from behind correctional centre walls to the family and community at large. However, for several reasons,

young adult offenders experience unique challenges with re-entry when compared to older offenders. Young adults, aged 19-34, not only face the challenges that come with transitioning into the home, but do so at a developmentally critical period in their lives, thus transitioning into adulthood (Mears & Travis, 2004).

The transition into adulthood as a life stage incorporates the expectations and responsibilities that come with leaving adolescence and emerging into adulthood, such as being economically and physically independent from family, through self-supporting employment or moving out on one's own. According to research on emerging adulthood, this can be a time-consuming, financially-ambivalent and stressful process for most young adults and their families (Greenberger, 1984). Thus, by compounding the developmental transitions with the challenges of re-entry makes young adult offenders more susceptible to failed re-entry, given their physical and maturational development, lack of real world experience, and varying levels of support from family and the community, due to their time away from normative experiences (Spencer & Jones-Walker, 2004; Sullivan, 2004).

Theorists such as Elder on a life course theory (1985) put an emphasis on life transitions, the timing in which they occur, and the meaning attached to these events. For an example, for young adults offenders who “grow up” in correctional centres, development is happening in a severely restricted environment in terms of having the opportunity and freedom to explore positive life directions, master social competence, and establish themselves in social structures necessary for status attainment. This implies that in many instances young offenders will not have solidified free world identities to the same extent as either their non-incarcerated counterparts or offenders who may become incarcerated later in their adult life (Uggen & Wakefield, 2005). This is because based on theorists such as Elder, identity formation is closely linked to the “institutional structures in which growing individuals function during their transitions to adulthood” (Côté & Bynner, 2008, p. 97).

Young adults' offenders are developing identities within a highly regulated, gangs dominated, extraordinarily routinised, male rape dominated, and violence-prone institutional context (Muntingh, 2008). Subsequently, young adults are especially susceptible to the development of

criminal or “hustler” identities that run counter to the pro-social identities they will need to successfully navigate both re-entry and the transition into adulthood outside of the correctional centres’ walls (Walters in Arditti & Parkman, 2011).

According to Arditti and Parkman (2011), the young adult male ex-offenders’ inability to play young adult roles relates to a developmental paradox. These inability to fulfil the developmental expectation and need had been proven to have serious implications to young adult males who experience these developmental paradoxes. This is because in our societies there is a constant need for males to make a contribution in their families and societies at large, and the failure to do according to the societal expectations results into negative psychological and behavioural consequences.

In his study, Bourgois (1996) revealed that Puerto Rican young adult men who were unable to attain successful manhood roles (for example, employment, self-reliance and independence) turned to misogyny, substance abuse, and became involved in crime in pursuing ideals of masculinity. Thus, society’s expectations of masculinity roles put pressure on males, and this is exacerbated by the challenging issues such as incarceration, criminal record, and poor educational background that reduce the chance of being employed, self-reliant and independent. This is not taken into consideration when society requires men to fulfil their expected roles. As a result, males always feel the need to make contribution even when their life situations do not favour them to acquire manhood roles (that is, employment, self-reliance and independence).

Given their age at incarceration, young adult ex-offenders may not have been able to establish networks of friends or spouses to support them once they have been released, unlike their older incarcerated counterparts. As a result, many young adult offenders return home to their families of origin who provide emotional and tangible support and guidance until the young adult is able to take care of himself – a crucial step in establishing adulthood and successful re-entry (Steinberg et al., 2004; Sullivan, 2004). In fact, often people turn to family for support when experiencing a particularly trying time in life, such as the loss of a loved one, a divorce, or a serious health problem. It stands to reason that incarceration and release are similarly traumatic events during which family can play a supportive role (Visser, LaVigne, & Castro, 2004).

This is also supported by the notion of the boomerang effect as advocated by Johnson and Wilkinson (1995). The boomerang effect is inclusive of the family life cycle concept of “launching”, in which young adults are launched into independence for a period of time and then return to their family of origin for various reasons, many of which are economic. A critical transition affecting both the family of origin and the young adult is what is known as the “boomerang effect” or “re-nesting” (Johnson & Wilkinson, 1995). Traditionally, boomerang or “re-nesting” was being used in reference to college students or divorced adult children who return to the family of origin but rarely used in other diverse contexts such as a returning home after one has been released from a correctional centre. In fact, most incarcerated young adults rather than college students and divorced young adults lived with family members prior to incarceration and most will return to these same residences once they are released (Visser, LaVigne, & Castro, 2004). Therefore, the “re-nesting” of incarcerated young adults is more prevalent than that of college or divorced young adults.

The significance of the boomerang effect on young adult offenders is that unlike their college or divorced counterparts, they “boomerang” home without the benefits that are symbolic of obtaining a degree or that characterise failed attempts at more socially-acceptable life transitions like marriage. Thus, the returning home of a child with a stigmatising criminal history might be very different in terms of family processes and family functioning than would be of a child returning home with a more socially positive and normative reason such as inability to find viable employment after obtaining a baccalaureate degree. Hence, this study focused on the transitioning of the formerly incarcerated young adult males.

A transition into the families of origin creates ambiguity within family systems due to uncertainty in the roles and duties for both young adults and parental figures upon release, particularly after a period in which the young adult has lived independently from the caretakers (Johnson & Wilkinson, 1995). Family role ambiguities that result from the boomerang effect can be found in the literature on college students and adult divorced children (Johnson & Wilkinson, 1995).

For smooth adulthood transitions, parents of boomerang children are encouraged to be flexible, that is, they should set boundaries that are not too rigid and allow for a certain degree of independence (Johnson & Wilkinson, 1995). Being flexible may not be possible for families with a young adult who has been incarcerated. This is because of the challenges associated with an adult child with a criminal record or with restrictions associated with being on probation (for example, unannounced visits by probation officers, random drug screening) (Parkman, 2009). Thus, independence may be thwarted by the conditions of being under parole and having a criminal record. Young adults might find themselves in a “double bind” situation where they are striving for independence but find themselves being unable to fully exercise their independence. This means that the boomerang effect may create the same ambiguities regardless of context, as well as unique challenges for families given re-entry challenges (Parkman, 2009).

There is evidence from research that upon their release from correctional facilities, emerging adults find themselves back in the neighborhoods and families, with many responsibilities and no officially-sponsored safety nets to help them meet their needs, responsibilities and expectations as young adults. Some of the emerging adults face the additional responsibilities of fatherhood (Sullivan, 2004). Along with their own survival, they struggle to find a way to contribute to the support of their children. If they cannot take on the traditionally male breadwinner role and provide financial support, they may find themselves at loggerheads with their families. This is an example of role ambiguities associated with “re nesting” of the formerly-incarcerated young adult males.

SOUTH AFRICA’S SOCIAL RE-INTEGRATION SERVICES

In South Africa, the Department of Correctional Services is responsible for the rehabilitation and re-integration services of offenders. These rehabilitation and re-integration services are only available to offenders serving sentences of two years or longer. During their stay in correctional centres, this department offers programmes to rehabilitate offenders and after release the department helps them with re-integration services. The programmes cover aspects such as anger management, sexual offences, crossroads correctional programme, pre-release programme, substance abuse, as well as restorative orientation and new beginnings. Most of these

programmes are offered based on the individual assessment and a written release plan (G326 profile report) (Department of Correctional Services, 2008).

Assessment of Offenders' Profile for Release Purposes

The assessment should be based on the concepts of corrections (involvement in programmes that target offending behaviour), development (education and training needs), security (right to safety in correctional centres), care (physical and emotional well-being), facilities (humane living conditions), and after-care (support after release). The after-care programme is managed by the DCS's community corrections where officials would, on a regular basis visit and contact the parolee to supervise him/her after his/her release from the correctional centre. This programme is only for offenders released on parole (Department of Correctional Services, 2007).

According to Byrne and Taxman (2004), corrections agencies such as the Case Management Committee (CMC), the Parole Board and the Case Assessment Team (CAT) "should administer an assessment to identify what an offender will need in order to be released, including any problems that might occur with meeting conditions of release". According to La Vigne, Davies, Palmer and Halberstadt (2008), USA and England's pre-release assessments cover housing and employment needs, with most assessments also identifying medical (substance abuse history and treatment, post-release mental and physical health care, current and future prescription medications), identification, and income and benefits needs references. In South Africa, these do not form part of the release assessment and it is entirely up to the offenders to see how to access these basic needs after release (Magadze, 2016).

For example, with regard to transportation from correctional centres, the Department of Correctional Services drop-off point of ex-offenders is community corrections offices. This implies that ex-offenders who are released after hours may have difficulty accessing public transport and may have no choice but to wait for long hours until late. This situation can make individuals vulnerable to victimisation, and may also create opportunities for criminal behaviour. The same difficult scenario applies when ex-offenders are released without food and clothing. Few resources exist for ex-offenders upon their release from the correctional centres (Magadze, 2016).

Offenders are released back into their communities under different conditions in South Africa. Amongst these are unconditional release, parole and sentence remission (see the table 2.3 below) (Department of Correctional Services, 2005; Nunez-Neto, 2009).

Table 2.3: Offenders' release conditions

Unconditional release	Parole release	Sentence remission
Occurs after the offender has served his/her entire sentence in a correctional facility. In this case, the ex-offender is not supervised by a parole officer meaning that he/ she is not eligible to abide by any special conditions of supervision (Department of Correctional Services, 2005)	Occurs when compliance with parole conditions is enforced. In this case, ex-offenders who have served a predetermined period of their sentences in a correctional centre (typically half of their original sentences) automatically become eligible for parole and are then released into their communities to finish the remainder of their sentences on (Department of Correctional Services, 2005).	Occurs under very specific and intermittent conditions when the country's president resolves to reduce the sentences of all sentenced offenders based on their crime classification (Department of Correctional Services, 2005; Nunez-Neto, 2009).

In South Africa, while the Correctional Services Act (Act no. 111 of 1998) provides conditions that seek to support offenders after their release to become productive and law-abiding citizens, on the other hand, this Act is not clear on community involvement and does not equip community members to understand offenders' release policy in order to apply it. This is because the DCS lacks a strong focus on social re-integration support services for ex-offenders and the community they are returning to. After they have been released, offenders go back to their respective communities where they struggle to re-integrate in the community without assistance

from the department (Singh, 2016). This is also evidenced by the little amount of money spent on social re-integration services compared to other services for offenders (see the table 2.4 below).

Table 2.4: Programme expenditure in the DCS (Department of Correctional Services).

Programme name	2016/2017		
	Final Appropriation	Actual expenditure	Under/over expenditure
Administration	R3,879,599	R3,879,599	R0
Incarceration	R13,423,945	R13,388,093	R35,852
Rehabilitation	R1,187,826	R1,185,661	R2,165
Care	R2,235,094	R2,235,094	R0
Social re-integration	R853,727	R853,727	R0

Source: Department of Correctional Services (2016/17).

Organisations responsible for social re-integration

While the DCS (Department of Correctional Services) makes available rehabilitation and re-integration services to offenders during their incarceration, the White Paper on Corrections (2005) recognises that the rehabilitation and re-integration of offenders into society corrections is a societal responsibility; and that civil society organisations and communities have a critical role to play in helping ex-offenders to re-integrate successfully. The re-integration of ex-offenders is one of the vital issues in the field of corrections, and is thus a necessary components of crime prevention, which requires a substantial contribution from all sectors Magadze, 2016).

Among other organisations, the DCS (Department of Correctional Services) in South Africa has collaborated with the National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Re-integration of Offenders (NICRO) and the Khulisa Crime Prevention Initiative in the fight and eradication of crime from its roots, through offender rehabilitation and re-integration programmes, including after-care

programmes. Civil society organisations such as the Civil Society Prison Reform Initiative (CSPRI), BOSASA group, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the Open Society Foundation for South Africa (OSF-SA), as well as the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) also play a role (Muntingh, 2008).

At community level community-based organisations such as Vezokuhle Youth Development Programme (VYPD) and the Rebuilding and Life Skills Training Centre (REALISTIC) play important roles in the rehabilitation and re-integration of ex-offenders by providing services to ex-offenders and their families, to ensure that they do not re-offend in order to also ensure safer communities (Department of Correctional Services, 2008).

NICRO incorporates the restorative justice principle and offers an array of services to offenders. While each programme has a specific aim, the programmes collectively address the different needs of offenders within and outside correctional centres. Some of the programmes address self-change, social support, responsibility and accountability. Other NICRO programmes address specific problems such as substance abuse, provides life skills education, debt counselling and family counselling (Department of Correctional Services, 2008).

According to the Department of Correctional services (2008), the NICRO diversion programmes offer seven standard options aimed at a healthy alternative and significant developmental opportunity for marginalised, socially excluded and traumatised young people in conflict with the law by giving them a chance to turn their lives around and become productive, responsible citizens. There are a number of objectives of the intervention programmes aimed at:

- i. Preventing young people in conflict with the law from re-offending;
- ii. Identifying and dealing with underlying problems that fuel juvenile offender behaviour;
- iii. Providing psycho-educational and rehabilitative programmes to the benefit of all parties concerned;
- iv. Offering young offenders an opportunity of taking responsibility for their actions and being accountable for these actions, in addition to providing an opportunity for reparation;

- v. Preventing first time or petty offenders from earning a criminal record and being labelled as criminals, as this may become a self-fulfilling prophecy;
- vi. Lessening the case-load of the formal justice system;
- vii. Avoiding the imprisonment of first-time or petty offenders who are exposed to criminal elements, who may emerge hardened by the correctional experiences and become even more prepared to repeat their offending or criminal behaviour; and
- viii. Reducing the risk of young people being involved in crimes.

NICRO (like the White Paper) outlines that the family unit is an important protective factor for former offenders. It is therefore, essential to work with the families of offenders during the re-integration process. NICRO therefore, established family centres to help reconstruct family units where necessary, and to serve as support centres to both offenders and their families (Department of Correctional Services, 2008). NICRO's Tough Enough Programme (TEP) addresses such families' issues and work with offenders and their families during pre-release stages and even in post-release stages. TEP offers after-care work by ensuring that ex-offenders are reunited with their families and that their basic needs such as accommodation, as well as other needs such as counselling, assistance with placement and creation and skills development are met (Department of Correctional Services, 2008).

NICRO undertook a study that found that the incarceration of an offender may have a profound impact on an entire family unit. This study also found out that the incarceration of a parent may have profound psychological consequences for children. In this way, children of offenders who may also be seen as victims of the crimes committed by their parents are at risk of becoming offenders themselves (Department of Correctional Services, 2008). In addition, NICRO also found that families also contend with the stigma attached with having a loved one incarcerated and suffer economical and emotional strain as a result of trying to maintain contact with a loved one through correction policies such as harsh visitation policies, expensive telephone rates and locations of correctional centres. These experiences that families and offenders have with the criminal justice system determine the level of family involvement, and ultimately shape family relations between offenders and families even after offenders have been released. As a result,

NICRO developed a strategy that requires that the family unit be strengthened for the re-integration of offenders to be realised (Department of Correctional Services, 2008).

In another study, NICRO found that offenders are from communities and families that face enormous challenges in terms of economics, unemployment, and access to mental and physical care. As a result, these families and communities suffer from high incarceration rates than others. For example, the black population was incarcerated at a rate of approximately 79 percent in 2014. The incarceration rate of this population group was approximately four times higher than that of the coloured group, which was 18 percent in the same year. According to NICRO, this analysis does not seek to suggest that some racial groups are more into crime than others. Rather, it seeks to identify some environmental factors that may predispose members of some communities and families to crime (Jules-Macquet, 2014). As Albertus (2010, p. 12) asserts “it may be assumed that many offenders are already vulnerable due to their backgrounds”. This implies that, individuals from poor socio-economic backgrounds, who do not have much access to better life opportunities, such as rural areas and squatter camps, are more likely to be involved in criminal activities than individuals who are from rich socio-economic backgrounds, who have been exposed to good life opportunities hence this study focused on ex-offenders in a rural setting.

Khulisa also has a number of programmes, which offers services to both offenders and former offenders. Offenders can access these services in correctional centres, which are aimed at changing negative behaviour. Through “My Path” Rehabilitation Programme, Khulisa provides self-help learning programmes for individuals in need of corrective behaviour therapy and personal development. Furthermore, through Khulisa’s restorative justice and conflict resolution processes, offenders are encouraged to take accountability for the harm they caused to the victims. A variety of mechanisms such as mediation, dialogue, negotiation and problem-solving are used to restore relationships so that healing can take place. This implies working with the victims, families and communities affected by harm resulting from criminal activities (Department of Correctional Services, 2008).

Khulisa offers developed, holistic and integrated programmes that combine community development, rehabilitation and re-integration programmes with restorative justice, peace-making and conflict resolution processes. Some of its programmes continue even after offenders have been released to ensure that re-offending does not take place (Department of Correctional Services, 2008).

Challenges with South African Correctional System

Although the DCS (Department of Correctional Services) and the organisations working with offenders and ex-offenders offer these re-integration services, and deem them as important, there are vast challenges experienced by the department (DCS), which hinder the effectiveness and efficiency of the rehabilitation and re-integration services. The following are challenges experienced by correctional centres in South Africa (White Paper on Corrections, 2005):

- i. overcrowding;
- ii. poor facilities;
- iii. high level of corruption and mal-administration;
- iv. challenges in aligning the correctional services organisational structure with the new paradigm;
- v. no special categories of offenders - women, children younger than 18 years, the youth, the disabled, the aged, the mentally ill, long-term offenders, offenders with life sentences; first time offenders and foreign nationals;
- vi. HIV/Aids, and the effect and management of communicable diseases; and
- vii. victimisation, male rape and gangsterism amongst offenders

All of these unexceptional cases, taken together, impact negatively on service delivery within the DCS (Department of Correctional Services) sector and thus hinder the successful rehabilitation and re-integration of offenders (Jules-Macquet, 2014). In this way, most of offenders come back into society regardless of whether or not they have changed for the better.

The challenges facing the DCS (Department of Correctional Services) are escalating since the supporting organisations are experiencing challenges of funding necessary to support offenders

and ex-offenders programmes. Thus, it is also difficult to rely on communities because there is a persisting and increasing outcry from the public to “lock offenders and throw away the key” (Padayachee, 2008, p. 46). This was also proven by a study conducted by Muntingh (as cited in Singh, 2016), where evidence emerged that some ex-offenders were not satisfied with the manner in which they were prepared for their release. According to his study, one of the male participants described the pre-release programme offered by the DCS (Department of Correctional Services) as follows:

“The pre-release programme from DCS does not really help. They tell how traffic lights work; green means go and red stop. But we know these things, this is not useful. How do you really prepare a person for release? You are really just dumped outside. We need a proper re-integration programme. DCS must at least try to have a re-integration programme. There are different options but they need to try harder to make it work, like learner ships.”

According to Muntingh (2005, p. 8) another challenge is that the DCS (Department of Correctional Services) and its stakeholders do not realise that “One-programme-for-all approaches are nothing but a waste of time and money”. He proposed that not every re-integration service and intervention will work for every offender or ex-offender. Rehabilitation and re-integration services must be directed at the appropriate offenders in terms of their risk-profiles and appropriate risk factors. Studies on the evaluation of effective re-integration have shown that re-integration services should be designed to incorporate different kinds of offenders. In this way, they will be able to target known predictors of crime and recidivism of a specific age group, and be able to implement only a behavioural intervention suitable for the offender of a particular age group (Cullen & Gendreau, as cited in Muntingh, 2005).

As noted above, it is a struggle for the DCS (Department of Correctional Services) to effectively rehabilitate and re-integrate offenders, as the strategies the department employs do not address offenders’ needs (Muntingh, 2008). Therefore, this calls for further research on strategies to improve the re-integration and rehabilitation of South African corrections, that in a way deal

with re-offending problems – hence this study focused on the re-integration of the young adult male ex-offenders.

COLLECTIVE RE-INTEGRATION FROM THE ECOLOGICAL SYSTEM MODEL

The White Paper on Corrections emphasises the collective re-integration of offenders, where every sector partakes to support offenders and their families (Department of Correctional Services, 2005). The notion of interdependence and interactional collaboration between environmental sectors and individuals resonates well with the ecological system model (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The model suggests that individuals go through and develop within a nested model of context that interacts with other models to shape attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours. From inside to outside of the model, there is the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. The model also suggests the effect each level has on the other, as well as the all-encompassing nature of the largest, most abstract level (that is, the macrosystem).

Inner levels represent closely the literal interactions of the individual with his/her immediate environment. The innermost level, the microsystem, represents an individual's immediate environment, and incorporates the direct interactions of an individual with other people, objects, and symbols in that environment. These enduring, progressively more complex and reciprocal interactions, known as proximal processes are thus, units of development. Proximal processes cumulatively shape the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of individuals over time (see figure 2 below).

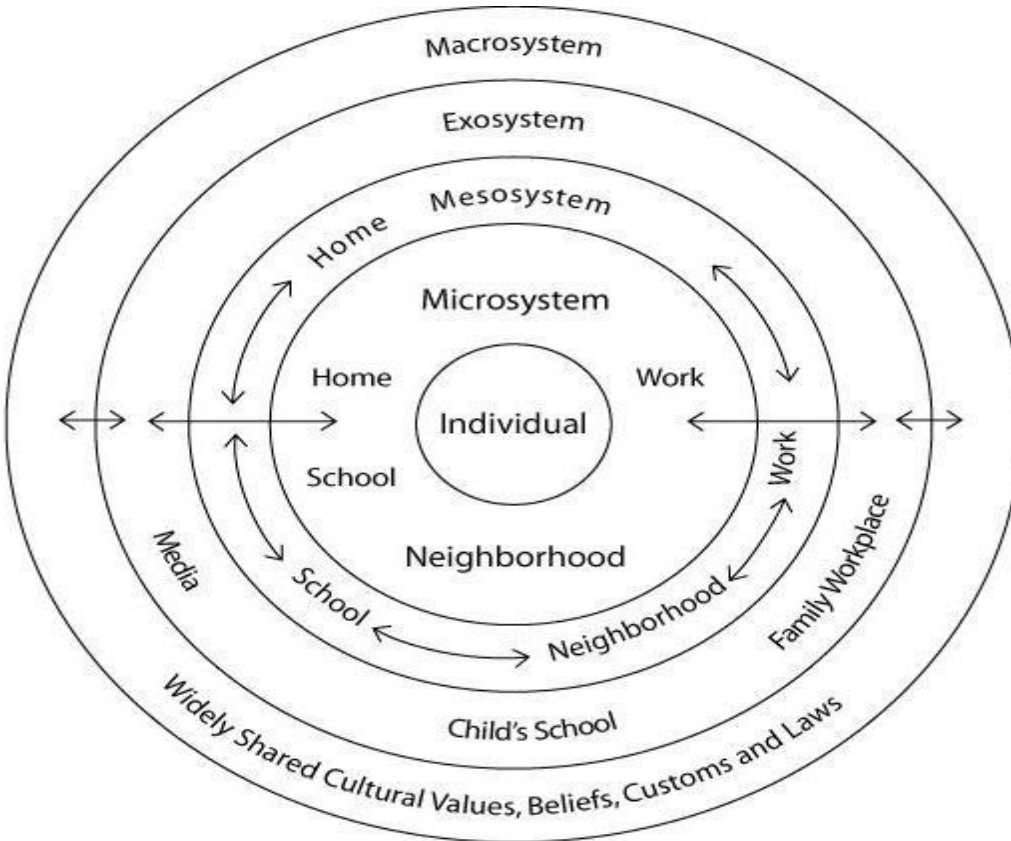


Figure 2: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Model

Source: Bronfenbrenner (1994)

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model applies to the developmental experiences of an offender making the transition from incarceration to the community after he/she has been released (see figure 3 below). Many offenders who are released from incarceration return home to family (spouses, siblings, children, and others), who all participate in the offender's family microsystem. Within the family microsystem the offender regularly engages in reciprocal interactions (that is, proximal processes) with his/her family that is, as the relationship continues, it becomes progressively more complex (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

The offender also participates in other microsystems with friends, coworkers, and community groups. Mesosystems are formed by the interrelationships between – say, the offender's family microsystem and friend's microsystem. Interactions that the offender has with members of his/her family will influence interactions that he/she has with his friends, and vice versa. Interactions that occur within the offender's community corrections supervision team represent

the exosystem. Finally, macrosystem factors such as community perceptions of criminal offenders or cultural beliefs about family will affect the offender's development through their influence on neighborhood environments, family dynamics, and interpersonal interactions (Heise, 1998).

