

**Exploring the social reintegration experiences of former female offenders who
committed fraud: A case of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality**

by

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Exploring the social reintegration experiences of former female offenders who committed fraud: A case of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality

I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



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DATE

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I would love to express gratitude to the following people:

I humbly thank God for giving me the power and the courage to continue throughout the entire period of my studies.

To my supervisor Dr M Mdakane, thank you for your guidance, integrity, and support during the Master's journey is deeply appreciated. Thanks for your insightful comments and encouragement. May God bless you.

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DEDICATION

I am dedicating this research study to my son Phenyo Mashifane, along with my parents Albert and Wincy Moabelo. Education is a panacea, and I am setting out a good footprint for my son to follow.

ABSTRACT

Most female offender studies focus on the causes of economic crimes and the experience of female offenders during their incarceration. This has resulted in a literature gap regarding female offenders and their experiences after incarceration. This study aimed to explore the social reintegration experiences of former female offenders who committed fraud. A qualitative research methodology was employed, and semi-structured interviews were used to gather information. Former female offenders who had completed their sentencing formed part of the sample. The study was based on labelling and convenience theories and the data were analysed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. The results of the study indicated that stigma, unemployment, anxiety, as well as broken relationships were the main challenges that former female offenders faced during their reintegration into society. The results also revealed that post-incarceration support was not offered by the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) during the social reintegration of the released former female offenders. Furthermore, former female offenders needed counselling and employment opportunities for their successful reintegration into society. Therefore, the study recommends counselling services to deal with the stigma, unemployment, and broken relationships encountered by former female offenders, and to provide gendered social reintegration programmes.

Keywords: Experiences, females, former female offender, fraud, incarceration, post-incarceration, re-entry, social reintegration, South Africa, Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality.

ABSTRAK

Die meeste studies oor vroulike oortreders fokus op die oorsake van ekonomiese misdade en die ervaring van vroulike oortreders gedurende hul gevangenskap. Dit lei tot 'n literatuurgaping betreffende vroulike oortreders en hul ervaring na afloop van hul gevangenskap. Die doel van hierdie studie was 'n ondersoek na die sosiale-herintegrasië-ervarings van vroulike oortreders wat bedrog gepleeg het. 'n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsmetodologie is ingespan en halfgestruktureerde onderhoude is gebruik om die data in te samel. Die steekproef het bestaan uit vroulike gewese oortreders wat hul vonnis uitgedien het. Teoretiese triangulering bestaande uit die etikettering- en gerieflikheidsteorieë is saam met Vertolkende Fenomenologiese Ontleding (*IPA*) gebruik om die data te ontleed. Die resultate van die studie dui daarop dat stigma, werkloosheid, angs, en gebroke verhoudings die vernaamste uitdagings was wat vroulike gewese oortreders te bowe moes kom gedurende hul herintegrasië in die samelewing. Verder toon die navorsingsresultate dat die gewese vroulike oortreders wat vrygelaat is, ná hul gevangenskap geen ondersteuning van die Departement van Korrektiewe Dienste en niestaatsorganisasies ontvang het tydens die sosiale herintegrasië nie. Om weer suksesvol in die samelewing geïntegreer te word, was berading en werkseleenthede ook nodig vir hierdie gewese oortreders. Daarom beveel die studie beradingsdienste aan vir die hantering van die stigma, werkloosheid en gebroke verhoudings wat vroulike gewese oortreders beleef, sowel as sosiale-herintegrasië-programme spesifiek vir vroue.

Sleutelwoorde: Bedrog, ervarings, hertoetreding, na-opsluiting, opsluiting, sosiale herintegrasië, Suid-Afrika, Tshwane Metropolitaanse Munisipaliteit, vroue, voormalige vroulike oortreder