According to the ecological system model, ex-offenders who re-offend or commit crime possibly do so because of the contexts impinging on their lives as they are transitioning from incarceration back into the community. Such contexts include seeking for employment, reconnecting with their families, as well as community reception (Travis & Petersilia, 2001). The model suggests that negative behaviours such as crime that may occur during the transitioning period of ex-offenders are probably caused by the negative interaction between ex-offenders and these multiple ecological levels and vice versa.

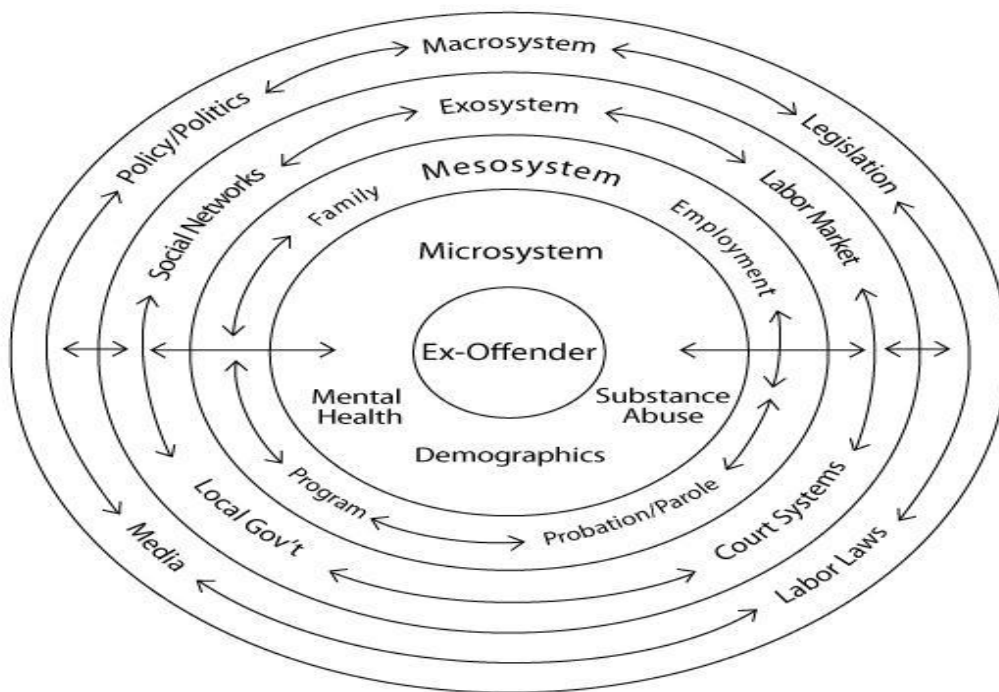


Figure 3: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model as Applied to Ex-offenders' Re-entry

Source: Hagedorn (2009).

This means that it is important to involve different sectors to ensure a holistic development of ex-offenders during the re-integration process. As the DCS (Department of Correctional Services) is aware of its shortcomings, it should work in collaboration with external stakeholders to address the needs of ex-offenders to ensure a better re-integration service.

THE FAMILY IN THE RE-INTEGRATION PROCESS

Family is an inevitable aspect when understanding the ex-offenders' re-integration processes. A study conducted by La Vigne, Naser, Brooks, and Castro (2005) indicates that most former offenders initially reside with family members after their release. In this way, the family becomes the first platform for the free life interactions after their incarceration. That is, family could contribute to both the success and failure of the re-integration process (Austin, 2001).

For example, early social scientists found that dysfunctional family set-ups such as conflict-ridden homes, homes where members abuse substances as well as poverty-stricken homes fuel criminal behaviours and/or recidivism - whereas enabling homes with positive attributes serve as protective factors against criminal behaviour or recidivism. Contact with these dysfunctional families has the potential to hinder successful re-entry (Farnworth, 1984; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986). Therefore, family becomes a critical institution to explain and understand individual pathways after their release from correctional centres in order to evaluate the failure or success of the re-integration process (Laub & Sampson, 2003).

In South Africa, the White Paper on Families also recognises that families enhance socialisation, care and support of members to ensure that the said members contribute positively to the overall development of the country (Department of Social Development, 2012). In this way, a family is regarded as a primary entity for social interactions and the negative or the positive behaviours displayed by members of our society are reflections of what happens in families. Although there is a dearth of literature in South Africa with regard to ex-offenders' re-integration, the governing policies realised the importance of a family- hence they are now emphasising on family for the support of ex-offenders who are being re-integrated (Muntingh, 2008).

Positive contributions of a family during the ex-offenders re-entry

Literature from other countries highlights on several trivial roles that families play in the re-entry process. The family contributes substantially to successful re-entry, as it provides emotional and instrumental support upon the re-entry of ex-offenders (La Vigne et al., 2005). Emotional support refers to the things that people do that make other people feel loved and cared for, that instil a sense of self-worth, for example, talking over a problem and providing encouragement. Such support is non-tangible. By contrast, instrumental support refers to the various types of tangible help that others may provide, for example, assisting with clothes, housekeeping, and provision of transportation or money (Seeman, Lusignolo, Berkman & Albert, 2001). In the *Returning Home* study, LaVigne, et al., (2005) note that formerly incarcerated offenders reported favourably in their families' financial support. A large percent (92%) of their Chicago sample reported having someone in their family who provided them with financial support.

Even prior to the 2005 research report, LaVigne and colleagues interviewed offenders prior to their release regarding their views on family support during incarceration, and the expectations they had of family once they were released. Over half of the participants reported that support from family would go a long way in ensuring that they remain in the outside world. In addition, the participants also reported expectations that their families would provide the emotional, tangible and financial support needed on their release (LaVigne et al., 2005).

Lastly, from the *Returning Home* study, one of the most critical findings was that after one year of release, families were found to be assisting former offenders in terms of emotional support, and being emotionally responsive and encouraging in their attempts to be law-abiding citizens, and in leading pro-social lives. By so doing, the majority of former offenders reported that family has had a great influence in helping them stay out of incarceration (LaVigne et al., 2005). Visser, LaVigne and Castro (2004) also found that former offenders who completed their self-administered survey relied on family members extensively for housing, financial support, and emotional support. Furthermore, the participants highlighted greater importance on the role of family in the re-integration process after release more than during the incarceration period.

Interestingly, the importance of the family during re-entry is not only linked to the contribution made by other family members to the re-entry of ex-offenders, but former offenders could also contribute to their own re-entry by focusing on families. Several studies have demonstrated that ex-offenders cease to re-offend once they begin to form significant life partnerships (LaVigne et al., 2005; Sampson & Laub, 1993). This means that families act as a means of certifying ex-offenders as conventional people (Meisenhelder, as cited in Sampson & Laub, 1993).

Family as a Negative Influence upon Offenders' Release

While substantial literature reports on positive family contributions to the re-integration of adult formerly incarcerated members, there is also a vast amount of literature that proves that families can have negative effects towards the re-entry of adult formerly incarcerated members (Christian et al., 2006). This is consistent with Fishman's (1990) notion that reconciliation with family members after incarceration is challenging and difficult for most of ex-offenders because of problems or conflicts that may have existed before they were incarcerated or have developed as a result of their incarceration. For example, evidence from research suggests that families and spouses experience intense emotional reactions such as anger towards the offenders for committing crime – and also feel resentful towards ex-offenders, because they cannot contribute to the wellbeing of the family, or share child-rearing responsibilities, at a time when they were incarcerated (Nelson et al., 1999; Oliver & Hairston, 2006). Therefore, the results of such intense emotions, coupled with the stress of the offender's transition back into the community and the family, may lead to conflicts – particularly conflicts between former offenders and their intimate partners (Hairston & Oliver, 2006; Phillips & Lindsay, 2011).

Furthermore, evidence from the study conducted by Inderbitzin (2009) shows that due to the poor family backgrounds of offenders, as well as by virtue of the fact that they come from violence-torn families, the majority of offenders had to grow up quickly, and in the process sacrificed much of their childhood in their quest for survival. They learned to live on their own and to take care of themselves – sometimes they had to support their families financially with the proceeds of their criminal activities. Therefore, returning back home after they have been

incarcerated they may pick up where they had left (that is, going back to the life of crime), for the sake of surviving (Hagan & McCarthy, 1998).

A South African researcher, Mpaung (2001) supports this notion by indicating that most offenders are from violent, impoverished families, and that they are also uneducated, and therefore, their constant contact with these social and economic circumstances often drive them back to the life of crime. She argues that in order to reduce the rate of crime, efforts need to be made to ensure that ex-offenders do not go back to their old lives.

The research points to families as essential participants in the re-entry of formerly-incarcerated individuals. This participation, however, often comes at a high cost – physical, emotional, and financial – to families that are reportedly, already strained in several ways (Braman, 2002; Christian et al., 2006). The demands placed on families to maintain offender-family relations can cause families to limit their support or sever ties with their incarcerated loved ones during or after release (Braman, 2002). Wolf and Draine (2002) found in their study on families and re-entry that offender re-entry can be stressful for families, and that many families are surprised and disappointed at the amount of support and assistance needed by former offenders. This would undoubtedly, affect interactions between families and their formerly-incarcerated members – hence this study is crucial.

PERSONAL COPING STRATEGIES

Personal coping strategies that have been identified in this chapter were studied elsewhere. However, most studies focused on other groups' personal coping strategies rather than on young adults' ex-offenders hence it was crucial for this study to understand the personal coping strategies of young adult male ex-offenders during the re-entry process. This was done in order to understand the value of such coping strategies to the young adult male ex-offenders, and thus, the importance of applying them. This is supported by Abrams' (2008) notion that little is known about how young formerly incarcerated people perceive or cope with the various challenges involved in their transition process.

Coping as defined by Lazarus and Folkman (1984, p. 141) is a “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of a person”. According to Latack and Havlovik (as cited in Gumani, Fourie & Terre Blanche, 2013), the process of coping requires one to look into the issue of comprehensiveness. This means focusing on coping (the stressful situation that coping is directed at and the emotional reactions shown) as well as the method of coping (the strategy that is used to deal with the situation).

Types of Coping Strategies

A distinction is made amongst the following methods of coping (Latack & Havlovik, as cited in Gumani, Fourie & Terre Blanche, 2013):

- i. cognitive (perception, thinking, planning and organising how to deal with stress);
- ii. behavioural (being actively involved in executing some action to deal with the situation);
- iii. proactive (being in charge of the situation and acting proactively to handle it accordingly);
- iv. escape (trying not to be involved with the stressor by avoiding it); and
- v. social (involvement of help from other people) and solitary (dealing with the situation alone).

On the other hand, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) identified two types of coping strategies, namely problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies. Other researchers also revealed that coping can be condensed into three categories, which are problem, emotional and avoidant focused coping strategies (LeBlanc, Reger, Jelley & Barath, 2008). In their study, Pienaar and Rothman (2003) confirmed the fourth category that could be added-namely, the reappraisal coping strategy. These coping strategies serve two functions. Specifically, they help individuals to: (a) change the situation, and (b) regulate their emotional distress.

Problem-focused strategies can be described as strategies that are aimed at actively altering the troubled person-environment relations causing the distress (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter,

DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986). Problem-focused coping strategies can be used when the demand can be controlled or changed. These strategies involve the execution of certain actions, in order to reduce or eliminate the source of stress (Folkman, 1982). They include examples such as the actual work of planning and organising how a situation will be dealt with, gathering more information about the situation and talking about the situation (Latack & Havlovic, as cited in Gumani, Fourie & Terre Blanche, 2013).

Emotion-focused coping on the other hand, involves of reappraising or managing the emotional reaction to the demand. Emotion-focused coping can also be described as “regulating stressful emotions” (Folkman et al., 1986, p. 993). Specific examples of emotion-focused strategies include looking at the positive side of a situation, thinking about the situation as a challenge that is manageable and helping to learn new adaptive skills, expressing how one is feeling to others which include crying, as well as worrying. Actions such as exercising more and drinking more are also included (Latack & Havlovic, as cited in Gumani, Fourie & Terre Blanche, 2013).

Avoidant-focused coping strategies involve the aversion of the stressor that an individual is faced with in order to avoid emotional stress (LeBlanc et al., 2008). Examples of such strategies include trying to get out of a situation (Latack & Havlovic in Gumani, Fourie & Terre Blanche, 2013).

The reappraisal coping strategies involve ways of re-evaluating the meaning of a stressful situation in order to find new and constructive ways of handling it (Pienaar & Rothmann, 2003). Coping and appraisal thus influence each other. As appraisal leads to coping, the coping achieved will lead to reappraisal. This is done by specifically weighing the meaning of the situation and what can be lost (primary appraisal) on the basis of an individual’s values, beliefs, goals, physical safety and commitments against the availability of resources required to handle the situation and therefore, what the individual can do to deal with it (secondary appraisal). Coping is achieved when coping resources equal the meaning attached to the situation (Folkman, 1982; LeBlanc et al., 2008).

It is therefore, clear that the six methods of coping described by Latack and Havlovic (as cited in Gumani, Fourie & Terre Blanche, 2013) – namely cognitive, behavioural, proactive, escape, social and solitary methods of coping fall within these four categories of coping strategies – that is, problem-focused, emotion-focused, avoidant-focused and reappraisal coping strategies (Gumani, Fourie & Terre Blanche, 2013). Coping strategies can result in either maladaptive or adaptive coping, depending on which type is used in that specific situation.

Maladaptive coping occurs when the strategy individuals use to cope fails to regulate distress or alleviate the underlying problem. This is likely an outcome of problem-focused coping strategies, which are employed in response to uncontrollable stressors, or when emotion-focused coping is used in response to controllable stressors. Adaptive coping refers to situations where the coping strategy matches the level of controllability of the stressful event or situation. When people are able to manage stressful situations with appropriate coping strategies, they are less likely to experience psychological symptoms of distress than when there is a lack of fit between the stress and strategy (Park, Folkman, & Bostrom, 2001).

On the other hand, Keil (2004) states that the coping process needs to contain elements of modification, or even alteration, which may include either the modification of external factors, or an internal adaptation to them – or a combination of both. Both these elements are concerned with the reduction of stress, either by the act of modifying, or even removing, external stressors linked to the situation (externalised response), or by being able to accommodate them, to learn to live with them (internalised response) so that while the stressors still remain, they have less impact on the individual than if the individual had not made this accommodation (Keil 2004).

The Challenge of Using Coping Strategies

Literature on coping strategies shows that the use of coping strategies is not as simple as it appears. First, the strategies do not operate independently. They are interdependent and are, therefore, employed according to the demands of stressful or traumatic situations encountered (Gumani, Fourie & Terre Blanche, 2013). For instance, Folkman (1982) argues that the two coping strategies, that is, problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies, can either facilitate or

inhibit each other. The use of one can lead to the necessity to use the other, while in other instances, the use of one can block the use of the other.

In a study conducted by Pienaar et al. (2007) it was suggested that the use of problem-focused coping strategies by police officers may prevent suicide ideation from taking place. Low approach (which is problem-focused) and high avoidance (which is emotion-focused) coping strategies can lead to suicide ideation. Even though the use of problem-focused coping strategies was found to be useful in avoiding suicide ideation, Pienaar et al. (2007) indicate that such strategies may lead to alcohol abuse among police officers. This suggests that problem-focused coping strategies may be effective in dealing with specific work-related stress, and cannot be applied uniformly. This assertion is supported by the findings of a study conducted by Kohan and Mazmanian (2003), which showed that problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies are beneficial in specific contexts.

Beasley et al. (2003) have also shown that the emotion-focused coping strategy is two-fold depending on situations in which it is applied. Expressing emotions reflects this aspect, thus showing that it is problem-focused, while sealing over the emotions that are experienced serves an avoidance of purpose. Therefore, it is a complex process to understand how individuals will react to the stressors, as this is also influenced by culture. Culture serves as a crucial factor in determining the coping strategies used when people are faced with stressful events (Gaziel, 1993). Pienaar and Rothmann (2003) concur that the emotional response following the occurrence of stressors can be influenced by culture, among other factors, as culture shapes the way that stressors are perceived, evaluated and understood.

Ex-offenders Coping Strategies

Life in correctional facilities is totally different from life in the free-world environment and ex-offenders are released with an expectation to cope and adapt to this ever-changing mainstream environment (Chikadzi, 2017). As an offender begins the re-entry process, new stressors arise, increasing the risk for recidivism. This requires not only the availability of a friendly and congenial environment, but also the appropriate social and life skills to maintain the equilibrium in the person-environment interface. This implies that for ex-offenders to be less inclined towards criminal activities, it would be necessary to modify the cognitive templates or alter the

coping strategies they use to perceive, respond and cope with the environmental demands (Weisman, Lamberti, & Price, 2004).

Ex-offenders just like everybody else, use coping strategies when they are faced with environmental demands. Amongst other stressors, ex-offenders' stressors can include fear of re-offending, finding stable employment and housing, paying back financial obligations, contending with social stigma due to their status as ex-offenders and receiving social support (Weisman et al., 2004). Opposite to the general population, evidence from research shows that ex-offenders use unhealthy and ineffective coping strategies when they are faced with environmental demands (Quinsey, Harris, Rice, & Cormier, 1998). This assertion is also supported by the notion that offenders with less effective coping strategies are likely to violate rules of the correctional facilities and "identified more strongly with the criminal subculture" (Zamble & Porporino, 1988, p. 415).

Evidence drawn from the study conducted by Phillips and Lindsay (2011) shows that the prominent coping strategy employed by offenders who recidivated while dealing with re-entry barriers was avoidance. There was a defined process experienced by participants in their research study, which was initial optimism about release, followed by craving substances, facing practical barriers, and/or feeling overwhelmed. This eventually resulted in avoidance of the problems, emotions, and substance abuse relapse, which culminated in recidivism.

Zamble and Porporino (1988) also conducted some initial investigation into the coping strategies employed by offenders. The researchers interviewed and administered various coping measures to 133 incarcerated men. Participants were followed up for 16 months. Although the researchers did not look specifically at the re-entry process, they asked participants to identify problems they faced before they were incarcerated and strategies they used to cope with those problems. The findings indicated that participants did not have adequate coping strategies to manage their problems. In fact, all participants reported using reactive problem solving, which lacked planning and consideration of the future. In addition, 91 percent of participants reported using substances.

A study conducted by Zamble & Porporino (1988) also supported the same notion by producing evidence that the majority of participants who recidivated only used strategies that focused on solving their problem for the moment. The researchers interviewed individuals who were incarcerated ($n = 311$), who recidivated (that is, returned to correctional facility) and compared them with individuals who were previously incarcerated and did not recidivate ($n = 36$). They assessed coping strategies using the Coping Vignettes Scale and found that individuals who recidivated had poorer coping skills compared with those who did not – thus speculating that poor coping skills made living outside of correctional facilities difficult for these individuals.

Limited research has been conducted on the positive coping strategies of ex-offenders. However, those who previously conducted studies on this phenomenon indicate that positive coping strategies for offenders during re-entry include education, re-integration programmes and prayer (Severance, 2004). The issue of spiritual mechanism was well stated by Gumani, Fourie and Terre Blanche (2013), who indicate that three forms of spiritual mechanisms could be used to cope with vicarious trauma – especially among the police – which are church attendance, individual prayer and supportive prayer. Ex-offenders could apply similar mechanisms as ways of coping better with their challenges.

Nonetheless, Lazarus (1999) cautions that coping strategies should be viewed in the contexts in which they occur – indicating that no one style or strategy is necessarily negative; and that the effectiveness of coping strategies depends on the context. According to a meta-analysis of research on avoidance coping, avoidance may produce positive outcomes shortly after applying this strategy – however, avoidance is generally associated with negative long-term outcomes (Suls & Fletcher, 1985).

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Reviewing previous literature on the re-integration process of ex-offenders proved to be necessary in understanding the dynamics involved in the whole transitioning process. The information gathered from the literature suggests that offenders' re-integration process is a prolonged process – where there is a need for contributions from various stakeholders, including families, employers, DCS (Department of Correctional Services) and communities – just to

mention a few. Furthermore, the review of literature also highlighted how South Africa operates as far as offender re-integration services are concerned. The gaps within DCS and other parties (that is, family, employers) as important role players in the process of re-integration of offenders emerged during the literature review – and this highlighted how this study could close some of the gaps, especially as far as the re-integration process is concerned. It is clear that much needs to be put in place in the South African re-integration system – given the challenges and difficulties faced by the government and other sectors in order to ensure efficient and effective services. Hence, studies such as this one are important to close such gaps. In this way, conducting literature helped me to get a solid background of the phenomenon under study and also helped me to refine my research questions and methods. The research design and methods adopted in this study are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses in detail the research design and methods. The fundamental philosophy that underpins the ontological and epistemological stance are highlighted in order to give clarity on how I chose the ontological and epistemological positions in this study. The chapter also discusses in detail the qualitative approach as well as the research design adopted, specifically the interpretive phenomenological approach, and its historical background. I further discuss the methods of data collection, data analysis, ethical consideration and measures of trustworthiness.

RELATIVIST ONTOLOGICAL POSITION

Ontology is the perception of the nature of reality and its characteristics (Cresswell, 2013). This relates to the researcher's way of being; what he or she believes is there that can be known about it (Guba & Lincoln 1994). This implies that when conducting research, researcher/s must choose a position of explaining what reality is. There are various beliefs of explaining what the nature and characteristics of reality is.

In approaching this study, I was guided by the belief that young adult ex-offenders experience a process of family re-entry differently, and thus encounter multiple realities. Therefore, I believe that there is no more or less "truth" about the lived experiences of the process of family re-entry among young adult ex-offenders. As such, I captured the nature of reality as given by each individual young adult ex-offender and this spoke for individual meaning and the specific nature of reality. This assertion is supported by Guba and Lincoln (1994, p.108), who posit that "if a real world is assumed, then what can be known about it is how things really are".

In addition, Guba and Lincoln (1994) posit that a better ontological position to adopt for studies with no given or fixed reality is the relativist ontological position, hence relativism was adopted in this study. Furthermore, Guba and Lincoln (1994) show that relativists present their realities in

many different aspects as presented by each individual. Relativists further present their realities as mental constructions and intangible – meaning that reality cannot be touched or measured. In this way the realities are socially and experientially based, and are dependent on the form of individual or groups content holding the constructions (although elements are often shared among many individuals and even across cultures). Therefore, reality in this study was socially constructed by the participants and myself. Through empathetic human interactions, the participants and I constructed subjective reasons and meanings behind the social action of family re-entry, although elements were often shared among many participants.

Philosophy behind relativism

In Western philosophy, relativism first appears as a philosophical outlook associated with the Sophists in fifth century Greece. Cosmopolitan and skeptically inclined, these travelling intellectuals were struck by the variations in law, mores, practices and beliefs prevalent in various communities. These intellectuals then concluded that much of what is commonly regarded as natural is in fact a matter of convention. There is thus, no objectively right way of worshipping the gods or organising society, any more than there is no an objectively correct way of dressing or preparing food (Westacott, 2000). In the twentieth century, after the appearance of the Sophists relativism, Thomas Kuhn and other modern philosophers extended the work of the relativists.

In his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970), Kuhn argues that science progresses by means of what he calls paradigm shifts. On Kuhn's account,

“a paradigm shift such as that by which Copernican astronomy displaced the Ptoemeic view of the universe should not be thought of as a shift between two different ways of looking at an independent reality. Rather, theory and observation are so intertwined that the shift amounts to a change in the reality the scientists inhabit. Consequently, there is no independent standpoint from which a paradigm shift can be judged to take us closer to a true picture of the way things really are” (Kuhn, 1970, p. 110).

The relativist philosophy collapses the distinction between truth and falsity, and asserts that each individual is really the "measure" of what is. In this way, relativism asserts that the truth-value of a statement is always relative to some particular epistemic standpoint (Westacott, 2000).

INTERPRETIVIST EPISTEMOLOGICAL STANCE

An epistemology issue involves the adequate theory of knowledge or justification strategy (Carter & Little, 2007). Carter and Little (2007) argue that decisions about choosing an epistemological position is the starting point in research because epistemology is the foundation and directly influences the methods used and methodology that be will be followed. This implies that epistemology influences the way the researcher relates with the participants during the collection and analysis of data. Therefore, epistemology also shapes the researcher's and participants' relationship in the study.

In approaching this study, the interpretivist stance was adopted. Interpretive researchers believe that reality consists of people's subjective experiences of the external world thus, they may adopt an inter-subjective epistemology and the ontological belief that reality is socially constructed. This is because the participants' subjective meanings are varied and multiple. Therefore, researchers need to get a deeper understanding of the meanings in order to avoid narrowing the meanings into a few ideas (Cresswell, 2013; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002). In this study I looked at the different subjective experiences of each participant and allowed both myself and the participants to have a linked interaction as we went deeper in trying to understand each participant's meaning of the phenomenon under study.

Furthermore, in this study, the participants were not the only active contributors of knowledge; I joined and engaged with them to bring an understanding of the phenomenon. Through showing care and empathy, I interacted freely with the participants to give them the space to be co-creators of the meaning. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), when the researcher is jointly engaging with participants in a caring and empathetic manner, the particular researcher's epistemological stance is transactional and subjective. This epistemological stance only takes place if the researcher is taking the relativist ontological position (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Therefore, through empathetic and caring conversations with the participant, I allowed the interactively linked dialogue to proceed in order to present constructions that are more informed and sophisticated.

According to Aikenhead (1997) interpretivist researchers are anti-foundationalists, who believe that there is no single route or a particular method of knowledge instead methods should be judged according to how interesting they are to the researcher as well as those involved in the study. This implies that the interpretivist researcher, together with the participants attempt to derive their constructs from the field by an in-depth examination of the phenomenon of interest. It is for this reason that the interpretivist position is underpinned by observations and interpretation. Therefore, interpretive research does not predefine dependent and independent variables, but focuses on the full complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges (Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994).

Therefore, in this study, I engaged with the participants without having a particular predefined method of knowledge, this is because my intention was not to test variables or hypothesis. However, I wanted to understand various meanings of the phenomenon under study. Therefore, what was important to me was to do an in-depth examination of the phenomenon of interest and take with me those derived constructs that were interesting to my participants.

Table 3.1 below displays the characteristics of the interpretivist position as used in this study categorised into purpose of the research, the nature of reality (ontology), nature of knowledge and the relationship between the inquirer and the inquired-into (epistemology), and the methodology used (Cantrell, 2001).

Table 3.1: Characteristics of the interpretivist approach

Feature	Description
Purpose of the research	To understand and interpret young adult male ex-offenders lived experiences of family re-entry process in Sekhukhune district, Limpopo province
Ontology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are multiple realities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reality was explored, and constructed through human interactions and meaningful actions. • Discovery of how the young adult male ex-offenders made sense of their social worlds in natural settings by means of daily routines, relations to others, experiences of the body, and experiences of the time in order to place their lived experiences in the context of daily practices and socialisation. • Many social realities existed due to varying human experiences, including the ex-offenders' knowledge, views, interpretations and experiences.
Epistemology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events were understood through the mental processes of interpretation that was influenced by interaction with social contexts. • Those active in the research process (the young adult male ex-offenders) socially constructed knowledge by experiencing the real life or natural setting. • Inquirer (myself) and the inquired-into (the young adult male ex-offenders) were interlocked in an interactive process of talking and listening, reading and writing. • More personal, interactive mode of data collection.
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected by field notes, recordings, interviews, and reflective sessions. • Research was a product of my values as the researcher.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

This study adopted the qualitative approach in an attempt to gain an understanding of young adult male ex-offenders' experiences of being part of their families after being incarcerated. In qualitative research specific types of research methodologies which do not rely on statistical procures or numbers to explore, describe and explain persons' experiences, behaviours,

interactions and social contexts are used (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott & Davidson, 2002). In many instances researchers employ qualitative methods of research with the aim of exploring the meaning people attach to a phenomenon, develop an understanding about the perspectives of participants, or observe the process in-depth (Cresswell, 2009; Green & Thorogood, 2009). Therefore, since the main aim of this study was to explore the lived experiences of young adult male ex-offenders in a rural area as they were trying to adjust to life as they re-joined their families after incarceration, the qualitative approach was appropriate. Furthermore, the qualitative approach appeared to be the appropriate method because it enabled me to obtain subjective, personal data pertaining to the experiences of the participants. I adopted this approach guided by the following characteristics of the qualitative approach as outlined by Cresswell (2009, p. 175 –176):

- i. Qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting, not a laboratory.
- ii. The researcher is the key instrument in the process of data collection.
- iii. Instead of relying on a single data source, qualitative researchers typically gather data from multiple sources. For example, qualitative researchers can, interview and observe a number of different participants and study various documents.
- iv. Data analysis is an inductive process.
- v. Qualitative researchers are interested in what the phenomenon under investigation means to the participants.
- vi. An emergent, rather than a fixed or predetermined, research process is selected. This means that the initial plan for the research cannot be tightly prescribed, and any or all phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field and begins collecting data.
- vii. Qualitative research is interpretive – it is a form of interpretive inquiry in which researchers make an interpretation about what they see, hear and understand.
- viii. Qualitative research is holistic in nature. The researcher tries to develop a complex picture of the problem or issues being studied. This involves reporting multiple perspectives, identifying the factors involved in a situation and how they are involved, and generally sketching the larger picture that emerges.

Researchers should also adopt a qualitative approach if the phenomenon under investigation meets the following features, as identified by Ritchie and Lewis (2003, p. 32–33):

- i. When the phenomenon is ill-defined or not well defined
- i. When the phenomenon being studied is deeply rooted within the participants' personal knowledge or understanding of themselves.
- ii. When the phenomenon being investigated needs to be understood from the vantage point of an individual or group that occupies a singular or highly specialised role in society, and
- iii. When the phenomenon being investigated is of a delicate and sensitive nature and when the target population is vulnerable.

Therefore, in approaching this study, I understood that the phenomenon under investigation was deeply rooted within the participants' personal knowledge, as these experiences were experienced by them and not me. Therefore, only those who had experienced this phenomenon were suitable to give me the best understanding and meaning of the phenomenon hence the qualitative approach was adopted.

Disadvantages of the qualitative approach

The qualitative approach has its own major drawbacks. According to Choy (2014), first, the qualitative approach is time consuming; second, it requires a researcher who is highly skilful in collecting data; and last, data collected by using qualitative approach is not objectively verifiable. Other main weaknesses of the qualitative approach is that the inquiry is generally open-ended, therefore is too dependent on participant openness or honesty, it requires a labour intensive analysis process such as categorisation, recoding, and all the researchers' interpretations are limited, with possible misinterpretations due to cultural differences (Choy, 2014). I was aware of these limitations and I understood that I should address them. In respect to being time consuming and labour intensive, I was proactive enough and started with the process while I still had enough time. To sharpen my data collection skills, I did some trials before I started collecting the actual data. I also relied on the experience I gained when I was doing my coursework in Master's to establish my skills in data collection.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH DESIGN

I conceived the research design as a strategy that focuses on the end product and all the steps involved in the process to achieve the outcomes. According to Creswell (1998, p. 43), a “research design can be seen as the overall plan indicating how your study will be conducted and analysed”. On the other hand, Green and Thorogood (2009, p. 42) maintain that “a research design attempts to indicate the what, how and the why of data production”. Therefore, in approaching this study, I adopted a phenomenological research design. This was because I was interested in the participants’ lived experiences of being in the midst of their families after an incarceration period (Creswell, 1998).

Phenomenology

Phenomenological studies seek to understand the lived experiences through in depth exploratory methods (Creswell, 1998). Phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method, as well as the procedures involve in studying a small number of participants through extensive and very long engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning of the lived experiences (Cresswell, 2009). A phenomenologist collects data from persons (1- 4 to 10-15 individuals) who have experienced the phenomenon and describe what all the persons have in common or their dissimilarities. Although other open-ended questions may also be asked, a phenomenologist researcher may ask two broad questions (Moutsakas, as cited in Cresswell, 2013): *(1) what have you experienced in terms of the phenomenon? (2) What context or situations have typically influenced or affected your experiences of the phenomenon?* The basic aim of phenomenology is to reduce individual conscious experiences (using themes) with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence - thus a “grasp of every nature of things” Van Manen (as cited in Cresswell, 2013, p. 13).

Therefore, by using a phenomenological design, I was able to understand perceptions and meanings that young adult male ex-offenders had attached to the phenomenon given their past experiences while incarcerated, as well as the current residual effects, such as the consequences of having been in correctional centres, and now being part of the family. There are various phenomenological approaches to the phenomenological studies; depending on the objectives and

the aim of the study (Cresswell, 2013). The aim of this study was to describe and interpret the meanings of the lived experiences of the participants in relation to the phenomenon under study. According to Van Manen (as cited in Cresswell, 2013), the interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA) was suitable for this study as opposed to the descriptive phenomenological approach as I did not want to focus merely on the description of the experiences of the participants.

Table 3.2: below distinguishes the interpretive phenomenological approach from widely used descriptive phenomenology approach, to provide a context for the present study:

Table 3.2: Descriptive approach versus interpretive approach

Descriptive phenomenology	Interpretive phenomenology
The goal of descriptive phenomenology study is to achieve transcendental subjectivity. Transcendental subjectivity as defined by Husserl, means that the researcher must constantly assess and neutralise his/her biases and preconceptions, so that they do not influence the object of study.	Also referred to as hermeneutics, interpretive phenomenology goes beyond mere description of core concepts and essences. It is a process and a method that brings out and lays bare what is normally hidden in human experiences and relations. The interpretive phenomenology approach indicates that presuppositions or expert knowledge on the part of the researcher are valuable guides to inquiry and, in fact, make the inquiry a meaningful undertaking.
In studying human consciousness, Husserl's approach indicates that there are features to any lived experience that are common to all persons, and these are referred to as universal essences or eidetic structures. For the description of the lived experiences to be	Heidegger borrowed the existential phenomenology concept 'suited freedom' to indicate that humans are embedded in their world to such an extent that subjective experiences are inextricably linked with social, cultural, and political contexts. This indicates

<p>considered a science, these commonalities in the experience of the participants must be identified and a generalised description of them be given. In this way, the essences can be considered to give the truth about a phenomenon under study, and this assumption represents a foundationalists approach in an inquiry. Thus, reality is regarded as objective and independent of history and context. This expresses Husserl's idea of radical autonomy, meaning that people are free agents who are responsible for influencing their environment and culture.</p>	<p>that individuals are free to make choices, but their freedom is not absolute; it is circumscribed by the specific conditions of their daily lives. Suited freedom is hence radically different from Husserl's concept of radical autonomy. Researchers using interpretive phenomenology focus on and describe the meanings of the participants' being-in-the-world and how these experiences influence the choices they make. The application of this method may involve an analysis of various contexts such as the historical, social and political forces that organise and shape lived experiences. It therefore represents the interpretation of the participants' narratives in relation to various contexts that are foundational. This is the reason, Heidegger also used the term <i>lifeworld</i> to express the idea that individuals' realities are invariably influenced by the world in which they live.</p>
<p>To achieve the goal of unearthing transcendental subjectivity, Husserl suggests the researcher must apply the bracketing technique, meaning that the researcher must get rid of all prior knowledge, opinions and preconceptions about the phenomenon in order to grasp the essential lived experience of the participant.</p>	<p>The interpretive approach does not negate the use of a theoretical orientation or conceptual framework as a component of inquiry. In a hermeneutic study, theory is not used in a formal way, that is, to generate hypotheses to be tested. Instead, a theoretical approach can be used to direct the focus of the inquiry where research is needed, and is used to make decisions about sample, participants, and research questions to be addressed. Use of an</p>

	orienting framework by the researcher is also a way of making explicit study assumptions and the researcher's frame of reference.
	An important concept that is articulated by Heidegger is that of co-constitutionality. This concept indicates that the meanings that the researcher arrives at in interpretive research are a blend of the meanings articulated by both participant and the researcher within the focus of the study.

Source: Lopez and Willis (2014).

Heidegger's interpretive phenomenology

Hermeneutics phenomenology emerged centuries ago, and from its start, it indicates the science of interpretation (Norrish, 2011). The term "hermeneutics" is derived from the Greek verb *hermeneuein*, which is translated as "understands" or "interprets" (Patton, 2002). According to Crotty (1998), scholars turned to hermeneutics to provide guidelines for interpreting scriptures. However, since the 17th century, hermeneutics has developed into many areas of scholarship and has been applied to text other than scriptures. Six domain of hermeneutics emerged during the modern times and each with its own standpoint on the act of interpretation. In this way, there are various hermeneutics domains that suit the unique beliefs, philosophies and practices of the interpretive researchers (Holroyd, 2007).

Frederich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and later, William Dilthey (1833-1911) emerged with a different hermeneutic inquiry, which is based on the phenomenology of existential understanding and interpretive procedures. During the early 1920s, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and later Georg Gadamer (1900-2002), contributed with their writing and offered a detailed exploration of the phenomenology of existential understanding and the interpretive alternative (Holroyd, 2007). Although Heidegger studied phenomenological philosophy under Husserl, he did not consent with the Husserlian or Neo-Kantian central concepts of phenomenology: he no longer talks of consciousness, objectivity, directedness, and the transcendental ego (Moran, 2000). Heidegger

presented this idea in his book, *Being and Time*, which was published in 1927. In his lectures in the 1920s, Heidegger further criticised Husserl's texts of intuition as insufficient because this text recognises that our original understanding is theoretical, while it is supposed to be grounded in our practical engagement with the world. The central characteristic of Heidegger's hermeneutics is that human beings cannot be understood through measuring behaviours, stimuli, and associated responses. Instead, the investigation of human beings is prompted through such things as encounters, lifeworlds and meaning (Holroyd, 2007). This implies that Heidegger's philosophical concerns were ontological-meaning that he aimed for understanding of "Being itself" rather than to reveal knowledge, which transcends human experience (the epistemological concern raised by Husserl) (Mackey, 2005).

In this way Heidegger's contribution changed the shape of twentieth century philosophy because philosophers did not enquire into what Heidegger called *being or dasein*. Being or dasein relates to "human being" and refers "fundamentally to intelligibility or how we make sense of the world, our place in it, and how we become aware of this place" (Conroy, 2003, p. 09). Heidegger's argument is that human beings engage in "silent thought" - meaning that "in the background of our existence is a web of relations where something becomes intelligible through the hermeneutic task of interpretation that incorporates historicity and fore structures of understanding" (Conroy, 2003, p. 14). This implies that a human being is self-interpreting and is necessarily interdependent on the world. Furthermore, this implies that there is an assumed link and commonality between the researcher and the individual and/or text, which makes the process of understanding feasible, despite a sense of uneasiness and distance between the two (Holroyd, 2007). However, researchers must be aware that when they approach this form of philosophical inquiry, they place their mental and intellectual process at stake and they must be willing to be transformed mentally. In this way, language plays a very important role, since it shapes all situations and experiences that human beings find themselves in. Furthermore, Heidegger indicates that the only opportunity for individuals to engage in hermeneutics understanding is when they undergo any experience that serves to interrupt the ordinary life, such as illness, death of the loved ones and other unusual event (Holroyd, 2007).

Furthermore, Heidegger argues that we exist in the world either authentically or inauthentically. The authentic way of existence is one where human beings are originally and consistently thinking beings - whereas “living inauthentically means that a human being has no such internal consistency between thinking and acting” (Conroy, 2003, p. 8). An authentic mode of existence implies that persons accept that life is the consequence of the interdependency between the past, the present and the future. In this way, Heidegger believes that every human being exists hermeneutically because he or she can find significance and meaning in every part of the world, the past, present and the future. Therefore, to better understand human beings’ lived experiences, the researchers must make use of variables and causal relationships because such research de-contextualise human beings from the world in which they live (Norrish, 2011). According to Mackey (2005), the following four concepts are of core importance in Heidegger’s hermeneutics phenomenology: Being-in-the-world, fore-structures, time and space (Mackey, 2005). Each of these concepts played a role in guiding me and in choosing a research methodology.

Being-in-the world

A central tenet of Heidegger’s thought in the year 1962 was that humans cannot abstract themselves from the world. Heidegger (1962) rejects the notion of the person (subject) as a viewer of objects, separated from the world. He considered the object and subject as inseparable, and this he articulated his use of the term “being-in-the-world” (Mackey, 2005). In this way, Heidegger coined the term “lifeworld” to express the idea that indeed individuals’ realities are always influenced by the world in which they live, and that one cannot separate the person from the world or vice versa (Lopez & Williz, 2004). In this way, the hermeneutic phenomenologist focuses on describing the meanings of the individuals’ being-in-the world and how these meanings influence the choices they make in their everyday lives. This might involve an analysis of the historical, social, and political forces that shape and organise individual experiences (Lopez & Williz, 2004). For this reason, Heidegger believed that there is no way individual freedom can be guaranteed, since individual experiences are shaped and organised by social, political and historical forces.

In addition, Heidegger believed there were many ways for the human being to be-in-the-world but the most significant way is to be aware of one’s own being, that is, being capable of inquiring

into one's own existence, and capable of wondering about one's own existence (Heidegger, as cited in Mackey, 2005). This means that interpretive phenomenology places important emphasis on understanding one's own possibilities for being within the context of the world in which one lives; and this understanding is made explicit through interpretation in language. For Heidegger, every human being exists hermeneutically, because he or she is able to locate significance and meaning in every part of the world, meaning to locate our past, present and the future of being-in-the-world and how different forces influence our existence (Norrish, 2011).

Application of being-in the world in this study

Within the context of this study, I was mindful of Heidegger's philosophical idea that human beings cannot be understood separately from the world in which they live. I was aware that young adult male ex-offenders live in the world where there is a certain way of doing things, like their culture and history. Therefore, it was impossible to detach their experiences and meaning of their family re-entry process from historical and cultural backgrounds. In this way, I applied Heidegger's idea of lifeworld - thus the idea that individuals are invariably influenced by the world in which they live. As the young adult male ex-offenders related their experiences to me, I also established how their everyday way of living and choices were influenced by their historical, social, cultural and political backgrounds. Furthermore, I also engaged with the young men about their meaning of the past, present and the future, and about being part of their families. By so doing, they were being aware of their own existence. Furthermore, throughout their conversations I was aware that although young adult male ex-offenders make choices in their everyday experiences, their freedom to those choices was not guaranteed. Therefore, their freedom was determined and shaped by cultural, political and social forces, and this related to Heidegger's notion of situated freedom (Lopez & Williz, 2004).

Fore-structures

Another philosophical assumption underlying the interpretive phenomenology approach is that of fore-structures - that is the presuppositions or pre-understanding on the part of the researcher and the participant about the phenomenon (Mackey, 2005). The researcher and the participant bring to the research situation the content-dependent-knowledge, opinions and experiences about the

phenomenon and this is only to be disclosed through the interpretation (Mackey, 2005). This is because Heidegger shows that it is the researcher's knowledge base that leads to specific ideas about how the inquiry needs to proceed to produce useful knowledge (Lopez & Willis, 2014). Therefore, personal knowledge, according to hermeneutic scholars, is both useful and necessary to phenomenological research (Mackey, 2005). In this way Heidegger was against Husserl's idea of removing our expert knowledge from the research situation and chose fore-structures over the bracketing concept. The presuppositions or backgrounds are open to change, and enable the researcher and the participant to give meaning and interpret the phenomenon (Koch, 1995). In this way it is imperative for the researcher and the participant to engage in a cyclic process where they move back and forth in revealing what is already understood in order to give meaning to wholeness of the phenomenon rather than the partial meaning of it (Mackey, 2005). When things in the world have been understood through interpretation, one can say that they have meaning and the meaning gives one the real understanding of the phenomenon (Heidegger, as cited in Mackey, 2005).

Application of fore-structures in this study

This implied that it was important for me as a researcher to know and bring into the research situation my own pre-understandings about the phenomenon under study or even understanding young adult male ex-offenders. This enabled me to have an understanding of the phenomenon more, since the participants and I were speaking more or less the same language. However, my pre-understandings were open to change since the family re-entry process of post release from a correctional facility was a lived experience to them and not me.

Through the back and forth engagement with each participant we both revealed what was already understood about the phenomenon in order to give meaning to the whole phenomenon, rather than the partial meaning of it. Furthermore, the theoretical orientating framework I worked from enabled me to make explicit my frame of reference - rather than showing bias towards the narratives of the participants. In this way, a theoretical framework, P-E Fit theory, was considered during my interpretation of the findings. This supports Heidegger's notion that theory is used to direct the focus of the inquiry rather than generate hypotheses to be tested (Lopez & Willis, 2014). Therefore, the meanings that I have arrived at in this interpretive

research, was a blend of meanings articulated by both the participants and I within the focus of the study thus co-constitutionality took place (Koch, 1995).

Time

Heidegger's phenomenology suggests that in order to understand and give meanings, human beings' interpretations of phenomena should be grounded in time (Mackey, 2005). Heidegger considers the individual to be temporally situated in-the-world – therefore, it is important to ground individual's experiences in time. Temporality allows the past, the present and the future to be experienced as a whole. The experience of this wholeness means that what is experienced in the present is associated with what was experienced in the past, and will be experienced in the future (Heidegger, as cited in Mackey, 2005). The interpretive phenomenological researcher must be alert to those things that stand out in participants' rich descriptions, which situate their experiences in time in order to enhance the understanding of the experience of time and the nature of being (Mackey, 2005). For example, a phenomenological study conducted by Madjar (as cited in Mackey, 2005) on cancer patients shows that the patients' lived time was disrupted initially by their diagnosis; and so the previously "smooth flow of life was suddenly disturbed and the taken-for-granted future seemed both distant and unclear" (Mackey, 2005). In this way the past, the present and the future of the participants' lived experiences and time are taken into account in trying to understand the phenomenon under study.