KHUTSOFATŠO

Bontši bja dinyakišišo tša basenyi ba basadi di lebane kudu le mabaka a bosenyi bja ikonomi le maitemogelo a basenyi ba basadi nakong ya go golegwa ga bona. Se se dira gore go be le tlhalelo ya dingwalo ka ga basenyi ba basadi le maitemogelo a bona ka morago ga go golegwa. Maikemišetšo a nyakišišo ye e be e le go hlhloba maitemogelo a go bušetšwa gape setšhabeng ga basenyi ba peleng ba basadi bao ba dirilego bomenetša. Go šomišitšwe mokgwa wa nyakišišo wa khwalithethifi, gomme dipoledišano tšeo di hlophilwego seripa di šomišitšwe go kgoboketša datha. Basenyi ba peleng ba basadi bao ba phethilego kahlolo ya bona ba bopile karolo ya sampole. Go tshepha ya teori yeo e akaretšago diteori tša tlhopho le phihlelelo di šomišitšwe ka Tshekatsheko ya Fenolotši ya Tlhathollo (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis) go sekaseka datha. Dipelo tša nyakišišo ye di bontšhitše gore go kgethollwa, go hloka mošomo, go tshwenyega le dikamano tše di sego gabotse e be e le ditlhohlo tše kgolo tšeo basenyi ba peleng ba basadi ba lebeletšanego le tšona nakong ya ge ba be ba bušetšwa gape setšhabeng. Dipelo di utolotše gape gore ga go na thekgo ya ka morago ga go golegwa yeo e filwego ke Kgoro ya Ditirelo tša Tshokollo le Mekgatlo ye e sego ya Mmušo nakong ya go bušetšwa gape setšhabeng ga basenyi ba peleng ba basadi bao ba lokolotšwego. Se sengwe gape, bao e kilego ya ba basenyi ba basadi ba be ba nyaka dibaka tša thobamatswalo le tša mošomo gore go bušetšwa ga bona gape setšhabeng go atlege. Ka fao, nyakišišo e šišinya ditirelo tša thobamatswalo go šomana le kgethollo, tlhokego ya mešomo le dikamano tše di senyegilego tšeo basenyi ba peleng ba basadi ba lebanago le tšona, le go aba mananeo a go bušetša gape setšhabeng ao a diretšwego basadi.

Mantšu a bohlokwa: Afrika Borwa, basadi, bomenetša, go bušetšwa gape setšhabeng, go golegwa, go tsena gape, ka morago ga go golegwa, maitemogelo, Mmasepala wo Mogolo wa Tshwane, mosenyi wa peleng wa mosadi

DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Economic crimes – Crimes that are financially motivated and include shoplifting, fraud, theft, and corruption (Macquet, 2013).

Former female offender – A female offender who was incarcerated.

Fraud – The abuse of power in the position carried out for financial gain including acts such as bribery, forgery, extortion, theft, conspiracy, and embezzlement (KPMG, 2016).

Rehabilitation – A method of correction that promotes educational and vocational training of offenders in order to change their prospects (Champion, 2001).

Reintegration – A systematic process in which action is taken to work with the offender in custody and upon release so that communities are better protected from harm and reoffending is significantly reduced. It also includes working with offenders, their families, significant others, and victims, in partnerships with statutory and voluntary organisations (Maruna et al., 2004).

White-collar crimes – Financial crimes committed by people in high corporate positions. It also refers to crimes such as fraud, theft, manipulation, and corruption (KPMG, 2016).

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

CSG - Council of State Government

CSPRI - Civil Society Prison Reform Initiative

COVID 19 - Coronavirus Disease of 2019

DCS - Department of Correctional Services

GLFRP - Green Light Family Reintegration Programme

HIV - Human Immune Deficiency Virus

IPA - Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

KPM - Klynveld Peat Marvick Geordie

NGO - Non-Government Organisation

NICRO - National Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of offenders

NIJ - National Institute of Justice

NLEP - Nation Law Employment Project

NSC - National Senior Certificate

PRI - Penal Reform International

REC - Research Ethics Committee

SAMHSA - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

SETA - Sector Education and Training Authority

SVORI - Serious and Violent Offender Re-entry Initiative

TB - Tuberculosis

UNDOC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

USA - United States of America

USCCR - United States Commission on Civil Rights

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the research questions, aims, objectives, rationale of the study, statement of the problem, significance, and the background of the study. The study aimed at exploring the reintegration experiences of former female offenders who were incarcerated for committing fraud in the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. The words ‘re-entry’ and ‘social reintegration’ are used synonymously in the report. Key specific objectives were to explore the reintegration experiences of former female offenders who had committed fraud, eliciting the social reintegration needs of former female offenders who had committed fraud and determining the support available to former female offenders during their social reintegration by the DCS and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