Application of time in this study

In this study the participants narrated their lived experiences in situated temporality, that is within the context of their past, the present and future experiences - all at once. As such I further considered the participants' rich description of the phenomenon under study and used these to give meaning to the whole phenomenon, based on their individual past, present and future experiences.

Space

Space in interpretive phenomenology does not refer to the geographical features of the participant's world. Space like time in an interpretive phenomenology does not concern the

quantitative measures rather it is concerned with either what a human being brings close to them (the here) or pushes away (the yonder) (Mackey, 2005). However, Heidegger contends that what human beings bring to the foregrounds or relegate to the backgrounds depends on the unique situatedness of any particular human being's being-in-the-world (Mackey, 2005). What matters to a person is the concern for which Heidegger uses the German term "*sorge*" (which means "care" and "concern"). Therefore, the researcher aims to describe, analyse and reflect upon the state of concern existing between the person and the phenomenon experienced (Mackey, 2005).

Application of space in this study

As I appreciate Heidegger's notion that human beings bring forth or relegate to the background only those experiences that they care or concern about, depending on the unique situation they find themselves in, I also considered those descriptions which concerned or were of interest to a specific participant.

POPULATION AND SAMPLING

According to Parahoo (2006), it is important for the researcher to first consider the nature of the data which must be collected for the study – as well as the study population. In identifying the population and sample of this study, it was important to firstly define the terms population and sampling. Furthermore, the study population and sampling techniques used were guided by my research focus and interest.

Population

Population can be defined as units from which the sample of the study is drawn, and from which the data is collected. These units may consist of individuals, events, artefacts or objects and substances (Polit & Beck, 2008). Therefore, the targeted population for this study included individuals, specifically young adult male ex-offenders in the rural area of Sekhukhune district.

This was because the research focused on the phenomenon of re-entry and the methodology I used required textual data from individuals.

Sampling

Sampling, on the other hand, refers to the process the researcher engages in when choosing or selecting a portion of the targeted population to represent the entire population (Neuman, 2006). In practical terms, this meant recruiting young adult male ex-offenders who possessed a particular knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study. Also, in recruiting participants for this study, I used sampling techniques which made it possible to recruit suitable participants. According to Neuman (2006) the researcher can use either probability or non-probability sampling techniques, but whatever techniques the researcher uses must give a sample. In this study, I used volunteer self-selection and purposive sampling techniques to select the sample.

Volunteer self-selection sampling is when the inclusion or exclusion of sampling units is determined by whether the units themselves agree or decline to participate in the sample, either explicitly or implicitly. There are three main ways in which self-selection takes place. However, Sonya, Sterba and Michael (2008) suggest that for non-probability sampling, researchers can use the volunteer self-selection sampling technique. This is because volunteer self-selection sampling is most common when rare, difficult-to-locate, demographic subpopulations are sampled. Therefore, I preferred volunteer self-selection sampling as I was interested in the population of young adult male ex-offenders. I acknowledge that this population is difficult to locate.

On the contrary, purposive sampling entails that only individuals who meet certain criteria are selected as participants (Bryman, 2008). For this study, a participant was an individual who met the following criteria:

Participant should be/have:

- i. Six and above months of post-release experience

- ii. Not under supervision of correctional services
- iii. Between 19-34 years
- iv. Male ex-offender from Limpopo
- v. Living in Sekhukhune district

Exclusion criteria:

- i. Having less than six months' post-release experience
- ii. Participant below or above 19-34 years
- iii. Participant not living in Sekhukhune district
- iv. Female ex-offender
- v. Participant under supervision of correctional services

I used purposive sampling in this study because I wanted a fairly homogenous sample in order to acquire a thorough and detailed understanding of each member of the sample about the phenomenon under study (Bryman, 2008). This is because phenomenological researchers usually try to find a fairly small homogeneous sample and a more closely defined group for whom the research will be significant, that is, those who experienced the phenomenon (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

Therefore, I was interested in young adult male ex-offenders who had the post-release experience of six months and above because they had been re-united with their families long enough to give me rich descriptions rather than young adult ex-offenders who had just been released. In addition, young adult male ex-offenders who committed different offences partook in this study because, though a homogenous sample, it would be difficult to find ex-offenders who committed the exact same crimes. Furthermore, for a young adult male ex-offender to be eligible to participate in this study he was not supposed to be under the supervision of a correctional officer as a parolee and he was supposed to be a resident of Sekhukhune district. I was interested in those who were not under supervision of correctional services because I was aware that they might not be available during the period of data collection since they would often have to go and report to the community correctional officers. Such circumstances would have hindered the progress of my study. Special ethical clearance from the Department of Correctional Services would also be required in such cases.

Sampling size

Few individuals participated in this study. Initially I opted for three participants, but because new ideas arose during the latter stage of data collection, I decided to include more participants (up to seven, and that was when I could hear same ideas arising. Thus a point of data saturation was reached. All of these participants participated in the study because they met the inclusion criteria as highlighted in the section above. According to Polit and Beck (2008), seven participants were enough because I was able to ensure data saturation. Data saturation is a crucial element in qualitative studies regardless of whether there are few or many participants. Thus, in a qualitative study the number of participants is not important because each case depends on what the researcher needs to find out, the purpose of the study, what is appropriate in addressing the researcher's question/s and as well as the intended duration of the study and available resources (Patton, 2000). Three participants could also be used, as Smith and Osborn (2007) suggest for researchers following interpretive phenomenological approach.

Research setting and context

A research setting can be defined as the environment in which data are collected. This can include describing cultural, physical, political or social characteristics of the place where data are collected. This study took place in Sekhukhune district in Limpopo province. This district is made up of 5 local municipalities. The district lies in the south-eastern part of the province and covers approximately 13 264 square kilometres of the province. The most of this area is rural, with almost 605 villages. The south-western part of the district consists of one of the largest commercial agricultural production in the country. However, due to critical water problems, households, agricultural and mining sectors are affected - approximately 65 000ha of prime land cannot be used for farming due to lack of water for irrigation.

Sekhukhune district is situated 200km north of Pretoria, and is a sparsely populated area dominated by the Sepedi-speaking population. According to the district's Integrated Development Plan (IDP), crime has become a recurring occurrence in this district - this is according to communities as well as stakeholders. Apart from other factors such as

unemployment, illiteracy and poverty, crime in Sekhukhune district is exacerbated by difficulty in accessing governmental services like police stations, hospitals, social work services and rehabilitation centres. It is reported that on average, there is one clinic for every 17 000 people within the district and approximately 97 500 people per hospital and police station (Department of Treasury, 2009).

Entry and establishing researcher role

I contacted non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and forums working with ex-offenders in Limpopo and asked for permission to do my study presentation to young adult male ex-offenders who were specifically from the Sekhukhune area. The reason for scouting for potential participants through NGOs and forums is because offenders who committed crimes around Sekhukhune area are taken to correctional centres in Polokwane and Vhembe district and most of the NGOs and forums working with ex-offenders are also based in Polokwane and Vhembe district. Therefore, I approached Polokwane NICRO and arranged with them to do my study presentation. However, I found that most of the young adult male ex-offenders in Polokwane NICRO were from Capricorn district, while I wanted to focus on young adult male ex-offenders from Sekhukhune. Fortunately, during my consultations I learned of the Tswelopele Ex-offender's Forum which is based in Sekhukhune area. Then I made contact with them and I was able to present and recruit participants for this study. I allowed potential participants to choose to participate voluntarily in this study by leaving my mobile numbers with the chairperson of the forum and I waited for participants to call me or send me messages after my study presentation. I gave my numbers to the chairperson and I encouraged him to respect potential participants' anonymity and privacy for this study, by asking him to display my numbers on the organisation's notice board. By so doing, I gave potential participants time and space to decide on their own because I wanted them to assess their ability to partake in the research study of this nature. In the presentation (See Appendix D), I included the nature and purpose of this study, the risks and benefits involved, issues of voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality as well as the inclusion criteria.

RESEARCHER'S ASSUMPTIONS

In approaching this study, I acknowledged that I was an “instrument of use” and I understood how all my human experiences, skills, background and time could constitute a potential risk in the same manner as they would benefit this study. For example, growing up in a strict, disciplined, lower-middle class family with only my mother and grandmother as parents; I was not exposed to the harsh realities that come with a crime infested environment. But to other young women or men of my age, this could mean a different development reality with a different developmental outcome. Therefore, I understood that these young adult male ex-offenders represented a complexity of life and circumstances that I ought to acknowledge and not draw conclusions on my own preconceptions. On the other hand, having an immediate family member with a criminal record and also having an experience of young adulthood expectations and roles shaped my lens for viewing situations as well as this research project.

Nonetheless, Kanuha (2000) asserts that our experiences as researchers contribute to who we are and also help us examine better the lives of our participants. For example, I acknowledge my experience of visiting Zonderwater Maximum Correctional Centre as one of Inside-Out Outside-In Corrections Interest's Group member at the University of South Africa (UNISA). Inside-Out Outside-In Corrections Interest Group is Unisa's community engagement initiative comprising of inter-disciplinary grouping of people interested in issues relating to corrections in South Africa. The group's objective is aimed at mapping South African community engagement initiatives, networks, research studies and public services relating either directly or indirectly to corrections communities.

The Unisa Inside-Out Outside-In Interest Group visits to correctional centres around Tshwane aided my ability to connect with offenders by being able to understand them at the level of individuals not as criminals. Like anyone else I was so sceptical about offender and ex-offenders, I was scared of them and I thought they were difficult to speak to or to be listened to. I thought they were cruel people who do not deserve to be in the outside world. I carried this mindset with me to Zonderwater Maximum Correctional Centre, but I told myself that if the mindset I am carrying is not true, I am willing to see for myself and then allow myself to change. After the experience of visiting Zonderwater Maximum Correctional Centre and after I interacted with the

offenders, I felt relaxed and humbled by some of the stories the offenders shared with us. At some point I put myself in some of their shoes, and I started to realise that the offenders are human beings first before I could blame and judge them. I started to have a neutral feeling about offenders, and I carried this mind-set even while I was recruiting participants for this study as well as while I was interacting with the participants before, during and after the interviews.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Establishing rapport

According to Seidman (2006) it is important for the researcher to connect with participants prior to the actual process of data collection, through “small talks”. This way, the researcher can establish the level of comfort in participants prior to the initial interview session. Therefore, I started “small talks” with each participant prior to the initial interview. Building rapport was made easy by our shared attributes. I am a Black, Sepedi young lady who resides in the Sekhukhune district as the study participants; participants and I have more or less similar socio-economic backgrounds, and we are also of the same age group (young adults). All these attributes paved my conversation way smoothly. Data collection took place at one of the Ephraim Mogale’s municipality offices. The access to use one of the municipality’s offices was paved by myself, where I met with the municipal executives and presented the nature of my study to them and the importance of using their offices.

Acquiring consent

After I had established rapport with participants, I first discussed the nature of this study with each participant and I read aloud the informed consent while the participant read along. Then I explained and clarified the contents of the consent form to the participant. In the event where the participant had no question to ask, then I explained the importance of using a voice recorder before the participant could sign the form. According to Cresswell (1998), some participants can express discomfort or reservation about being recorded. Therefore, by explaining the importance of using such equipment to the participants prior to the interview alleviated the feeling of uneasiness and discomfort amongst the participants and ensured greater understanding.

After the participants had signed the consent forms, I collected the signed consent forms and put them safe in my locking bag, and later put them in my room and locked them inside a cabinet. I allowed each participant to debrief a little before we could start with the actual interview. To debrief means each participant was allowed an opportunity to reflect on their feelings and thoughts about the nature of the study before the interview could actually begin.

Demographic questionnaire

I opened the interview by first asking the participant to provide me with some demographic information (see Appendix B) which included age, employment status, educational background, criminal record and a pseudonym that each participant wanted to use in this study.

Semi-structured interviews

Interpretive phenomenology requires an intensive qualitative analysis of detailed personal accounts derived from participants. The most common method of data collection is in-depth, semi-structured interviewing (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

In approaching this study, I used semi-structured interviews as the most common data collection method in a phenomenological study, according to Smith and Osborn (2007). Semi-structured interviews allow for some degree of flexibility - they allow the interview protocol to be used as a guide and questions are modified throughout the interview process. In this way, probes can be used and hunches can be followed as participants describe and talk about their experiences. In addition, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher and participant to control, direct and explore areas of the lived experiences that ground the study, that could potentially be left out if another method was used, for example, structured interviews (Rossman & Rallis, as cited in Parkman, 2009).

I engaged each participant in a dialogue by asking one same question at the beginning of the semi-structured interview, which was based on the guidelines from Moutsakas (as cited in Cresswell, 2013):

“Please tell me about your experience of re-entering your family after release from the correctional centre”

I encouraged the participants to share more of their experiences with me by following Spradley’s example of an open phenomenological approach question as cited in Kvale (1996, p. 34). The purpose was to learn from the participants. The questions that I quoted are as follows:

“I want to understand the world from your point of view.”

“I want to know what you know in the way you know it.”

“I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them.”

As each participant narrated their experiences of family re-entering, I respectfully asked them to describe some or their other experiences in more detail. Through back and forth dialogical movement with the participant, I did some probing where the participants spoke about the following aspects:

- i. Self - what it means to be back home after incarceration;
- ii. Challenges encountered and benefits enjoyed of being back in the family; and
- iii. Coping strategies used during the re-entry process.

Furthermore, I asked the participants to tell me more about the contexts or situations which have typically influenced or affected their experiences of re-entry into the family. It was at this stage where the participants reflected on historical, cultural and societal backgrounds and how these influenced their present experiences, and how these influenced their future. I did all these with each participant on separate days.

The interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes and all the interviews were conducted in Sepedi as all the participants and I are Sepedi-speaking people. According Seidman (2006) a 60-90 minutes long interview suffices, as it allows enough time for the beginning, the middle and the end. In addition, time allocated for each participant was long enough to reflect on their experiences. Time allocated was nevertheless, not too long in order to prevent exhaustion which

could result in participants and researcher fatigue. The duration of each interview worked out very well for each participant.

After doing the interview, I turned off the voice recorder and put it in a safe bag. The voice recorder was useful in ensuring that I captured accurate descriptions and exact words of the participants, expressed during the interviews.

At this stage I allowed the participants to debrief again. This time around, the debriefing was about how the participants felt and thought about the whole interview process. This helped us to identify potential psychological harm caused by the study and also afforded me an opportunity to refer some participants to counselling services, which I had arranged with the Department of Psychology at Matlala Hospital in the Limpopo Province (see appendix E).

Field notes

Field notes were also taken throughout this study to supplement the voice recorded data. Field notes are descriptive and provide reflective data that assist the researcher to account for events, observations and feelings that occur throughout the research process (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Field notes are important supplemental data to recorded interviews in that they capture the “sights, smells, impressions and extra remarks said before and after the interview” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998 p. 77). Therefore, field notes assisted me to account for events, observations and feelings that occurred throughout the interviews. Field notes were taken before, during and after all interview sessions to reflect on the words, thoughts and feelings from the participants, which occurred during data collection. These notes were used during data analysis and were useful in ensuring that I remembered the contexts, points of interests and hunches given during the interview process (Parkman, 2009).

Transcribing the interviews

As interviews were used as a form of data collection in this study, it was imperative to transcribe the data before data analysis. Data transcription is an important way of ensuring trustworthiness of the study, and it is important to indicate in the research project how the data were transcribed.

Transcription as a term refers “to the process of reproducing spoken words into written text” (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006, p. 01). In this study, the process of transcription was done by myself and I did verbatim transcription. Verbatim transcription entails reproducing word-for-word of the spoken words, where the written words are the exact replication of the spoken words from the voice recorder (Poland, 1995). Therefore, I practically listened to each interview from the recorder and started to write down the spoken words in a form of a text, each interview transcription happened separately and I transcribed from the beginning to the end.

This process was tiring, as I had to listen and listen again several times to the recorder in order to get the exact spoken words of the participants and myself. For an interview which took 60 minutes exactly, I had seven to eight hours of transcription. According to Britten (1995) this is normal in verbatim transcriptions. According to Van Teijlingen and Ireland (2003), in a research project where thematic or content analysis is used, the researcher seeks to identify common ideas from the data and therefore, the verbatim transcription is not that much of a necessity. In this study, however I transcribed the recordings verbatim in order to have the audit trail for my audiences. In addition, it was important to use verbatim transcription because when using qualitative frameworks such as phenomenology, grounded theory, feminism and ethnography it is important to get closer to the text, hence I used verbatim transcription and made sure that I did transcriptions on my own (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006). Furthermore, I transcribed my research interviews because I had first-hand knowledge from the involvement in the interview process and that I had participated in both the verbal and non-verbal exchanges with the participants. According to Halcomb and Davidson (2006), this is why it is important for researchers to transcribe their own interview data. I transcribed non-verbal expressions such as exclamations, laughter, sighs and pauses and bracketed these in the transcribed text.

Since the interviews were conducted in Sepedi, I had to translate the verbatim transcripts from Sepedi into English. This daunting process happened for every participant transcript. Following this I read through each transcript while listening to the individual recorded data to ensure that I did not lose the actual meaning or words of the participant. After this process I started with the data analysis process immediately.

INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS (IPA)

Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) is concerned with the detailed examination of personal lived experiences, the meanings that participants attach to these experiences, as well as how participants make sense of those experiences. IPA has theoretical roots in phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography. IPA is idiographic in its commitment to analyse each case in a corpus in detail. More commonly, IPA involves a detailed analytic treatment of each case, followed by the search for patterns across the cases. Where this is done, the best IPA studies are concerned with the balance of convergence and divergence within the sample, not only presenting both shared themes but also pointing to the particular way in which these themes play out for individuals (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

In order to achieve the abovementioned theoretical concepts of interpretive phenomenological analysis, the following steps were followed in analysing the data: Step 1: first encounter with the text; Step 2: preliminary themes identified; Step 3: grouping themes together as clusters; Step 4: tabulating in a summary table or master list; Step 5: relate the themes from all transcripts; and Step 6: write each superordinate theme in an interpretive form.

Step 1: First encounter with the text

In the first step, I read and re-read the entire transcript of one participant. Then on the left-hand margin I made notes on what I made sense of, for example participant feelings, preliminary interpretations, contradictions, echoes, amplifications of language of the participant, and so forth. According to Smith and Osborn (2007), there is no a rule of thumb regarding what the researcher must make notes about. The main aim of these notes is to document points that are interesting or significant to the researcher, which relate to the research question and objectives. Therefore, I wrote down anything that was interesting and also relating to my research question that came into my mind while I was reading and re-reading the transcripts.

Step 2: Identify preliminary themes

I returned to the beginning of the transcript, and then on the other margin I documented emerging theme titles. It was at this stage where I also used the initial notes to establish concise

phrases which aimed to capture the essential quality of what was found in the text (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Smith and Osborn (2007) assert that at this stage the skill is finding expressions, which are high level enough to allow theoretical connections within and across cases, but which are still grounded in the particularity of a specific thing said. I worked this throughout the entire transcript of each participant.

Step 3: Grouping themes together as clusters

I provided a list of emergent themes on a sheet of paper and looked for connections between them. According to Smith and Osborn (2007) it is at this stage where the researcher involves a more analytical or theoretical ordering, as he or she tries to make sense of the connections between themes which are emerging; rather than in the initial list, where the order provided is chronologically – and is based on the sequence with which they came up in the transcript. Therefore, some of the themes cluster together, and some may emerge as super-ordinate concepts, meaning concepts which stand as umbrella terms for other words. For example, an umbrella term “emotions” includes all emotional categories like sad, happy, disappointment and so forth (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

Next I organised the themes in a more analytical order, in order to make sense of the connections between themes. For example, I grouped themes according to participants’ feelings or coping strategies regarding the phenomenon under study. However, clustering of themes is a very iterative process (Smith & Osborn, 2007). I had to go back and forth and repeat the whole process of theme clustering and I worked close with the participant actual words to ensure that the theme I created captured what the participant really meant. To overcome this adjunct process of clustering, I compiled directories of the participants’ phrases that supported related themes, as suggested by Smith and Osborn (2007). This was easily done by cutting and pasting the transcript to help with the clustering, and as the clustering developed so the extract material could be moved, condensed and edited.

Step 4: Tabulating in a summary table or master list

On the fourth step I produced table of themes, ordered coherently. According to Smith and Osborn (2007) the table of themes represents each superordinate theme, and is an identifier to

each superordinate theme. The identifier indicates where in the transcript instances of each theme can be found by giving key words from the particular extract as well as the page number of the transcript. I followed this step mainly to be able to organise the analysis and I followed all the 4 steps for each transcript.

Step 5: Relate the themes from all transcripts

During the fifth step I did revisions continually, of all themes from each transcript in order for me to identify connections and contradictions in participants' themes. This enabled me to form a consolidated list with superordinate and subordinate themes from all transcripts showing quotation of responses.

Step 6: Write each superordinate theme in an interpretive form

At this last stage I created a synthesised story, which represented core essences from each participant. I also synthesised these core essences with my theoretical background, specifically the Person-environment fit theory framework; and therefore, I interpreted these core essences based on the basic ideas of this theory. In this way co-constitutionality was ensured.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Permission for the study

As a student, I presented the study proposal to the Department of Psychology at the University of South Africa and obtained ethical clearance from the department's research ethics committee. This forms part of the requirements for conducting research in the Masters in Research Consultation programme, which I have enrolled for. As the participants of my study were not under parole during the time of the interviews, it was not required to apply for permission from the Department of Correctional Services (DCS). The Department of Psychology ethics committee only therefore granted the permission to conduct the study; and I had to abide by the following ethical guidelines supported by the University of South Africa with regards to human participants:

Informed consent

This is a statement to explain aspects of the study to participants and to ask for their voluntary agreement to participate before the study begins. By the aspects of the study, I refer to the following: 1. Aim of the study; 2. Significance of the study; 3. Methodology of the study; and 4. ethical considerations (See Appendix A). This was done in order to ensure that the participants understood what they were being asked to do and therefore, to make informed decisions (Neuman, 2006). Participants for this study were thus given consent forms before the commencement of the research to make them aware of their rights, as well as what they were getting themselves into.

Respect for participants

According to Butler (2002) to respect a person is to acknowledge their individuality, their dignity and their right to make their own decisions regarding matters that affect them in a research. Therefore, the participants in this study were given the full right to exercise their autonomy-thus I involved them in making choices and decisions based on their values, beliefs and preferences without deliberately obstructing them or degrading them.

Anonymity and confidentiality

According to Neuman (2006) anonymity is the ethical protection that participants remain nameless. The participants in this study were also protected from disclosure to any persons and they remained unknown. To ensure this, I did not ask participants for their names. Rather I used pseudonyms in place of their names. Confidentiality, on the other hand, is the ethical principle of holding research data in confidence or keeping data secret from the public (Neuman, 2006). Therefore, the researcher does not release information in a way that would link specific individuals to specific responses. Therefore, to ensure confidentiality in this study, I kept the voice recorder that I used for data collection in a safe locked place, and I made sure that no one had access to the research data. I further deleted the recorded data after transcribing the interviews to further secure confidentiality of the information.

Aftercare for participants

According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002), social research should never cause harm to participants regardless of whether or not they volunteered to take part in the study. Therefore, the researcher should guard against subtle dangers, because participants could be harmed psychologically in the course of the study. In realising the potential psychological harm that could be caused by participating in this study, I had to arrange for free counselling services with a clinical psychologist at the local government hospital, Matlala hospital in Sekhukhune district for participants who could experience discomfort or distress from participating in the study (psychological service in government hospitals are offered for free). However, none of the participants were referred for the counselling service as they did not show a need for it. Psychological services in government hospitals are offered for free.

Beneficence

According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002), researchers should design research studies in such a way that they will be of benefit – if not directly, to the research participants and more broadly, to other researchers and society at large. This study benefited the study participants as it was one of its kind in the Sekhukhune area, where young adult male ex-offenders were given an opportunity to be listened to and to raise their voices about their experiences regarding their family re-entry processes. In addition, if the voices of these young adult ex-offenders could be heard, there could be a potential benefit to the Sekhukhune rural community and other rural communities with regards to the possibility of setting up support programmes for ex-offenders and their families during the re-entry process.

Non-maleficence

Non-maleficence is an obligation of researchers to do no harm to participants and themselves as well. This involves no harm to the emotional and physical aspects of a human being (Bryman, 2008). Therefore, to ensure this ethic, I gave the participants permission not to answer questions which they found discomforting during the interviews. However, where participants chose to

share discomfoting issues I allowed them to do so, and I suggested that they consult with the psychologist whom I had made arrangements with. I also arranged for the interviews to take place where there was security for both the participants and I. The interviews took place during the mid-hours and early-hours of the day, so that the participants and I could arrive early to our respective homes.

MEASURES OF TRUSTWORTHINESS

Fox, Morris and Rumsey (2007, p. 77) remark that “qualitative researchers who use novel methodological approaches should be prepared to engage in a process of reflection and flexibility, to make transparent the experience and demonstrate the viability of the method”. Therefore, it is through measures of trustworthiness that the viability of the research process and methods is ensured. Measures of trustworthiness for this study included: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research refers to the legitimacy and integrity of the study (Patton, 2002). Thus, a researcher employs specific ways to promote confidence that he or she has accurately recorded the phenomenon under study (Shenton, 2004). In order to ensure the credibility of the findings, I employed the following techniques, which have been outlined by Shenton (2004) - I utilised peer debriefing, member checks, iterative questioning, and employed tactics to ensure honesty from participants when contributing data.

Peer debriefing

Peer debriefing refers to the opportunities for scrutiny of the research project by colleagues, peers and academics. This should be feedback given to the researcher during any presentations (for example, at conferences) over the duration of the project (Shenton, 2004). Therefore, the amount of feedback I received from my supervisor, colleagues, as well as delegates at conferences (such as the International Conference on Community Psychology and Psychological Society of South Africa conferences) enabled me to build credibility around my research. The fresh perspectives that such individuals brought, allowed them to challenge the assumptions I held, and this further enabled me to view this study through different lenses. As indicated by

Shenton (2004, p. 9) “such questions and observations may well enable the researcher to refine his or her methods, develop a greater explanation of the research design and strengthen his or her arguments in the light of the comments made”.

Member checking

Furthermore, according to Guba and Lincoln (as cited in Shenton 2004) member checking is the single most important provision that can be made to bolster a study’s confirmability. Checks relating to the accuracy of the data may take place “on the spot” in the course, and at the end, of the data collection dialogues. Participants may be asked to read the transcripts from their recordings. Here the emphasis would be on whether the participants consider that their words match what they actually intended since, if a voice recorder has been used, the articulations themselves should at least have been accurately captured. Therefore, after transcribing each interview, I went to every participant and asked them to listen to the recordings and also read the transcripts in order to ascertain if their words match with the transcribed information. This was done in order to ensure that the findings from the data were actually what the young adult male ex-offenders experienced, and that I did not misinterpret such experiences and their meanings. Although this required more time from the participants, they were all happy to check the accuracy on their individual transcripts.

Iterative questioning

In addition, to ensure the credibility of the findings, I utilised the iterative questioning technique - that is I employed specific ploys which the researcher incorporates to uncover deliberate lies. These may include the use of probes to elicit detailed data and iterative questioning, where the researcher revisits matters previously raised by the participants and extracts the related data through rephrased questions. In both cases, where the contradictions emerge, falsehoods can be detected and the researcher may decide to discard the suspect data (Shenton, 2004). Therefore, apart from using the probes during the process of data dialogues, I also utilised iterative questioning. I had to revisit to matters previously raised by the participants and extracted related data through rephrased questions. This enabled me to remain with more related and rational data concerning the phenomenon under study.

Other tactics used to ensure credibility

As another technique to ensure credibility of this study I promoted voluntary participation as one of the tactics. For this study, I ensured that only those young adult male ex-offenders who were genuinely willing to take part and willing to offer data freely participated. By using the consent forms I wanted to ensure that this was achieved. Furthermore, I increased the credibility of the findings by establishing rapport with the participants prior to the data collection sessions. It is during these moments that I had to indicate to the participants that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions that would be asked. Moreover, as Shenton (2004) suggests, I also emphasised my independent status as the researcher so that the participants could contribute ideas and relate their experiences without fear of losing credibility in the eyes of the managers of the organisations affected by the study (that is the Tswelopele Ex-offender's Forum, the participants' families or UNISA).

Transferability

According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002) transferability is achieved when a detailed and rich description of contexts are produced. The sufficient thick description of the phenomenon under investigation allows readers to have a proper understanding of the phenomenon, thereby enabling them to compare the instances of the phenomenon described in the research report with those that they have seen emerge in their situations.

Thick description

I allowed participants to describe their experiences in more detail so that I did not end up with complex constructs, which could be difficult to understand. For example, if the participants described experiences of family re-entry as stressing, I suggested that they explain in more detail what they meant by "stressing". By so doing, I suggested that more thick descriptions be given which would give readers a structure of meaning, which developed in a specific context. Furthermore, in line with Krefting's (1990) suggestion that it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that thick descriptions of his or her sample and sufficient contextual information about the fieldwork sites are provided to enable the readers to make such a transfer, throughout this chapter I provided thick descriptions of information on the participants, methods

of recruiting and sampling them, their contexts, as well as the methodology followed, so that others can make transferability judgements.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the researcher's capacity to report in detail all the methodological processes followed in the study, thereby enabling the researcher to repeat the work in future, to gain similar results. Such an in-depth coverage also allows the readers of the research report to gain a thorough understanding of the methods and their important use (Shenton, 2004).

Relevant methodology

In-depth details of methodologies used and the reasons for choosing such methods over others were discussed. A qualitative research design was adopted and a phenomenological approach was followed in order to gain in-depth meaning and understanding of the experiences of the phenomenon. Therefore, an appropriate, interpretive phenomenological data analysis method was also employed. In this way, a rich description of the methodology was given; so that others would be able to follow methodological processes of this study, thereby repeating similar processes to get the related information (Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability

The use of this strategy means that the researcher outlines all processes of the research project so that the external auditor can follow through the natural history or progression of events in a project and understand how and why decisions were made (Krefting, 1990).

Research process record keeping

I recorded and kept records of all the phases of the research process - problem formulation, selection of research participants, field notes, interview scripts, and data analysis decisions in a manner that is accessible and would enable the readers to follow through the progression of events. In this way, the readers would understand how and why I arrived at certain decisions regarding my findings. Furthermore, according to Krefting (1990), reflexivity is one of the important strategies that ensure confirmability of the findings. Reflexivity relates to the personal

assessments, whereby the researcher is constantly aware and acknowledges throughout the research how his/her interest and personal history influences his/her research. Through the course of this study I acknowledged my interest, assumptions, background and beliefs, in order to make it explicit to the readers how all these influenced the whole research process and the analysis.

Triangulation

Furthermore, Shenton (2004) contends that triangulation can also be used to reduce the effects of the researcher's biases. Triangulation is a term used in qualitative research that refers to the use of "multiple sources of data, multiple points in time, or a variety of methods used to build the picture that you are investigating" (Rossman & Rallis, as cited in Parkman, 2009, p. 50). In this study, the triangulation of methods was employed, whereby data collected through various means were compared (Krefting, 1990). I verified the viewpoints and experiences of the participants against the field notes, interview transcripts and voice recordings to ensure that the findings reflected exactly what the participants intended, rather than my own beliefs and opinions.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In general, this chapter discussed the methodology used in conducting this study and highlighted the ontological and epistemological stance adopted in this study. I discussed the methodology with reference to the research approach and design. This approach is supported by Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002), who maintain that paradigms are an all-encompassing system of interrelated practices and thinking that guide the researchers in their enquiry along three dimensions: ontology, epistemology and methodology. The chapter highlighted the methodology used in this study, with reference to the relativist ontological position and the interpretivist epistemology, which also influenced my selection of the context for the research, methods, tools, and participants that were discussed in this chapter. Lastly, the ethical considerations and measures to ensure trustworthiness were also presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings of the study. Firstly, a biographical description of the participants is given in tabular form. This is followed by a brief description of their background information. The chapter also presents a detailed description of the participants' lived experiences of integrating in their families after being incarcerated, obtained from the individual dialogical-engagement sessions I had with each participant. This description of the participants' lived experiences is discussed in relation to the literature reviewed and contextualised in the P-E fit theory, as one of the objectives of the study was to gain insight into the participants' lived experiences in light of this theory. This notion is in line with the IPA's orienting framework premise (see Chapter 3) – hence the combination of the results and discussion of the results are presented as the findings of the study. All identified themes have been linked with the personal experiences of the participants in order to reflect similar and/or contradictory patterns. The themes discussed in this chapter are: the meaning attached to re-entering the family, the benefits of being back in the family, the challenges of being back home, and the re-entry coping strategies. The themes are presented in the form of superordinate themes and subthemes. The chapter ends with a summary of the findings of this study.

PARTICIPANTS' BIOGRAPHICAL DATA DESCRIPTION

The participants' biographical data are presented in table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1: Biographical data of participants

*Name	Age	Educational level	Criminal offence committed	Period of incarceration	Employment status
Mike	29	Grade 4	House breaking and theft	5 years	Unemployed
James	30	Grade 8	Armed robbery	3 years	Unemployed
Thabi	29	Grade 11	Sexual harassment	2 years	Unemployed
Sabelo	24	Grade 11	Attempted murder	3 years	Unemployed
Lesiba	34	Grade 10	Theft	1 year	Unemployed
Kamogelo	33	Grade 8	Murder	7 years	Unemployed
Moeti	29	Grade 9	Robbery	6 years	Unemployed

*Note that pseudonyms were used.

DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS' BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mike

Mike was born in 1987, and was 29 at the time of the interviews. He lived with his mother, stepfather, siblings and niece. He studied up to grade 4 and was not attending any formal schooling at the time of the interview. He was unemployed and had two children. Mike revealed that a family member took him from his family when he was still young. This family member always ill-treated him by beating him up and accusing him of things he never did. This ill-treatment went on for a long time to a point where Mike accepted it as part of life. Therefore, by the time he was reunited with his biological family, he had accepted ill treatment as an integral part of his being. This is articulated in his words: *"I was used to the pain."* He also explained that because he was used to the beatings he started stealing items in the house and hurting other children without any fear of being beaten by anyone. Stealing and hurting other people continued until he was arrested for housebreaking in 2010.

James

At the time the data were collected James was 30, and was unemployed, with two children. His highest educational level was grade 4. He first entered a correctional facility at the age of 25,

where he served his sentence until he was 28 years old. He described how he became involved in criminal activities: *“I grew up poor, but things were much better when my father was still alive. My father used to buy and do good things for me. After his passing, that is when I started to experience challenges. His passing really got me worried and it affected my effort at school. I started to drop out of school and went to look for a job in farms like an adult because of my family’s poverty. This was because my mother could not afford to buy us the things we wanted. I started to commit crime because it is quick cash, to buy myself stuff until I got arrested.”* James explained how his family started to disregard him and how he relied on living with friends who got him into serious crimes. At the time of the interview, James was out of a correctional facility, where he had served 3 years for armed robbery.

Thabi

At the time of the interviews Thabi was 29 and lived with his mother, sister and two elder brothers. He was incarcerated at the age of 26 and served 24 months for sexual harassment. At the time of the interview, he was unemployed and had attained grade 11 education. He reported that he was employed as a security officer, but that his job was given to someone else while he was at a correctional facility. Thabi had 4 children and was looking for a job at the time of the interview, which seemed hard to find. He was the first person to be arrested in his family. While he was incarcerated his father passed on, and he was not able to attend his burial. He explained that this issue sparked feelings of anger in him and that since he came back home no one has been willing to talk to him about his father’s passing. This, for him was cause for concern. At the time of the interview he had been back home for approximately 12 months.

Sabelo

Sabelo was 24 and was incarcerated at the age of 21 for attempted murder. He spent 3 years in a correctional centre. Sabelo reported that correctional facility is not good for human beings. He indicated that it nearly destroyed him, because according to him things are so bad inside the correctional facility, such that he thought he would never come back alive. Prior to being incarcerated, Sabelo was working as a gardener, and at the time of the interviews he was not employed, but was hoping to get his job back. Sabelo lived with his father and sibling. Sabelo admitted that he had anger issues, and that while growing up he was always fighting with other children. During his incarceration he attended an anger management programme, but had

discontinued with the programme as he was released from the correctional facility. Sabelo did not have children but hoped to have children one day. During his spare time, Sabelo did artistic work such as drawing and painting.

Lesiba

Lesiba was 34 years and was incarcerated at the age of 28 for theft. He served a 12-months term. He had one child and had dropped out of school in grade 10. He has never continued with schooling to date. At the time of the interviews Lesiba was unemployed, but was working as a gardener prior to incarceration. Lesiba reported that it was difficult to find employment because prior to his incarceration he would hold jobs but then steal from his employers and got fired. This affected his credibility. Prior to his incarceration Lesiba was living with his sister and cousin. His mother passed away and his father's whereabouts were not known. Since his release Lesiba had been staying alone in his mother's house. His two sisters lived elsewhere, but were still involved in his life. Lesiba considered the issue of not having a father figure in his life as the cause of the various problems he caused for other people. He explained that he resorted to crime because he lacked parental discipline, especially from his father. He seemed to blame his father more as his mother's absence was due to death, unlike his father, who just disappeared. During his incarceration, Lesiba attended life skills and agriculture programmes.

Kamogelo

Kamogelo was born in 1982 and was 34 at the time of the interviews. He went to a correctional facility for charges related to murder at the age of 27. Kamogelo reported that he dropped out of school in grade 8. He served 7 years in the correctional facility. He had two children who lived with their mother at their maternal home. At the time of the interviews Kamogelo was staying with his mother, niece and his elder brothers. He reported a long history of alcohol abuse. He also attributed his criminal acts and most of the wrongdoings to his alcohol problem. During his incarceration, Kamogelo attended a life skills programme while he was incarcerated and was responsible for sewing inmates' uniforms. At the time of the interviews he reported that he was not drinking alcohol anymore, and that this contributed to his successful re-integration into his community, especially his family. He reported how people in his community spoke highly of him and appreciated him. He showed the extent to which he valued the time he spent in the correctional facility because it gave him an opportunity to reflect on his life and made future

plans. His family depended on his mother's old age pension grant, and he sometimes worked as a bricklayer to try and supplement the family income. He was looking for a stable and fulltime job.

Moeti

Moeti was a 29-year old man who was incarcerated for robbery at the age of 23. He served 6 years in a correctional facility. He had one child and had dropped out of school in grade 9. At the time of the interviews, Moeti was unemployed and hoped to get back on his feet as soon as his bakkie was fixed. He bought the bakkie after his release. Prior to his incarceration, Moeti was not employed, but relied on his criminal acts to make a living. He reported that he was so much involved in criminal activities to an extent that it appeared to him as though he was bewitched. He also reported that being incarcerated made him a better person, but that the situation at home forced him back into crime, because he wanted to make quick money in order to take care of his family. At the time of the interviews Moeti was living with his two brothers and one sister. His parents had passed away. All his siblings were not employed – as such they did not have other ways of making a living. He reported that it was hard for everyone in his home, as there were days where they would go to bed on empty stomachs. During his incarceration, Moeti attended life skills and anger management programmes.

EXPERIENCES OF RE-INTEGRATING INTO THE FAMILY

Table 4.2 below provides a summary of the participants' experiences of the re-entry process in their families in relation to the P-E fit theory. Included in this table are the superordinate and subordinate themes, which were analysed in relation to the S-V and D-A dimensions of the P-E fit theory. The S-V fit dimension explains participants' experiences in relation to what their family environments supply versus what they value personally, while the D-A dimension explains participants' experiences in relation to their family environmental demands versus participants' abilities to fulfil such demands. As the P-E fit theory also predicts the outcomes of the relationship between persons and their environments, the table below also provides the positive and negative psychological effects as explained by the participants during their re-entry process. Positive outcomes refer to the good psychological and behavioural outcomes attributable to a match between the participants and their family environments, whereas negative outcomes refer to the bad psychological and behavioural outcomes, also attributable to a mismatch between the participants and their family environments. A dash (-) was used to indicate where there were no outcomes identified.

Table 4.2: A person-environment fit theory analysis of young adults male ex-offenders' experiences of family re-entry process

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEME	P-E FIT DIMENSIONS	POSITIVE OUTCOMES	NEGATIVE OUTCOMES
Meaning of family re-entry	Reinstatement/second chance	<u>S-V (supply and values) fit</u> Family supply – Acceptance Support Ex-offender values	Happiness Satisfaction with the family acceptance	-

		Commitment to not recidivate Need to mend broken relationships		
	Re-entry as a cultural process	<u>S-V (supply and values) fit</u> Family supply Culture adherent families Culture non-adherent families due to costly cultural rituals Ex-offender value Need for cultural rituals for ancestral forgiveness and fortunes	Double standard	
			Envisaged harmonious family re-entry experience Envisaged happiness and fortunes	Feeling hampered Expectation of misfortune Disappointment Confusion
The benefits of re-entry	Family members' support	<u>S-V (supply and values) fit</u> Family supply Care and support (Financial support; provision of shelter; food; clothing) Ex-offender value Need for financial support,	Developmental paradox/ambivalent emotions	
			Happiness Gratefulness	Eustress Perception of age-inappropriate behaviour Embarrassment

		food and shelter		
	Interdependency within the family - “We are family”	<u>S-V (supply and values) fit</u> Family supply Family unit Instilled family value (mutual family care) Adopted care and support Ex-offender value Bi-directional relationships (“Give-and-take family relations”)	Developmental paradox/ambivalent emotions	
		<u>D-A (demands and abilities) fit</u> Family demands Functioning family Ex-offender abilities Cooking Cleaning	Happiness Enriched family relations	Despised chores Internal conflicts Perception of age-inappropriate behaviour

		General house chores		
The challenges of re-entry	Not being trusted	<u>S-V (supply and values)</u> <u>fit</u> Family supply Untrusting families (accusations; comparisons; separation; monitoring behaviour) Ex-offender values Need for trust Need for harmonious relationships	-	Feeling of pain Anger Low-self-esteem Helplessness
	Name calling	<u>S-V (supply and values)</u> <u>fit</u> Family supply Deflating environment (swearing and labelling: “criminal”; “ <i>lepantiti</i> ”(“prisoner”) Ex-offender value	-	Loss of hope Feeling of pain Unacceptance Relationships schisms Anger Loneliness Estrangement

		Need for approval and an acceptable name		Death wish/suicidal ideation
	Intolerance	<u>S-V (supply and values) fit</u> Family supply Impatient and non-tolerant environment Ex-offender value Need for patience and tolerance	-	Feeling like “ <i>mohola</i> ” (“burdensome somebody”) Retaliation Disappointment Sadness Despair Strained family relations
	Contrasting roles	<u>D-A (demands and abilities) fit</u> Family demand Playing men’s roles Ex-offender ability Paradoxical roles Inability to accomplish men roles, but aspiring men roles for future	-	Anxiety Stress Feeling of pain Sadness Identity crisis Feeling of stupidity Feeling of “being left behind”/incompetence
	The need to make a contribution versus unemployment	<u>S-V (supply and values) fit</u> Environmental –family supply	-	Feeling of stupidity Despair Loneliness

		<p>Segregation policies for employment (holder of a criminal record)</p> <p>Insufficient rehabilitation programmes (educational background)</p> <p>Ex-offender value</p> <p>Need for employment</p> <p>Need for family contribution</p> <p>Need for self-care</p> <p><u>D-A (demands and abilities) fit</u></p> <p>Societal and family demand</p> <p>“A working young man”</p> <p>Ex-offender ability</p> <p>“An unemployable young man”.</p>		<p>Perceived difficulty</p> <p>Feeling of pain</p> <p>Feeling of entrapment</p> <p>Sadness</p>
Young adult ex-offenders coping strategies	Spiritual coping	<p>D-A dimension (Demands and abilities)</p> <p>Environmental demands</p> <p>Re-entry challenges (name</p>	Double standard	
			Avoided conflicts	Envisaged negative outcomes (anger and

		calling; intolerance; not trusted; unemployment) Ex-offenders coping abilities Prayer (going to church)		anxiety)
	Social coping	D-A dimension(demands and abilities) Environmental demands Re-entry challenges (name calling; intolerance; not trusted; unemployment) Ex-offenders coping abilities Seek support (speak to mother, sister and relatives)	Envisaged happiness and forgiveness	-
	Avoidance coping	D-A dimension (demands and abilities) Environmental demands Re-entry challenges (name calling; intolerance; not trusted; unemployment) Ex-offenders coping abilities Drinking alcohol, walk away and isolation	<div>Double standard</div> <div>Avoided conflicts</div> <div>Envisaged negative outcomes (anxiety, recidivism and aggression)</div>	

Meaning of family re-entry

Family re-entry refers to the young men's understanding of the re-entry process into their families, and how they made sense of this re-entry process. Two sub-themes emerged from this main theme: (1) Reinstatement/second chance and (2) Re-entry as a cultural process. These sub-themes are discussed below:

Reinstatement / second chance

All the young men reported that being back home was necessary, and that this brought them happiness. They embraced reinstatement/second chances because this was an opportunity for them to start all over and enjoy freedom from an institutionalised environment. Reinstatement/second chances most importantly, provided them with an opportunity to work together with their families – including their girlfriends and children – and mend things after a long separation due to a life of crime and incarceration. They reported that they had failed their families by bringing the stigma of criminality in their lives. They described the notion of “second chances” in relation to age, and considered that they were now old enough to provide for themselves, and that going back to correctional centres was not an option for them. Therefore, for them, the return home provided them with an opportunity to make a positive contribution to the lives of their loved ones and to leave behind the life of criminality. These young men's notion of second chance is consistent with what is articulated in literature – that after being confined in correctional centers, ex-offenders are released with an expectation that they will refrain from committing crime and lead productive lives (Muntingh, 2008).

Drawing from the Person-Environment fit theory' S-V (supply-values) fit dimension, the notion of second chances, mentioned by these young men, relates to the concepts of commitments, which reflect the pattern of goals, motives and values held by the young men in this study (Edwards & Cooper, 1990). This means that any dynamic condition that may potentially prevent these young men from being, having or doing what they desire will result in negative behavioural and psychological outcomes (that is, they will commit crime, and contend with sadness and stress) (Edwards and Cooper, 1990). Therefore, should the young men sense a match between the preferred outcomes (not to recidivate, re-establish broken relationships) and the

environmental supply at home, such as acceptance and support, they will experience positive behavioural and psychological outcomes – for example, a sense of happiness and satisfaction of their re-entry process in the family as communicated in their responses.