Upon being released, former female offenders face reintegration challenges such as stigma and discrimination, unemployment, family breakdown, lack of shelter, challenges with the custody of their children, stress, and readjustments problems (McIver, 2020; Muthee, 2020). In support of the above claim, gender sensitive literature confirms that there are more social reintegration challenges facing former female offenders than former male offenders (Brown, 2018; Covington, 2002). The additional challenges facing former female offenders include childcare responsibilities, fewer job skills, less education, lower self-esteem, and higher rates of mental health problems (LaVigne et al., 2009).

1.2 Background to the Research Problem

There was a global increase in the number of incarcerated female offenders, and it ranged from 6.1 % in 2000 to 7.2 % in 2019 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC, 2021). South Africa has 2.4% of the female offenders and 97.6 % of the male offenders who were incarcerated worldwide (DCS, 2021). In contrast, the incarcerated female offenders in Africa constitute a small number of 2.9% from the year 2000 to 2019 (UNDOC, 2021). It is important for the correctional service department across the globe to pay attention to the increasing number of the incarcerated female offenders. The underlying root causes of the increase in the number of the incarcerated female offenders need to be investigated.

Table 1.1: Incarcerated female offenders across the globe

Year	Percentage of female offenders
2000	6.1%
2010	6.6%
2019	7.2%

Source: UNDOC (2021)

The above table depicts that there was a high number of incarcerated female offenders across the globe. In addition, there was a huge increase of incarcerated female offenders from the year 2000 to 2019. The high increase of the number of incarcerated female offenders simply means that female offenders needed the attention of policy makers and the social reintegration role-players. In addition, the attention was directed to the DCS to implement relevant strategies aimed at minimising the high rate of incarcerated female offenders. The DCS has the responsibility of providing incarcerated female offenders with proper care during incarceration. The small number of incarcerated females in South Africa can work both in favour of and against the incarcerated offenders. The small percentage of incarcerated females can be ignored, and as a result this then increases if unattended to. Therefore, the DCS has the responsibility of ensuring that the small percentage does not increase. The provision of reintegration and rehabilitation programmes that meet the needs of female offenders could help to minimise the number of incarcerated females.

The available literature depicts that female offenders are mostly incarcerated for economic and less aggressive crimes (Ackerman, 2014; Hesselink & Mostert, 2014). In addition, Macquet (2013) found that South African female offenders committed economic crimes such as theft, fraud, and shoplifting. Economic crimes are crimes that are financially motivated and include shoplifting, fraud, theft, and corruption (Macquet, 2013). Therefore, this study was designed to explore the reintegration experiences of former female offenders who were incarcerated for committing fraud. Most studies on female offenders in South Africa have focused on the causes and the lives of female offenders during the incarceration

period (Artz et al., 2012; Dastile, 2019). Incarceration had severe consequences for the female offenders, and these manifest in the form of social stigma and mental health issues (Goga, 2015). Moreover, Steyn and Hall (2015) confirmed that mental disorders that are prevalent within the South African correctional centres range from depression to substance abuse, psychotic disorders, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorders. The prevalence of mental problems for the incarcerated female offenders clearly depicts that there was a lack of mental treatment during the incarceration period. If mental support was available, former female offenders would probably not re-enter their communities with the same health related problems.

The DCS is the custodian of offender rehabilitation and reintegration in South Africa (DCS, 2021). However, South Africa has rehabilitation and reintegration programmes that have been developed for male offenders but these do not meet all the needs of female offenders (Currie, 2012). The social reintegration role-players need to understand the unique social reintegration needs of former female offenders so that they can render relevant reintegration programmes (McIver, 2020). The DCS still has a long way to go in terms of understanding the narratives of what works better for former female offenders during their re-entry into the community. It is the responsibility of the DCS to design policies that support the social reintegration programmes for former female offenders and enhance their rehabilitation and reintegration. The enhancement of rehabilitation and reintegration could assist in minimising the challenges that former female offenders face during their reintegration into the community.