Therefore, their chance of being back in the family meant embracing their values, understanding their motives and fulfilling their goals – and these should not be hampered by any means – otherwise this will result in negative behavioural and psychological outcomes. James communicated his meaning of being back home by saying:

“When I came out of jail my family was quiet and at peace. It is obvious that trouble is caused by me but this happened because I was young and naïve. So now I have come out; I am grown up and I can see that my family is at peace. Therefore, I do not want to disturb the current situation by going back to the wrong things. I am a grown up man now. I want to achieve good things for myself unlike going back to jail.”

Kamogelo expressed his meaning of a second chance this way:

“I want to fix issues with my girlfriend because I want to be with her and take care of my children. Since I have committed this crime (referring to the murder case) she does not want to see me and that hurts me. I want her and I to start afresh because I want to be as close to my children as possible. I know I am not working but at least if I have my girlfriend back in my life together with my children I would be able to be a happy man. I will hustle for them. I am a grown up man; as long as they will be in my life”.

Young men in this study reported that their chance of being back home provided them with an opportunity to mend things with their families, including their girlfriends and children. In articulating that they had been given second chances, young men highlighted the importance of being back home with relevance to their age. They contended that they were at an age where they needed to start making a positive contribution to the lives of their loved ones and leave behind the lives of criminality, as this had brought shame to their families and delayed their progress in life.

Therefore, the notion of being “back in the family” meant doing things more right than they did before their incarceration. According to a South African study conducted by Langa and Masuku (2015), ex-offenders described their chance of being back in the community as an opportunity for them to be involved in communities through positive programmes such as Community Work Programme (CWP), as their apology to community members for the pain they had caused them, when they committed crimes against them. Similarly, young men in this study stated that their chance to be back in the families meant that they would be able to contribute positively and work well with everyone in the family to fix the mistakes of the past. These young men who participated in this study felt they had to do something positive and meaningful in their families, for their family members to accommodate them and for their meaning of second chance to be meaningful. Thus, they needed to strive to maintain a clean record and contribute positively to the wellbeing of their families, to prove their sincerity.

While there is substantial research supporting “second chance” opportunity among ex-offenders (Matshaba, 2015; Langa & Masuku, 2015; Parkman & Arditti, 2011), other studies have also proven that most released ex-offenders tend to reoffend and find themselves back in correctional centres. While there are no accurate statistics in South Africa, research has estimated that 85 percent to 94 percent of ex-offenders tend to re-offend (Goyers, 2001). This percentage is high, and is congruent with Jolingana’s (2011) statement that at least 67 percent to 94 percent of ex-offenders tend to reoffend in South Africa.

Thus, is without doubt, that some discrepancies between what the recidivism numbers suggest and what the ex-offenders do or say in general. Recidivism statistics contradict the notion that being given a “second chance” as espoused by the study participants benefit ex-offenders. The notion of “second chance” should mean another chance to make or do legitimate things, and also bring a reduction in recidivism statistics. Until then, the re-integration programmes should be reviewed continually to address the challenges that ex-offenders contend with, which result in high recidivism numbers (Muntingh, 2008; Naser & Visser, 2006).

Re-entry as a cultural process

For the young men, going back home meant that there were cultural expectations associated with their return home. They reported that being back home meant that they had to perform certain

cultural rituals to make the process of re-entry successful. In this way, they acknowledge that re-entry into their families is dependent on them fulfilling such cultural expectations, in order for them to be accepted by their families. This is because for the young men and their families, their incarceration was a sign of them not being “right” with their ancestors. As such, they needed to first deal with the dictates of their culture in order for them to settle harmoniously within their families.

This assertion is supported by Durkheim’s (as cited in Maruna, 2011) notion that rituals appear to serve a crucial, cathartic function when individuals are facing epistemically threatening life situations, especially transitions and turning points. Furthermore, Maruna (2011) argues that contemporary Anglo-American societies fail to re-integrate and re-accept individuals who have committed offences back into the wider society because they do not understand the dynamics of rituals in facilitating crucial life transitions such as re-integration. This failure is evidenced by the high rates of released offenders who return to correctional centres (Petersilia, 2003; Travis, 2005), as well as in the high rates of suicide among recently-released ex-offenders in the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom (Maruna, 2011). This is consistent with the S-V fit dimension, which provides that cultural processes, as perceived by the young men in this study embody values and motives – and since they came back home, there was a need for them to embrace these values and motives, which should be supported and supplied by the environment they returned to (the family) in order for them to experience the feeling of forgiveness from their ancestors, happiness and fortune as stated by the young men.

This means that the young men believed that their re-entry process should have a cultural dimension, and that cultural practices should be carried out for their re-entry process to be seen as meaningful and relevant, and to avoid negative outcomes such as recidivism, misfortune and unpleasant family relations. In other cases, the young men’s family members were the ones who recommended the cultural rituals to be performed for these young men. All this relates to how each young adult man and his family value the meaning attached to cultural rituals when transitioning from incarceration to re-integrating with the family. James highlighted the following cultural processes:

“I should be doing things the way Ndebele people do and I would actually avoid much of the problems I am encountering. Even when I check myself, this is actually true because I

was with my father's family in the year 2002, things went just fine until I came this side of Sekhukhune and things got bad. Bad things started happening ever since I came this side. I go to jail and even after coming out, things are still not good for me. I believe that I should buy a goat and slaughter it for my father's ancestors just to make my re-entry process better and also to open up good doors for me".

Thabi shared his cultural perspective of the re-entry process as follows.

"When I came back from jail my mother encouraged me to go appease my ancestors by doing some rituals. She believes it is the way of preparing good things for myself and never go back to jail. I also believe that and do that. But these kinds of things are expensive"

This is how Lesiba expressed his cultural perspective of family re-entry:

"My culture demands I lot in terms of my re-entry. In my culture it is required to slaughter a goat and prepare sorghum beer for ancestors. If you calculate the money is too much to have such a ritual. If you are like myself and you do not have money, it means that you will still not be successful because the ancestors are not appeased and that implies that the worse situation will remain like that as the ancestors are not happy".

Sabelo also expressed the cultural perspective of family re-entry as:

"In my case since I came back my family did a ritual for me to appease the ancestors. However, for me this is confusing because we do appease the ancestors and actually no good results come out. For example, I am still dependent on my parents, yet I performed the ritual. Sometimes it gets me confused, but what can I do, it is my culture" (pause).

Furthermore, as the young men shared their experiences, the overarching sentiment expressed in relation to performing these cultural rituals was the costs associated with performing them. Some indicated that they were required to slaughter a goat and make traditional beer in order to perform their cultural rituals, and that all these came at a cost. Since these young men were unemployed, they either had to rely on family members to perform the rituals for them, or halt an important cultural ritual, which they associated with their family re-entry life. Halting the rituals may hinder their prospects of re-integrating in the family. It also became frustrating when the expected results were not achieved after performing such rituals, leading to disappointments and confusion. Therefore, in some cases, cultural dictates were merely followed, because the families of these young men expected them to do so – thus they would agree to perform these

rituals as experiments, and when this did not yield the expected outcomes, the young men would be confused.

This is consistent with the findings of the study by Maruna (2011), which have shown that modern society undergoes what is referred to as “deritualisation” – because of the high amount of money involved in performing such ceremonies. Nonetheless, he still believes that as much as it happens in the case of most of life transitions (for example, adulthood, marriages, birth and death), it is important to perform rituals during the re-integration process of ex-offenders – and that rituals might be performed differently in different cultures.

The S-V dimension of the P-E fit theory affirms that negative psychological and behavioural outcomes result from a mismatch between one’s values and reinforces in the interactive environment and vice versa (Jansen Kristof –Brown, 2006). As the P-E theory predicts, the outcome between the environment and the person-interaction (Edwards & Cooper, 1990), makes it crucial to note that if young men in this study can experience disparities between the preferred outcome (second chance and cultural practices) and the family environment, they will experience negative behavioural and psychological outcomes (for example, stress, anxiety, dissatisfaction).

The benefits of re-entry

The benefits of being back home include the pleasant treatment the young men enjoyed during their re-entry into the families. This refers to the good relationships and support they enjoyed as they reunited with their families. Two sub-themes emerged from what these young men said about their benefits of being back home. The themes are: (1) Family members’ support (2) Interdependency within the family – “we are family.”

Family members’ support

The young men reported that they depended on their family members for their successful re-entry. They depended on their families for emotional support and tangible things such as food, and often money. The young men regarded this as their re-entry benefit, because their families showed care and support during a challenging time in their lives. While they accepted that at their age they should be providing for themselves and for their families, they reported that they

needed this support from their families in order to survive outside correctional centres, thus indicating mixed feeling of receiving help at that stage of their lives. These young men acknowledged that although they could not provide financially for their families, like other people their age, their families provided them with basic necessities such as food, water and shelter. The family members also supported the young men's children as they themselves were unemployed most of the time – and that made the young men happy and grateful. Kamogelo shared his familial support as follows:

“I think I experience more because my mother is there for me. Especially because she is the one who makes sure that we have a meal at home and she sometimes gives me money for job hunting or she buys my kids some clothes or things. Even if sometimes she says I do not have money, I understand because at least I know there is someone who still cares about me”.

Sabelo also pointed to family support as one of the things he enjoyed during his family re-entry:

“My family wishes me luck and they really care about me. They normally give me support in terms of finances, clothing and other stuff I need”.

Similarly, James shared his experiences of family members' support as follows:

“My family do help me, but because they are poor is still not ok because I take the last money from them. I feel embarrassed about myself because my family sometimes is forced to take even the last money to help me do job application”.

In consistent with this study, research conducted previously has revealed that many ex-offenders rely on their families for tangible support such as financial support, housing and clothing (Arditti & Few, 2008; Parkman, 2009). The findings of a study conducted by Naser and Visher (2006) revealed that family members of the recently-released ex-offenders were reportedly supportive of their formerly-incarcerated relative. The findings also provided evidence to the effect that 83 percent of the study participants were providing financial support to their formerly-incarcerated family members, even though more than 40 percent of these family members admitted that it was financially and emotionally cumbersome for them to do so.

In another study, conducted by the Vera Institute of Justice in New York, 92 percent of ex-offenders reported that they expected family members to support them, together with own their children during the period of re-entry, as they would be unemployed (diZerega & Agudelo 2011). Similarly, the young men in this study reported that their families were facing the same predicament – that of having to provide for them (the young men) and their children, since they were unemployed.

Nevertheless, the findings of this study have shown that while the young men needed support from family members, they acknowledged that this was painful, embarrassing and unacceptable for them to be supported at their age. This is because they felt like they were not men enough to provide for themselves and their own children. The findings of this study thus, corroborated the findings of previous studies that have shown that the stress and pain experienced is not only encountered by the caregivers or family members (Naser & Visser, 2006), but by the young men undergoing re-entry process as well.

Similarly, Arditti and Parkman (2011) have shown this developmental paradox in their study. However, their study did not uncover the everyday experiences of stress, pain and embarrassment that these young men go through, as their findings merely described dependency on caregivers as a developmental paradox. This study therefore, highlighted that re-entry stress and emotional strain should not only be associated with caregivers or family members, but also with the ex-offenders, who are the ones who have to undergo the re-entry process.

In relation to the S-V fit dimension, this suggests that these young men might not develop stress or negative psychological and behavioural outcomes, as their surrounding environments satisfied their needs by giving them the support they required during their re-entry – hence they reported happiness and feeling grateful. However, the P-E fit theory does not hint on the possibility that an individual may have ambivalent feelings about his or her environment. Therefore, the theory does not explain these young men's feelings of happiness (due to the support they received from family members) and sadness (due to the shame and embarrassment resulting from being supported at their age) or situation of ambivalence.

Interdependency within the family- “We are family”

The message that was conveyed when elaborating on family relationships is that family works together, regardless of the disgrace brought by the incarceration of some of their members. Therefore, the ideal way of relating with one another within the family is operating as a unit. The young men reported that their relationships with their family members appeared to be bi-directional in nature. Unlike before their incarceration, the young men worked together with their family members to keep their families as a unit. They reported that they played active roles like everyone else in their families. They were not a burden to their families as they picked up after themselves, helped out with household tasks, and were involved in family decision-making processes. They showed that they considered it their responsibility to try and improve their relationships with their family members in order to keep the family units intact. This is in a way, is described as a give-and-take type of a relationship. Some of the young men realised that the bulk of the support was consumed by them – since they spent most of the time unemployed. This is what Mike had to say in relation to this support:

“I depend on them more because I am not working. I also help my family with cleaning, but such jobs I do not like them. I do not have a choice since I am not working so I just have to help my family there and here with such chores. We are family after all.”

Lesiba reported this about his relationship with his family members:

“We are pulling together as a family, I help with house chores and my sisters help me with other support like money and food. Our relationship does not have challenges. We are always happy in my family”.

Thabi talked about his experience of contributing to the success of his family relationship:

“I am working as a handyman, and I still depend on them for most of the things I want. I am helping them so that they can help me financially. I need to help them with something so that they can help me in return”.

Moeti expressed a different experience to the rest - indicating that the mutual familial support that he enjoyed is a result of family values in held by his family, even before incarceration, not a result of incarceration. This is what he said:

“I go fishing so that we can all have a meal. My role is not so different in terms of what I used to do before incarceration. Our parents passed on a long time ago, so it was our responsibility to make sure that we provide and help each other in order to keep the family together”.

The sentiment expressed by these young men is supported by research, which has shown that failure to practice family rituals may lead to the failure of the family to maintain equilibrium, and consequently weakening the family (Chui, 2016). In family systems, family rituals, which can be understood as the routine, practices, and interactions that family members engage in, are proposed to contribute to good family functioning and strengthening the collective identity of the family (Chui, 2016). Similarly, from the D-A fit perspective (the demands-abilities fit), young men in this study possessed abilities and skills, such as cleaning and cooking, to satisfy the demands of their families (keep the family functioning). As such, this is considered as a match or a fit between the environment demands and the personal abilities. In addition, from the S-V fit dimension, these young men’s environment also provided mutual family care and support, which was part of the bi-directional relationship, which the young men valued. Therefore, according to the P-E fit theory, these young men are not expected to develop negative psychological and behavioural outcomes (for example, anxiety and anger), because of the identified match between their abilities and the expectations their family members had on them.

Furthermore, as this was a reciprocal relationship between the young men and their families, the family members also brought in other skills and abilities to assist the young men to keep the family functioning as expected (the environment demands). While the P-E fit theory explains the person-person fit (for example, the fit between the person and the supervisor) – thus providing an explanation of such a relationship on a smaller scale, it does not explain this relationship in terms of when many people are involved in a relationship, as is the case in this study. This study portrays an interacting environment, in which the influence of various family members of the ex-offenders, both those who are still alive and those who have passed on, is involved. This study thus, has shown that it is crucial to understand who will experience stress if dissatisfaction occurs

within this broader context, in cases where no match exist between people's abilities and the demands of the environment.

The family as a system represents and incorporates reciprocal interactions, as espoused in Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological perspective, especially at the level of the microsystem. As it stands, the microsystem represents an individual's immediate environment and incorporates the interactions that the person engages in directly with other people, and symbols of the immediate environment. These enduring and reciprocal interactions, called proximal processes, are units of development and they influence and shape an individual's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours over time.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model applies to the developmental experiences of these young adult ex-offenders of trying to make sense of their transition from incarceration into their families, as they have returned home to their family members and relatives, who all participated in the ex-offender's family microsystem. Within their families, the ex-offenders regularly engaged in reciprocal interactions (interdependency) with the family members. This shaped the kind of proximal processes they had and as a result, their development, as well as interactions at the other ecological levels (mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem) (Trickett, 1995).

Furthermore, as the ecological model predicts, there are two predictions that could be made regarding the outcomes among different levels of interaction, noting this reciprocal relationship (interdependency) between the ex-offenders and their family members. For example, if change is made to one feature (the ex-offender or the family members) of the system, there could be a ripple effect brought by the change throughout its other features, and the functioning of each feature of the system would be influenced by the functioning of the other, and vice versa (Trickett, 1995).

Challenges of being back home

Challenges included difficulties or problems faced by these young men on a daily basis during the re-entry process. Every challenge had emotional implications for these young men. The challenges constituted every uncomfortable situation these young men contended with, as well as the reactions of their family members towards them. Five sub-themes emerged when these young men highlighted the challenges of being back home: (1) Not being trusted cues; (2) Name

calling; (3) Intolerance; (4) Contrasting roles post-incarceration; and (5) The need to make a contribution versus their inability to contribute.

Not being trusted cues

Not being trusted is one of the major aspects of the re-entry challenges experienced by these young men. Their past criminal behaviour undoubtedly put them on the spot, as compared to other members of the family. Even though they understood that this would be the case, owing to their past criminal behaviour, they reported that this was painful because they had already paid for their mistakes. They also expressed that they would like to live their lives without strained relations with their family members. They also indicated that their family members sometimes say or do things that hurt and angered them, which also made them feel helpless and even bad about themselves. Mike expressed this challenge by stating the following:

“You see there are many bad things which are happening since I am at home and they make me angry. For example, when there is something missing, things like money or anything valuable I am always the suspect. Even my older sister treats me like that. There was this day when there was a fight in my family and the person who caused the fight was my sister’s husband, and I went to call my sister so that she could come and speak to her husband. After some few days, my sister came back to me, accusing me of stealing from her house. You know these kinds of things are very painful especially because they are from your family”.

Thabi also shared his experience of not being trusted by his family, particularly his siblings:

“I get along with only one brother in my family. The other one doesn’t like me at all, perhaps he told himself that I am a criminal. This is because most of the time he wrongfully accuses me of stealing things from the family. My big brother has separated himself from us since I came back from jail. He told my mother that he cannot come near the family because there is a criminal in the house; you see what I am talking about? And these kinds of things were not there before my incarceration”.

It is interesting to note that some family members accused the young men of stealing while they were incarcerated for sexual harassment. While this is understandable in Mike’s case, who was arrested for housebreaking, it does not make sense why Thabi’s family would accuse him of stealing, while he was arrested for sexual harassment. This may mean two things about families and communities at large: (1) they may not be able to differentiate between different types of

crime because they could carry a perception that somebody who was convicted of sexual crimes is a thief, overlooking the fact that sexual crime and theft were two different crimes, and that the offenders behind these crimes also have different motives; and (2) they may not understand the importance of social re-integration (Travis, 2005).

This implies that families have a long way to go as far as understanding criminality and the treatment of ex-offenders is concerned. In addition, the inability of families and communities to treat offences differently could imply that even at corporate level, employers are unable to differentiate between different types of crimes, only because ex-offenders have been to correctional centres— without considering the nature of the crime they committed. As the Criminal Law Act (No. 32 of 2007) states, an ex-offender who was incarcerated for sexual offences can still come out of incarceration and work anywhere - however, with restricted access to minors and disabled people.

Furthermore, the young men associated with lack of trust the fact that their activities were being monitored since they returned home. According to these young men, monitoring their activities included the tendency for family members of asking about their whereabouts, and having neighbours checking on them and reporting their activities to their families. This was reported to be detrimental to their re-entry process. In contrast, the findings of a study conducted by Parkman (2009) revealed that while the caregivers monitored the activities of the ex-offenders and their whereabouts to ensure that they do not revert to their old ways, ex-offenders who participated in their study welcomed being monitored and took that as a sign that caregivers are concerned about their well-being.

Thabi talked about the fact that his family monitored his activities:

“Sometimes I think things are made worse by the neighbour because he reported to my brothers about how I behave and what I do in the family, and he talks lies about me to them. So we will never go back to being good brothers again, and this is a painful feeling. Why do they trust the neighbour over me? They do not trust me and this is clear.”

Lesiba also reported a similar experience:

“I do not like the fact that I should always stay at home. I am a grown up man with a kid and I need to provide for my own family; so being at home full time does not solve my problem. There is not so much I can do with this challenge. I just need to listen to my sisters as they are the ones who provide for me”

Similarly, Sabelo said:

“Now I am an adult; my father needs to listen to me and not always think about bad things when I go out at night”.

The young men further argued that the family members’ lack of trust was evident in the words they uttered, which indicated that they were being compared to other family members. This assertion is supported by Travis (2005), who maintains that ex-offenders are viewed differently from other members of the community and/or family, due to their incarceration background. They believe that communities and/or families tend to classify ex-offenders as people who should be treated with caution. According to Braithwaite (1989), referring to the shamefulness of the crime when interacting with ex-offenders may increase the likelihood of reoffending among these young men, because they are treated as bad persons who did the bad thing in the past.

Similarly, it is deduced, from the S-V fit dimension, that the inability of the environment to supply provision that met the personal values of these young men resulted in negative psychological outcomes (that is feelings of pain and anger, low self-esteem and helplessness). This implies that the young men subjectively perceived that for them not to be trusted opposed their need to be trusted and acknowledged by their family members as the environment they returned to. Such trust and acknowledgement is something they needed and valued in their re-integration into the families, and the failure of the environment to supply such resulted in those negative psychological outcomes.

Name calling

The young men also reported that they contended with name calling as one of the major challenges they encountered as they re-entered their families. They repeatedly mentioned the names that their family members used to refer to them during their re-entry process. Those names include: “criminal” and “*lepantiti*”, which means prisoner. At times, these names were accompanied by being sworn at. According to these young men, these names were provocative –

because the names referred to criminality or the harshness of incarceration. These young men also shared that the names, that they carried during their family re-entry squashed their hope of being successfully re-integrated into their families, and that they were unacceptable and painful. The young men specifically mentioned that the experience of being called names happened when they were with their family members only – and that they found this strange, because even at the correctional centres they were not called such names. This clearly shows that families do not understand the importance of social re-integration.

While the families should be helping the ex-offenders to experience positive transitioning back home, they played a part in demoralising young men and squashing any hope for their formerly-incarcerated members to be reintegrated successfully, by calling them demeaning names. For this reason, it becomes important to involve family members in the re-integration programmes in order to make them understand the important role they play in the lives of their formerly-incarcerated members (Muntingh, 2005). This becomes a matter of life and death, because according to the young men who participated in this study, the experiences of being called bad names affected their relationships with members of their family negatively – it stirred up feelings of anger in them – and as they were often alone in this situation, with no one showing empathy for them, they felt lonely, and wished they could just die. This observation was also made by Akers and Jennings (2009), who state that once an individual is labelled he/she feels embarrassed, disgraced and discomfort, which stirs anger in them.

Similarly, it is deduced from the S-V fit dimension that the failure of the environment to supply the personal demands results in negative behavioural and psychological outcomes. This implies that the young men subjectively perceived that being called derogatory names was not in line with their need for approval and acknowledgement by their family members as the environment they had returned to. Such approval and acknowledgement was something they needed and valued in their re-integration into the families – hence the failure of the environment to supply the approval and acknowledgement resulted in both negative psychological and behavioural outcomes of loss of hope, feelings of pain, feeling unaccepted, relationship schisms, anger, loneliness and death wish/suicidal ideation. James had the following to share about his experience of name calling:

“Before I went to jail, they used to call me with such funny names which I do not like. Like that I am cruel and stuff. And now that I am back from jail they still call me names like “lepantiti”. I do not like that because I have my own name and even in jail they do not call us with such funny names; they use our real names”.

Mike also reported similar experiences of being called by strange names:

“Actually I can say my mother and I do not have a good relationship. I cannot talk to her most of time as we usually fight. You can find that sometimes I wish I can go and just sit down with my mother but because I know she might call me names or say things which are bad about me and that will cause me to be angry, I end up not talking to her. You know sometimes I wish I could just die because no one loves me.”

Moeti said the following with regard to his experiences:

“My other brother the one who drinks, normally come back from where ever he was and straight up swears at me, call me bad names or others in the house. You see that is not a good thing and it affects my relationship with him, and as a result we distant ourselves from each other”

Literature indicates that the negative labelling of ex-offenders or other members of the society, community or family leads to exclusionary practices that unfairly exclude members who are being labelled from legitimate aspects of life (Hirschfield & Piquero, 2010). According to Hirschfield and Piquero (2010), it is because of these negative names that other people tend to look down or judge those who have criminal records or have been incarcerated. Therefore it should be emphasised that labelling has serious implications for ex-offenders who are in the process of being reintegrated, because this explains how others treat members of their families who are ex-offenders, and how these ex-offenders will in turn, respond to the way they are being treated.

This supports Goffman (1963) notion that individuals who are given negative labels tend to internalise and integrate the label and start to see themselves as the label suggests, not the way they really are – hence the negative feelings of loneliness, isolating oneself and preparedness to die, as asserted by the young men in this study. While incarceration estranged them from their families, in some cases swearing and labelling further cemented this estrangement.

However, being solely labelled does not necessary lead to negative outcomes – instead, labelling affects people differently, depending on how people think and feel about being stigmatised. Also, the degree to which they anticipate future discrimination predicts functioning in the person (Major & Sawyer, 2009). This assertion is supported by the social-cognitive theorists, who posit that some personality traits can buffer the negative effects of stigma or labelling. For example, optimism is one of the personality traits, which is considered to protect the ‘self’, as it reduces the degree to which people feel threatened (Major & Sawyer, 2009). Nevertheless, this strength was not noted among the young men who participated in this study – hence they exhibited several negative psychological and behavioural outcomes, including loss of hope and suicidal ideation.

Intolerance

Unlike the verbal assault and issues associated with a lack of trust, these young men reported that intolerance was evident in the negative responses given by the people they relied on for support and care. While these young men reported that generally families supported and cared for them, there were times where family members spoke harshly to them. At times they were denied some necessities such as financial assistance. Taking into consideration the consequences of their incarceration, the young men understood that they needed their families in order for them to adapt to life outside correctional centres. However, they reported that re-entry was such an unpleasant experience, and that as a result they lost all the hope of being reintegrated successfully. Moeti expressed his intolerant family as follows:

“I don’t experience much challenges, but my family sometimes do not tolerate me. As I am not working, I am just “mohola (burdensome somebody)”. Like now I am not working, and I am always broke; so when I try to request money from them they do not want to hear that or they respond harshly towards me.”

The other young men also spoke about the experiences of not being tolerated by their family members:

“Sometimes when I come home and I find my brother at home, they suddenly leave the house. For what? I do not know. You see they cannot tolerate having me in their presence but they are my brothers.” (Thabi)

“I think most of the irritation among them comes when I beg them for something. Because I would demand things that they do not have and they would start being

intolerant towards me and call me names that I do not want. So having a job will solve this problem and also as I know job give you a certain good standard in the family”
(James)

“Some other day my kids came in to visit. It was during the course of the month and “magrissa- (my mother) did not have money because she only gets her social grant month end. So..... my kids were there for money to buy some stationery for school. Then I went to ask magrissa, and I did not like how she responded to my request and I then also used words which were not good to her. She would also say why I had children if I couldn’t provide for them? eish....you see that is a bad question to ask my sister”.
(Kamogelo)

Similarly, in a study conducted by Parkman (2009), caregivers indicated that the support given to parolees during their re-entry was in fact limited. One of the themes that emerged from that study was “Got to do something soon”. This indicates that the support given to parolees or to ex-offenders during their re-entry cannot be long-lasting. Therefore, the family members reach a point where they cannot tolerate any longer those who returned home, wanting to be taken care of.

The findings from previous studies suggest that family members experience greater financial strain and anxiety when an individual is released from incarceration (Naser & Visser, 2006; Sullivan, 2004). However, these studies did not explore how financial strain and anxiety affect relationships within the families. Thus, this study explored the familial relationship between ex-offenders and their family members after being released from correctional facilities, and has highlighted that ex-offenders are more likely to experience feelings of intolerance and negative reception when returning to a home where families experience financial strain and feelings of anxiety. The young men in this study revealed that they contended with intolerance, which was associated with unemployment and being financially dependent on their family members. At times they would retaliate as a result of being treated differently, because of their unemployment status. The young men in this study reported that family members who were employed were treated better than them. This left the young men disappointed, sad and would often make them feel like burdensome people (“mohola”).

Relating this finding to the P-E fit theory, the young men felt the need to be tolerated by their family members. As evidenced in this study, what they required, desired and valued during the re-entry process could not be provided by their environments (that is families). This is what the

P-E fit theory considers a mismatch or misfit between the environmental supply and the personal demands (S-V fit dimension), and this mismatch results in the stated negative psychological and behavioural outcomes. This is because the young men subjectively perceived that their families did not show them the tolerance that they needed during their re-integration.

Contrasting roles post incarceration

The young men indicated that it was unacceptable for men their age to rely on their families for support and not be able to provide for their families. They repeatedly referred to the phrase “being a man” when speaking about the expectations that they and their family members had for men their age. They reported that their expected roles as young adults contrast with the roles that they actually played on a daily basis, ever since they came back from correctional facilities. The contrast that was expressed appeared to have caused an identity crisis for them. Their feelings of sadness were sparked by the fact that they were not able to meet their own expectations and the families’ expectation with regard to “man’s roles.” They described their idea of what it means to be “a man” their age group several times, in relation to their roles before they were incarcerated, as opposed to their roles after they have been released from correctional facilities. The meaning attributed to being “a man” and actually doing what “a man” is supposed to do made them question their identity. They perceived themselves as playing women’s roles, as not being real men who could provide for themselves and for their children, as being stupid and being left behind when compared to their peers. They mentioned that roles such as cleaning and cooking were not for men, and having to perform such roles made them feel stupid. This was again linked to their unemployment status and not being able to start families. Lesiba expressed what he thought it meant to be a man:

“I am not happy with my role at the moment because cleaning and cooking is not the role for men. Men should provide for their families not do the women’s duties”.

Similarly, Mike defined being a man in this way:

“It is not good as I know that by now I should be able to depend on myself. I should be able to buy myself bread now and everything I want. I should have my own family. This makes me feel stupid. Many of my peers have achieved a lot; they are working and they

have cars but as for me I am still behind. I do not have a job, no wife and I still depend on my family. It is not good. Prison has delayed my life”

Thabi also shared his experience by saying:

“I do not think I can go back to working as a security officer due to the criminal record that I have. The role I play is not enough to sustain me as a man and to be able to buy myself what I want. The money they give me is little for me and my 4 children. It cannot support me and my children; so the role I play is not for real man, because real men can provide from the sweat of their foreheads”.

The young men also reflected on their anxiousness about what “being man” was when they shared about what living up to being “a man” would be in future, possibly if their goals to have family and employment would be achieved. Moeti said:

“I need my bakkie fixed and ready to go so that I can use it to generate money and make a living. In that way, I would be able to stay out of trouble because I would have money to make a living than killing people for their money to make a living. I will be able to marry my wife, renovate my parents’ house and provide for my siblings.”

Similarly, Sabelo said:

“I wish I can have my own place, job and be able to help my parents. My parents have been there for me since I was young. It is my time to be there for them not them to be there for me, especially with this age, I am a grown up man”.

Similarly, the findings of previous studies revealed that having lived independently and separately from family, an adult child returning home may struggle to accept the roles, which they were comfortable with before they left home. The most typical examples of transitioning home with contrasting roles are the boomerang effects studies of adult children returning home from either marriage and/or college (Burn & Szoeki, 2016). In this study, the young men returned home from correctional facilities and also experienced contrasting roles suggested by the studies done for college students and married adult children.

According to Arditti and Parkman (2011), the inability of these young adult men to play the roles of young adult leads to a developmental paradox. This inability to fulfil the developmental expectation and socially-expected roles and duties has been proven to have serious implications for the young men, triggering stress and identity crisis, as confirmed by Jewkes (2002). This is also congruent with French et al.'s (1982) perspective of the D-A fit that the mismatch between an individual's abilities and the environmental demands creates negative psychological and behavioural outcomes. In this case, the young men's self-perception was that they failed to carry out roles, which they associated with "being a man", as expected by the environments they had returned to.

A study conducted by Bourgois (1996) revealed that Puerto Rican men who were unable to attain successful manhood roles (for example finding employment, being self-reliant and independent) tended to engage in misogyny, substance abuse, and got involved in crime in trying to achieve ideals of masculinity. In consistent with this study, the young men in the current study reported that for them not to fulfil manhood roles and duties was a stressful and painful experience. However, they were confident that they would not recidivate to relieve this stress. Furthermore, some of them regarded themselves as stupid because they could not do what other men their age do.

As the D-A fit dimension purports, the fact that in most societies men are expected to assume roles of breadwinners or providers (an environmental demands and expectation), created a feeling of inadequacy amongst these young men, since they could not meet the demands and expectations of their environment – hence, they reported feelings of stress and experiencing emotional pain. Meeting societal expectations and demands serves as a constant reminder to men that they are only good enough if they are able to provide for their families, neglecting adversity times such as having a criminal record or coming out of correctional facilities. There is no doubt that this creates psychological pathologies in men who are not able to carry out morally appreciated roles as expected by society (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2004).

In this way, re-integration for male ex-offenders becomes a challenge because they enter the community without much preparation, and are expected to immediately assume financial responsibilities and take their active roles in society (Gaynes, 2005). This is an indication that the transition between the two "homes" (correctional centre and family setting) leads to a

paradoxical situation or a dilemma, because persons undergoing the transitions are expected to assume roles which might not be similar or usual as the previous roles done at the different “home”.

The need to make a contribution versus unemployment

The sub-theme discussed above and the proceeding sub-theme is linked – however, it was crucial to discuss each subtheme separately, as each outlines a different case as presented by the young men. Given their age, the young men in this study were transitioning to their homes at a stage where employability and independence were fundamental achievements. Therefore, securing a job was an important requirement for their successful re-entry. However, the young men reported that finding a job was difficult. Meanwhile, they needed to contribute financially in their families and to take care of themselves. This dilemma is expressed by the young men in the excerpts below:

“Eish, I will just live but I do not think I will be able to get what I want, which is a job. Because I am not educated and I have criminal record. I do not apply or do any job hunting. I am just sitting at home trying to support my sisters’ requests that I should avoid streets to avoid trouble. But am not trying to prepare for my future”. (Lesiba)

“I am looking for a job to provide for myself, but in the meantime I do not hope for anything good because of my criminal record and my educational background.....I attended some programmes inside the correctional centre you see, but they do not add any value to me getting qualifications because they are about anger management not about employment, so is a problem for me you see”. (Sabelo)

“Sometimes I feel like I am stupid because I still want things from them. I have two kids who I need to provide for. At this moment as I speak to you they are suffering because they do not have what other children have and there is nothing I can do since I am not working and again my educational standard, won’t help me to secure a job ”. (James)

“At the correctional centres they are educational programme you see my sister, but outside we are all alone. Nothing is provided to us by DCS to make a living, but they do not expect us to go back inside.....it is difficult you see”. (Sello)

“This situation of being supported by your mother at this age is painful. I feel stuck relying on my mother who is supposed to be sitting down and wait for my money at the end of the month”. You, my sister the issue is my criminal record, I know I can make application but my criminal record will always take me down to my current situation, which is not nice experience.....there were times were I went to town to do application at the farm, but the farmers declined me a job offer after telling them that I have a criminal record, they asked and I told them that yes, I was incarcerated and they said they do not hire people with criminal record. You see, eish I came back home sad too much”. (Kamogelo)

Research has shown that employers are hesitant to hire people with criminal records and would prefer to hire someone who has minimal work experience (Holzer, Raphael & Stoll, 2003). A study conducted by Pager (2003) found that employers continue to make hiring decisions based on an applicant's race and criminal record. Such barriers prevent ex-offenders from securing employment and ultimately an income, and further sustain their families. Similarly, the young men in this study were cognizant of the fact that finding a job and being able to contribute financially to the well-being of their families might not be easy because of their criminal record and level of education.

Hanisch (1999) categorises the negative effects of unemployment into individual and family effects. Individual effects include physical and psychological effects. Physical effects include an increase in headaches, stomach aches, and sleep problems, lack of energy, hypertension, and heart and kidney diseases. Psychological effects include increased hostility, depression, anxiety, stress, anger, fear, despair, loneliness and social isolation, as well as decreased self-esteem, life satisfaction, aspiration levels, concentration and personal identity. Similarly, the young men in this study reported that they suffered from pain; they felt stupid and sad that they were unable to secure employment and contribute financially in their families. Young men did not report any physical effects due to their being unemployed. The negative effects of unemployment on families includes an increase in spousal abuse, marital friction, spousal depression, family conflict, and child abuse, as well as decrease in family cohesion, and the well-being of children (Hanisch, 1999). Similarly, the young men in this study also reported that their relations with their families were strained, and that there were schisms in their family (see table 4.2 above).

Similarly, the S-V fit dimension predicts that these young men would develop negative psychological and behavioral outcomes, because there was a mismatch between what they value (which was employment) and what the environment supplies (segregation policies for employment opportunities). Negative psychological outcomes were observed in these young men – however, there were no signs of negative behavioural outcomes. In addition, from the D-A fit dimension it can be deduced that these young men would further develop negative psychological outcomes; because they could not satisfy the societal and family demands for a “working young man”. Thus, young men in this study were unable to satisfy environmental demands of acquiring a job – this could therefore lead to negative psychological outcomes amongst them since there was a mismatch between their re-entry need and their environmental supply.

However, in this case the environments that did not supply the young men with what they needed or desired was not the immediate family, but conditions that came as a result of being incarcerated. For example, the young men indicated that their inability to contribute in the family was not only influenced by their level of education, but by also the employers’ unwillingness to give ex-offenders an opportunity, because of their criminal records and lack of work-related skills. This implies that the external environment (for example employers) also does not satisfy or supply the young men’s personal values and desires.

Furthermore, as these young men highlighted, rehabilitation programmes of the DCS did not include specific programmes that would help them during their re-entry to deal with challenges associated with their re-entry, such as finding employment.

This means that the environment that is inhibiting the young men’s desire and goals for employment did not only include their re-entry families, but employers and the DCS, through the rehabilitation programmes that were offered during incarceration, that did not prepare them fully for re-entry challenges. From the S-V fit dimension, this implies that the environments (employers and the DCS-Department of Correctional Services) were not congruent with these young men’s values and desires for employment.

While the effects were not directly from the immediate family environment but the external environment, the outcomes affected how these young men and their family members functioned.

The P-E fit theory does not address situations like these – where the secondary environment (employers) has an influence on the primary environment (the family) – which in turn, impact on the relationship between the individual and environment. Nonetheless, it was clear that these young men’s experiences of the mismatch between their individual needs and the interacting outside environment created negative psychological outcomes of sadness, feelings of stupidity and pain.

Coping mechanisms of ex-offenders

As these young men experienced challenges during their re-entry process, they had to employ mechanisms or strategies to deal with these challenges. In general, transiting between environments presents challenges as far as coping with and adjusting to the new environments are concerned. Individuals who are transitioning – such as those who are getting married, retiring or transferring between schools or “homes” have to navigate new social roles and expectations, which may cause stress, due to role strain (Fenzel, 1989). According to the P-E fit theory, stress or life challenges are brought by the lack of correspondence between the characteristics of a person (abilities and values), and the environment (demands and supplies). Therefore, mechanisms to deal with or cope with challenges or stress include tackling the objective environment and/or the objective person (French et al., 1982).

This means making changes either in the stressful environment or in the characteristics of the person. Lazarus and Folkman (1984, p. 141) define coping as “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of a person”. Coping mechanisms, on the other hand, include cognitive and behavioural attempts to master, reduce, or tolerate demands or stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). As they experienced difficult times during their family re-entry process, these young men employed strategies, which helped them deal with or master their challenging situations.

According to Cooper and Marchshall (1976), people can use either adaptive coping or maladaptive coping when dealing with challenges. Adaptive coping refers to strategies aimed at dealing directly with the stressful or taxing situation by seeking and implementing solutions. Maladaptive coping, on the other hand, refers to strategies that consist of emotional, self-

protective approaches to dealing with stressors or taxing situations. According to Culver, Arena, Antoni and Carver (2002), coping strategies can be adaptive or maladaptive depending on the environment and situation. For example, avoidance coping strategies such as reframing or acceptance are protective factors, and are correlated with higher meaning in life, while avoidance coping strategies such as denial, substance use, or venting are less likely to help the situation, and are correlated with undesirable outcomes. Culture also serves as a crucial factor in determining the coping strategies used when people are faced with stressful events. Culture also determines the type of coping strategies that are available to people and seem proper to use, in order to handle stress (Gaziel, 1993).

Combination of positive and negative coping strategies

While a distinction is made between adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies, a combination of the two is also possible (Gumani, Fourie & Terre Blanch, 2013). Combining more than two coping strategies helps the individual to grow from negative experiences (Saakvitne, Tennen & Affleck, 1998). For example, an individual may need to first engage in emotion-focused coping to manage his or her emotions before he or she can effectively engage in problem-focused coping efforts. Young men in this study employed a combination of coping strategies to deal with their challenges during their re-integration. They employed spiritual strategies, avoidance and social support strategies, which are discussed below:

Spiritual strategies

Spirituality plays an important role during stressful situations as it reduces the effects of exposure to stressful situations because of the belief that there is a supernatural being that is higher than an individual. Therefore, spirituality ignites the individual's inner resources and strength to enable them to cope effectively with adversity (Bolden, Lee, Lanier, Newsome, Williams & Utsey, 2007). For example, some of the young men in this study reported that when faced with challenges, they went to church and prayed about their situations. As a result, they tended to become calm and relieved. This is an indication that spirituality assists individuals to find solutions during stressful situations. Similarly, literature shows that spirituality and religion have a positive role to play when one is faced with stressors (Seeman & McEwen, 1996).

According to Hovey, Hurtado, Morales and Seigman (2014), religious and spiritual forms of coping are reported to have positive associations with reduced depressive symptoms and higher self-esteem. Religious and spiritual beliefs are important sources of strength for many people, and research indicates that a person's well-being may be enhanced by certain spiritual dimensions (Naser & Visser, 2006).

Two young men shared the following ways of coping with difficulties during the re-entry process:

"I am grown up man, I have seen a lot, and I do not want to see again. I really put everything in God's hands because if I can resort to fight they will call police to take me". (Thabi)

I also go to church and pray about my situation and I become relieved". (James)

This is consistent with the criminological literature, which states that religion provides a resource for emotional coping. As a result, subscribing to religion enabled these young men to stay away from criminal activities, especially engaging in violence-related behaviours when they felt stressed and frustrated (Agnew, 1992). This is supported by numerous previous studies that argue that religion can serve as a deterrent for various forms of deviant and criminal behaviours. For instance, Burkett and White (1974) found that religion has a strong effect on adolescents for victimless crimes that are in violation of religious principles, such as drug and alcohol abuse. Furthermore, Baier and Wright (2001) conducted a meta-analytic review of the research linking religion to crime, and their findings revealed that religion operate as a social bond. They specifically argue that "religion deters individual-level criminal behavior through the threat of supernatural sanctions and promotes normative behavior through the promise of supernatural reward" (Baier & Wright, 2001, p. 4).

This is in contrast with the D-A (demands-abilities) fit dimension because the young men's efforts to deal with the demanding situation were to enhance the subjective person through cognitive distortion of the subjective person rather than dealing or changing the objective counterparts.

In other words, the young men in this study should tackle or change the challenging environment and/or person that stress them directly, rather than keeping the stress between them and dealing with it subjectively. The young men were faced with the environmental demand of getting jobs and providing for themselves. However they did not tackle their environmental demands – rather, they enhanced their subjective person through cognitive distortion – for example, thinking that situations will be changed by prayer only, while doing nothing about the situation. From the P-E fit perspective, the positive coping mechanisms involve tackling directly the objective environment and/or the objective person, and not the subjective environment and/or person. The objective implies the environmental and personal variables as they exist independently without the individual's perceptions – while the subjective implies the environmental and personal variables as they are perceived by the individual (French et al, 1982). In other words, the young men in this study should tackle or change the challenging environment and/or person that stress them directly, rather than keeping the stress within them and dealing with it subjectively.

Nevertheless, young men in this study revealed that their spiritual coping helped them to avoid conflicts with others, as when they felt angry they would go to church and pray, thus preventing recidivism. This is supported by Seeman and McEwen (1996) notion that religious coping mechanisms, when compared to other coping mechanisms, help individuals to better react to stressful situations.

Social support

The young men in this study also indicated that they relied on other people for assistance during their challenging times. Social support as commonly known, may come from different individuals, such as family members, friends, teachers or any social groups to which one is affiliated (Hengl, 1997). Social support may come as tangible assistance provided by others, or in a form of perceived social support that assesses individual's confidence of the availability of adequate support when needed (Hengl, 1997). Therefore, young men in this study reported that they sometimes turned to significant people in their lives such as their mothers, sisters and relatives for the support they needed. These were some of the young men's social ways of coping with difficulties during the re-entry process:

“I also speak to my mum about such and she supports me.....” (James)

“I have one sister in Hammaskraal, who understands me more than everybody, so I sometimes speak to her about what is happening back here at home.....and she always support me unlike the people I stay with”. (Sello)

“Sometimes, when my other brother starts his troubles, I speak to the other family relatives and they come and solve him...”. (Moeti)

This corroborated the findings from studies that suggest that the people related to individuals in stressful and traumatic situations understand them and suggest resources and ways to assist the stressing individuals by giving them feedback (Yassen, 1995). The findings of a study conducted by Roohafza, Afshar and Adibi (2014) revealed that employing active coping styles (coping styles that are characterised by solving problems, seeking information, changing the environment and others) and the perceived social supports, particularly positive re-interpretation and family social support are protective factors for depression and anxiety. In another study, disclosure of trauma to and social support from family members was found to be protective in the midst of traumatic events. Due to the support of spouses or partners, heart diseases were lowered among police recruits who anticipated exposure to stressful work experiences (LeBlanc et al., 2008). The role of social support thus, appears to be very important because it is considered a mechanism that forms a buffer against life stressors and promote health and wellness (Steese, Dollete,Phillips, Hossfeld, Matthews & Taormina, 2006).

The efforts taken by these young men to solve their problems speak consistently to the P-E fit theory. From the D-A fit dimension, it can be deduced that when these young men were faced with environmental demands, they employed strategies/skills to tackle the objective demands/problems. Therefore the young men’s ability to involve relatives, immediate family members (mothers and sisters) to solve or tackle objective persons or environments which cause stress implies that young men were able to deal with challenges as they came, rather than relying on cognitive distortions (French et al., 1982).

Avoidance coping

The young men in this study revealed that they employed coping strategies, which provided them with some relief only momentarily. For example, they reported that when their family members called them names, or suspected them on the things they did not do, they would walk away (avoidance) from them. According to the P-E fit perspective, defence mechanisms such as avoidance, repression, projection and others are considered efforts to enhance the subjective P-E fit through cognitive distortion of the subjective person or environment without changing their objective counterparts. It can be deduced, from the D-A fit dimension that the young men had coping mechanisms that enabled them to tackle the environmental demands of their re-entry process. Therefore, the young men's inability to employ mechanisms which dealt with the objective environment was in contradiction with the P-E fit dimensions, and thus, employed negative coping mechanisms.

These ways of coping are nevertheless said to be helpful only for a limited time (French et al., 1982). This is supported by Zamble and Porporino's (1988) notion that the majority of ex-offenders who recidivate employed strategies that focused only on relieving their problem for the moment. Working on their Coping Vignettes scale, Zamble and Porporino found that participants who recidivated were found to have poorer coping strategies as compared with those who did not, and thus concluded that poor coping strategies made it difficult for participants to live outside correctional facilities.

Similarly, some of the young men in this study employed avoidance coping mechanisms such as drinking alcohol and isolation, which are generally predicted to result in negative or undesirable outcomes (Culver et al., 2002; Suls & Fletcher, 1985). This poses a future possibility of emotional and behavioural difficulties such as anxiety, recidivism and aggression amongst young men in this study (Fitzpatrick & Boldizar, 1993). Nevertheless, like reliance on spirituality, the avoidance mechanism of "walking away" helped the young men in this study to avoid conflicts. However, avoidance coping strategies does not provide long-term relief (Culver et al., 2002).

Mike had this to say regarding how he coped with his challenging experiences, which supports the above assertion:

“I am a very short tempered person, so when challenges like that arise, I know is much better for me to leave and go out to avoid causing trouble. I go out and sit at the tavern and drink. Or I sit alone somewhere and think about myself and nothing else”.

Other young men also shared the following regarding their coping strategies in difficult circumstances during their family re-entry process:

“I walk away, that is how I deal with noise. This is because I do not want to get that angry and do something stupid as a result”. (Kamogelo)

“I avoid many things by listening to my father. I do not want any problem with my family again. Even when they are wrong, I just accept and leave them. I really avoid them”. (Sabelo)

“Most of the times I decide to stay away from those who troubles me. I rather go and sleep or do beers than to fight them and end up in jail again”. (Thabi)

“I just keep quiet to avoid fighting them. I normally just end communicating with them. I keep quiet until they come back to me”. (James)

Analysis of these young men’s coping strategies suggests that they employed both the internal and external coping mechanisms. External responses imply that stress is removed by dealing directly with the stressors, while the internal responses imply that stress is accommodated and people learn to live with it (Keil, 2004). The young men in this study used both types of coping mechanisms because their ways of coping mechanisms included removing stressors linked to the situation (external response) and in other cases, accommodating the stressors and learning to live with them. This is evident in that they kept quiet, walked away, drank alcohol and prayed, which demonstrate that they internalised the challenging situations. Others would talk with other people for assistance, which demonstrate that they employed external responses.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on presenting interview data that were acquired from the participants of this study. The data were presented through interpreted themes and discussed in the context of the P-E fit theory and other relevant literature. I also included the young men's extracts to support literature or provide contrasting findings in order to bring up important contextual factors in the family re-integration experiences of the young men who participated in this study. A number of interesting findings emerged, such as the meaning attached to the family re-entry process, benefits and challenges of the family re-entry process, as well as the coping strategies employed. Chapter 5 discusses conclusions drawn, as well as the limitations of the study and the recommendations made. Lastly, the chapter presents my reflections during the course of this study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the conclusion, limitations and recommendations of the study – by providing a detailed summary of this study, and elaborating on how future research can further explore related topics in order to fill the gaps and add to the existing body of knowledge in the field of psychology and re-integration studies. This chapter also highlights my personal reflections of embarking on this research study.

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of formerly incarcerated young adult men with regards to family re-entry in the rural area of Sekhukhune in the Limpopo Province. Specifically, the study examined the meanings made by the identified young adult male ex-offenders with regards to their re-entry processes in the family, the benefits enjoyed, challenges encountered, and the coping strategies that they employed during the re-entry process. The aim of the study was achieved through conducting qualitative semi-structured interviews with formerly-incarcerated young adult men between the ages of 24 and 34. The study findings were interpreted in light of the P-E fit theory. The propositions of this theoretical perspective enabled the examination of the experiences of the young men's re-entry process as well as the coping strategies they employed.

The interpretations of the interview data yielded the following findings:

- i. At some point, the young men reported positive experiences of their re-entry processes into their families, while at other points they reported negative experiences of the re-entry processes. The young men highlighted on the notion of a second chance (opportunity), as well as their positive commitment to do right with their families, including mending relationships with significant members of their families on their return home. Unlike before their incarceration, they worked together with their families to support one

another, even though much of the assistance was consumed by the young men since they were not working. The young men reported a positive re-entry experience as they described how well they fitted in their family systems to form a whole unit. This highlighted the importance of interdependence within the families in that family members relied on one another regardless of the young men's criminal backgrounds.

- ii. The P-E fit theory helped to frame my understanding of these interdependences in terms of how the match between the environment and the person could result in positive psychological outcomes, especially when the young men shared how they and their family environments tended to meet each other's needs and expectations during the re-entry process. These experiences were portrayed with the positive psychological outcomes of happiness, gratefulness and satisfaction.
- iii. The young men's negative experiences associated with their family re-entry process specifically centred on their perceptions of receiving help from family members – given their beliefs about what it means to be “a man” and the role that “a man” should play. They grappled with the reality of not being able to care for themselves and their children, as well as the conflicts of their perceived expected roles. These conflicts emerged as the young men talked about what it means to be “a man” and what it is that “a man” does. They spoke about being grown-ups and being “a man”, but struggled with not being able to perform the tasks they thought they should be doing, given their self-defined role of “a man”. For example, the young men described being “a man” as someone who takes care of himself, handles his responsibilities and “has his own” (for example, his own house, car and money). However, they were all living with their families and did not hold jobs that could meet all their needs, and relied on family members to meet their basic needs. Their shared language of what it means to be “a man” and their perception of “a man's” role highlighted their shared expectations and shared disappointments when these roles were not fulfilled, and that implied an unsuccessful re-entry process for them.
- iv. The P-E fit theory also contributed to the framing of these conflicting thoughts on how the environment's failure to supply employment as something valued by the participants resulted into negative psychological outcomes such as sadness, anger and disappointment. However, the theory only includes aspects which can affect a person in the immediate environment, I noted that the theory does not take into consideration the

indirect effects of other aspects, which can affect an individual in the immediate environment. For example, the young men's inability to secure employment was related to employers' scepticism to hire ex-offenders, but the effect of not having a job due to this scepticism affected both the young men and their families.

- v. In addition, the inability to live independently and lack of self-reliance were reported to be the major sources of unhappiness in these young men, and these created an experience of an unsuccessful re-entry process amongst the young men. This is because every challenge they mentioned was linked to unemployment and how it affected their relationships with family members. For example, one of the participants mentioned (as noted in Chapter 4): *"I think most of the irritation among them comes when I beg them for something. Because I would demand things that they do not have and they would start being intolerant towards me and call me names that I do not want. So having a job will solve this problem and also as I know job gives you a certain good standard in the family"*.

Therefore, the need to be independent and self-reliant shaped the experiences of these young men. It is therefore, imperative that this need should be taken into account when efforts are made to ensure meaningful and successful re-entry of young adult male ex-offenders at the age group identified in this study.

- vi. The lack of trust, name calling and the lack of tolerance by family members was also seen as a negative experience, which sparked feelings of anger and disappointment amongst the young men. It was clear that if these negative experiences persisted, and without professional help, the young men would end up with negative outcomes (see table 4.2 in Chapter 4). Young men also seemed not to be coping well with these negative experiences. For example, most of the young men used avoidance coping strategies, such as taking alcohol and isolating themselves, which did not solve their problems. This was also supported by the P-E fit theory (see table 4.2), which posits that coping strategies such as avoidance are not effective in dealing with stress, because they are only effective in the short term, and do not deal with the objective environment/persons, which is the source of the stress. For the young men who employed social support and spiritual coping strategies, there was an unlikelihood that they would develop more negative psychological outcomes.

- vii. Lastly, the role of culture was proven to be an inevitable factor during the re-entry process of the young men in this study. Therefore, it was concluded that the re-entry process would never be meaningful for the young men of this age group until cultural practices were achieved during their re-entry. In such cases, culture influenced these young men's view, their values, and the meaning they attached to their re-entry process. However, it is interesting that some young men mentioned that the role of culture was confusing, because the rituals they performed did not yield the expected results. This explained further the complexity of the re-entry process for these young men.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although this study provided insights from young adult male ex-offenders regarding the family re-entry process, it should be noted that the sample was not fully representative of young adult male ex-offenders in the whole of the Sekhukhune district or other rural parts of the country. The small sample of seven participants was only sufficient for this study because I wanted to obtain a more contextualised understanding of participants' lives and experiences within the described setting. Furthermore, using a small number of participants is recommended for IPA first time researchers and students because of the intensive nature of this design (Smith & Osborn, 2008) - hence seven participants were selected for this study. However, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to other young adult male ex-offenders of different class, social, racial, religious backgrounds and geographic regions, who might have different re-entry experiences.

Another limitation to the study was that of providing an outsider's perspective to the topic of re-entry. While I have visited correctional centres and communicated with offenders, I have never been incarcerated nor have I experienced what it is like to be a young adult male returning home after incarceration. This could have implications as I was just an observer and interpreter of the participants' narrations and first-hand interpretations of their experiences as is the case in IPA (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015).

Furthermore, by using young adult male ex-offenders who had been incarcerated for a period of time, and released to families without community supervision (parole) limited the scope of the study – due to the fact that the study did not take into account the circumstances of young men

who were released on parole to families, with constant monitoring of community corrections. In addition, some of the participants in this study were incarcerated for a short period of time – a further limitation – as participants who were incarcerated for longer periods would have a more in-depth and different experience

This study employed a qualitative method of inquiry - hence family re-entry as a phenomenon could not be measured. This kind of weakness has some implications in terms of understanding this phenomenon as a whole, since I employed only a single methodology. Consequently, the findings of the study do not give a broader picture of family re-integration in our country.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Firstly, it is recommended that future studies consider the representativeness of the study participants' demographic characteristics in order to elicit research findings that can be generalised to different contexts, and countrywide. Such future studies could be in the form of surveys, and could include mixed- methods studies representing different young adult male ex-offenders from different racial, class and social groups. In addition, longitudinal studies are recommended in future, especially those that would look at young adult male ex-offenders' re-entry experiences when successful independence is achieved, and when successful independence has not been achieved.

Secondly, as the White Paper on Corrections (2005) puts an emphasis on families to support young adult ex-offenders or any other ex-offenders during the re-entry process, resources need to be made available for these young men and their families, especially in the rural areas of South Africa. For example, support and resources should be provided that would relieve family members of some of the burdens and help them deal with the psychological distress due to the re-entry process. Facilities should also be established that would offer skills training and job placement, which would benefit these young men and their families. The findings of this study suggest that when young men are working, they maybe less likely to place financial demands on their families.

Thirdly, given the sub-themes that emerged from the study, it is important to put support systems in place to assist young adult ex-offenders and their families throughout the re-entry process. This means that correctional policies should have provisions for family members, as they are also involved in the re-entry process of the formerly-incarcerated family members, by virtue of the fact that they should all (family members and ex-offenders) participate in counselling interventions, pre and during family re-entry. One way of doing this would be to allow family members to be involved in the pre-release planning and post-release follow-up re-integration programmes to ensure that there is accessible support outside correctional centres for ex-offenders and their families. This could benefit families and ex-offenders, as the counselling sessions would allow them an opportunity to address any concerns that might arise during the re-entry process, being guided by professional counsellors.

Lastly, based on the literature reviewed, this study was the first of its kind to apply the P-E fit theory in South Africa to look at the re-integration process of young adult male ex-offenders. Therefore, other researchers could apply the theory in their future studies to explore further the importance of this theory in understanding the re-integration process of different categories of ex-offenders. For example, a study on the re-integration of female ex-offenders, from the P-E fit perspective could be conducted in future.

REFLECTIONS OF THE RESEARCHER

Firstly, let me highlight that as a researcher in this context, it is easy to fall into a trap of being an outsider than anything else (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015). Therefore, when I embarked on this study I took a conscious decision to be more of an insider than an outsider, in order to capture as many re-integration experiences of the young adult male ex-offenders as possible. I also wanted to understand each participant's experiences as comprehensively as possible, and from their own perspective, not mine.

However, two factors that positioned me as an outsider were my educational background and my gender. For instance, in terms of power dynamics that exist between different gender roles in our society, one can tell how challenging it might be for a male person to show emotions (for

example, cry) in front of a female person. This became clear in this study as some of the participants held back their emotions even though I could hear and see that they wanted to cry. I also did not dig deeper into such emotions because I was caught up in the power dynamics that exist between genders in our society. This affected my position with the participants, because I felt that I should accord them their superior position in society as men, and not create a situation where they would cry in front of me. As the expression goes in my mother's tongue, *monna ke nku, o llela teng*. This is a Pedi idiom which means that “a man is like a sheep, he does not show his feelings (he cries inside).”

Another factor that positioned me as an outsider was my position as a researcher. This was particularly clear when one of the potential participants asked “What will one gain out of the study because the researchers gain money and knowledge?” This dawned to me that as researchers we may be perceived as intruders by the communities that we study for knowledge production (LaBaree, 2002). I personally felt it was time I gave back to communities and participants for the knowledge that I obtained from them, either by sharing the results of my study with them, or by making recommendations for policy development, based on the findings.

Broadly speaking, I did not include this participant in this study because he was not eager to participate, unless there was a tangible reward, which this study did not cater for. However, I learned a valuable lesson from this participant's statement, that in order to become a researcher, one must step out of their comfort zone and learn about the attitudes of participants and also acknowledge participants in many possible ways, in order not to be seen as a predator of knowledge in the communities we are researching. I therefore, would like to thank all the individuals who participated in this study without thinking that I am a predator of their knowledge. Surely the knowledge which they have shared with me will be available to them, the rest of the research community and all affected institution through the UNISA and NRF libraries, presentations at conferences and publications of findings of the study in peer reviewed research journals.

Lastly, embarking on this study has not only ensured that I gain knowledge – it has also changed my perspective as far as offenders and ex-offenders are concerned. Of significance is the fact that I now see offenders and ex-offenders as human beings first before seeing them as people who

broke the law, and this makes me feel that I should listen to them and not judge them. This change in me, thus also reflects a change in my attitude towards them.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the conclusion, limitations and recommendations of the study. It was concluded that transitioning from correctional facilities to home is the happiest moment for young adult male ex-offenders. However, this is also a challenging process, and families should be the primary focus when coming to the re-integration process of ex-offenders. Although different role players can be involved in the process, the importance of the families was emphasised, because it was recognised that the family as an immediate place of support after incarceration can make or break young adult male ex-offenders. The process of family re-entry was also shown to be negatively affected by different outside factors (for example, unemployment), and that both families and young adult male ex-offenders should deal with that by themselves. Recommendations were therefore, made to address this issue by the DCS.

Overall, this study lent support to the notion that the re-entry process of young adult male ex-offenders into their families is a complex process – and that the process should be understood from different perspectives and ideologies in order to make it meaningful and relevant to the formerly incarcerated South African population.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT

Project Title: Young adult male ex-offenders' experiences of the transition from incarceration to the estranged family in a rural community.

I. Purpose of this Project

This consent form is to help you to decide whether or not you would like to participate in this study. The purpose of this research study is to learn about re-entry into your family after release from a correctional centre, particularly the relationship between you and your family after incarceration that determines how you adjust after release.

II. Procedures

If you decide to participate in this study, your participation will consist of 60- 90 minutes of an interview. This interview will ask you several questions about your experience since you have been released from incarceration, your everyday experiences with your family (i.e. interactions, relationships, coping strategies) and thoughts about your future. There will be notes taken and a voice recorder will be used to record our conversation during the interview; however, the main purpose is to help me capture data accurately. The data will be deleted from the recorder after the process of transcribing. Furthermore, I will ask you questions as you tell of your experiences just to get more clarity and deeper understanding of your experiences.

III. Voluntary Participation

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time for any reason (but not after the data analysis process). You may refuse to answer or skip any question that makes you feel uncomfortable or anxious. If you decide not to participate, withdraw from the study, or refuse to answer particular questions, you will not be penalised.

IV. Risks

Your voluntary participation in this study comes with a minimal degree of risk. You may for example feel emotional discomfort or anxiety as you discuss your experiences about your family relationships. However I will provide a list of referrals if needed at the end of the interview for follow up treatment for any emotional distress brought up during the interview.

V. Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you by participating in this study. Your participation may assist the Department of Correctional Services and other stakeholders in understanding family situations and family processes of young adult male ex-offenders and their families regarding incarceration and re-integration (returning home) and later be able to find solutions which will directly benefit you. You may find benefit in discussing some of the topics in the interview that have been on your mind and/or of concern to you and your family since you have been home from the correctional centre.

VI. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

Your participation in this study will not be shared with anyone outside of myself, my dissertation supervisor (Dr. M.A Gumani) and the professional transcriber and translator. All documents kept (e.g. notes written during the interviews) and voice recorder will be kept in a locked personal closet. You will have the opportunity to select a pseudonym or false name so that you will not be identified by your real name to protect your anonymity. This pseudonym will be used in any published documents that are a result of this study.

VII. Questions and Concerns

If you have questions after the interview takes place, please feel free to contact me (Lontinah Nchabeleng), at 079 791 2850 or Dr. Masefako Gumani (Supervisor), Department of Psychology, University of South Africa at gumanma@unisa.ac.za. OR Tel 012 429 8267

VIII. Participant's Permission

I have read and understood the Informed Consent letter and the conditions of this research study. I have had all of my questions answered, understand the nature of the study, understand the risks and benefits, know the extent of confidentiality and have been made known to me who I can contact should I have questions or concerns about this project.

I voluntarily give my consent to participate in this study project with the use of the Voice recorder.

Participant Name (pseudo name) (Please print).....

Participant Signature.....

Date.....

APPENDIX B

BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Please provide your personal details which will not be used to identify you in the study but for data analysis

AGE:

1. How old are you?

2. How old were you in your first sentence?

3. How old were you in your last sentence (*applicable to individuals who were incarcerated more than once*)?

CRIMINAL RECORD

1. What kind of offenses were you serving for in your last sentence?

.....

2. How long did you serve for your last sentence?

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

1. What is your current educational level?
2. Are you currently enrolled in an educational programme?
3. While incarcerated, what types of programmes did you participate in, if any?

CHILDREN

1. How many children do you have, if you have any?

EMPLOYMENT

1. Where are you employed? What kind of work do you do if you are employed?

.....

.....

.....

2. If not currently employed, what do you do?

.....

.....

.....

.....

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Please tell me about your experiences of re-entering your family after release from the correctional centre.

Probe: What are the benefits, challenges or risks and benefits encountered?

Probe: How do you deal with the challenges that you experience?

Probe: Who currently lives at home with you?

Probe: What is different about the home environment before and after you were incarcerated?

2. What does being back home mean to you?

Probe: What is your role now that you are back in your family?

Probe: How do you feel about your role in your family now?

Probe: Is the role anyway different or similar with the role before your incarceration?

Probe: What do you think your family thinks and feels when they look at you?

3. Please tell me about your relationship with the members of your family since you have been home.

Probe: What are the benefits or challenges of your relationship with those you live with?

Probe: How do you deal with the challenges you experience with regard to your relationship with them?

Probe: How was your relationship before your incarceration?

Probe: How do you feel and think about your relationship with your family members?

4. Please tell me about things you hope and wish for your future since you are back in the family.

Probe: Where do you see yourself in one year since you are back into your family?

Probe: How do you think your family helps you to achieve the things that you hope or wish for?

5. Thinking back to when you were incarcerated, what kinds of things did you worry about when you thought about your return home?
6. If there were anything that you could change about your re-entry into your family, what would that be?
7. What kinds of re-integration services did you participate in during your incarceration, if any?

Probe: Do you find the re-integration services offered important for family re-entry?

8. What do you think you might need to help you not to re-offend?

Probe: Does your family help you in any way to stay out of incarceration, if so how?

Probe: How do you feel about that?

Probe: Do you have re-integration services offered to you to help you stay out of incarceration since your release?

9. Please tell me more about the context or situations which have typically influenced or affected your experiences of re-entry into the family.

Probe: How does your historical experience influence your re-entry into your family?

Probe: How does your cultural background influence your re-entry into your family?

10. If you have to choose now, would you like to be back into a correctional facility or would you prefer to be home with your family and why?

APPENDIX D

PRESENTATION FOR RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

Nature of the study

This study uses qualitative methods to explore the lived experiences of the young adult male ex-offenders, between the ages of 19-34 in Sekhukhune District. The potential participants will be interviewed face to face by the researcher and the recorder will be used to capture the conversation.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research study is to learn about re-entry into your family after release from a correctional centre, particularly the relationship between you and your family after incarceration that determines how you adjust after release.

Risks and benefits

Participants may for example feel emotional discomfort or anxiety as you discuss your experiences about your family relationships. However, list of referrals if needed at the end of the interview will be provided. No rewards or compensation will be provided to the participants.

Voluntary participation

Participants will not be forced to participate in the study, and they will be required to fill in the consent form.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

To protect you as participant, you will be allowed to use fake name and your real name will not be asked during the interviews. The recorded interview will not be shared with anyone, except my supervisor who monitors the study.

Inclusion criteria

1. Six and above months of post-release experience

2. Not under supervision of correctional services
3. Between 19-34 years
4. Male ex-offender from Limpopo
5. Living in Sekhukhune district

How to participate?

You can contact me directly at 079 791 2850. My personal number will also be displayed on the notice board and potential participants can personally contact me.

APPENDIX E

LETTER FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES FOR THE PARTICIPANT



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MATLALA HOSPITAL

P/BAG X9624

MARBLE HALL

0450

TEL-013 264 5192/5210

Fax.013 264 9616

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

MATLALA DISTRICT HOSPITAL

DEPARTMENT OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Enquiry: Phethi TS

Clinical Psychologist

Date: 08/09/2015

Dear Sir

Re: Confirmation of willingness to offer psychological services to participants

This is to certify that Nchabeleng L (49121650) has arranged with Matlala hospital (Department of Psychology) to refer patients who may have psychological issues resulting from the study (study topic is as follows; young adult ex-offenders experiences of the transition from incarceration to estranged family in a rural community). Department of Psychology at Matlala Hospital will be available to offer any psychological services free of charge.

Your cooperation is highly appreciated and please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards

Phethi T.S

Psychology Department

APPENDIX F

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL CLEARANCE

**Ethical Clearance for M/D students: Research on human participants**

The Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology at Unisa have evaluated this research proposal for a Higher Degree in Psychology in light of appropriate ethical requirements, with special reference to the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Psychologists of the HPCSA.

Student Name: Lontinah Nchabeleng

Student no. 49121650

Supervisor/promoter: Dr MA Gumani

Affiliation: Department of Psychology,
Unisa

Title of project:

Young adult male ex-offenders' experiences of the transition from incarceration to the estranged family in a rural community.

Result: Ethical clearance is granted.

The application was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology at Unisa on the understanding that all ethical requirements regarding informed consent, the right to withdraw from the study, the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the information will be met to the satisfaction of the supervisor.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "HC Janeke".

Prof H C Janeke

Date: 26 October 2015

[For the Ethics Committee]

[Department of Psychology, Unisa]

APPENDIX G

SIMILARITY INDEX REPORT

Complete dissertation

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