The current literature lacks research on the reintegration needs of former female offenders (Green et al., 2015). In addition, scholars posit that there is no post-incarceration support for the released offenders when reintegrating back into the community (Chanakira, 2013; Murhula, 2019; Muthee, 2020). There is a need for reintegration stakeholders to understand what former female offenders need during their reintegration in order to design gendered programmes for them (McIver, 2020). This study therefore focused on exploring the social reintegration experiences of former female offenders who were incarcerated for committing fraud. The available literature in South Africa has failed to pay attention to the social reintegration narratives of former female offenders with special reference to fraud (Artz et al., 2012). The current study is unique because it focused on the gap that was ignored

by scholars. The narratives in this case are vital in laying a foundation for the important factors that were needed for successful reintegration of former female offenders.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

Historically women have always been seen as mothers, and associated with care and love, not forgetting their household chores. Times have changed, and women are associated with criminal activities too. There is a global increase in the economic crimes committed by female offenders (Kruger, 2016). The purpose of conducting this study was to get an understanding of the social reintegration experiences of former female offenders who committed fraud. The exploration of the lived experiences of former female offenders may discern the need to improve or enhance reintegration programmes by the relevant stakeholders. Such an improvement in reintegration programmes can be channelled in a manner that caters for the unique needs of females. This study could add value to academia on social reintegration.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Social reintegration is a crime prevention measure of providing support to offenders during their re-entry into society upon their release from incarceration (Mondlane, 2013). Like former male offenders, former female offenders encounter challenges such as unemployment, labelling, rebuilding social relationships, stigma, the psychological impact of incarceration, and discrimination during their reintegration periods (Agboola, 2017; Brown, 2018; McIver, 2020; Muthee, 2020). Magadze (2016) argues that “they are then expected to invent new ways of making a living and surviving without any help from the community, subsequently, they fall back into crime” (p. 2). Thus, Murhula (2019) postulates that reintegration and rehabilitation programmes are not sustainable after female offenders are released from the correctional centres. This shows that most reintegration programmes fail because they are not being monitored after the offender’s release. The challenge is that offender reintegration has not yet been considered a priority or a crime prevention strategy in South Africa (White Paper on Corrections, 2005). Thus, this study explores the social reintegration experiences of former female offenders who were incarcerated for fraud. Their perceptions and untold stories significantly lay a foundation for the vital aspects that former female offenders need for them to reintegrate successfully into the community.

1.5 Research Aim and Objectives

1.5.1 Main aim

The aim of this study was to explore the social reintegration experiences of former female offenders who were incarcerated for committing fraud.

1.5.2 Objectives

1. To elicit the social reintegration needs of former female offenders who committed fraud.
2. To determine the role played by DCS and NGOs during the social reintegration of former female offenders.

1.6 Research Questions

1.6.1 Main question

What are the lived experiences of former female offenders who have committed fraud?

1.6.2 Sub-questions

1. What are the social reintegration needs of former female offenders who have committed fraud?
2. How do DCS and NGOs support the former female offenders during their social reintegration?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The overall purpose of this study was to explore the social reintegration experience of former female offenders who were incarcerated for committing fraud. The study sought to contribute towards the enhancement of social reintegration programmes of former female offenders. It explores the experiences of former female offenders, thus laying a foundation for the monitoring, evaluation, and enhancement of offender reintegration strategies by stakeholders such as the DCS, community-based organisations, and non-profit organisations. The lived experiences could inform role-players about important aspects that perpetuate successful reintegration from the perspectives of former female offenders. This qualitative

study could contribute to the literature on the theory of social reintegration of former female offenders. Moreover, the study could influence policy development on the support of offender reintegration.

1.8 Research strategy and research methods

The study used a qualitative research methodology to collect data on the social reintegration experience of former female offenders. A qualitative research approach was employed in the study because it helps in studying people's behaviour and the lived experiences of a specific phenomenon (Rahman, 2016). Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to recruit the study participants. Purposive sampling was appropriate for the proposed study because it allowed the researcher to choose participants deliberately, based on their characteristics and attributes that served the purpose of the study (De Vos et al., 2011). The second technique was snowball sampling. The snowball sampling method was suitable for the study because it helped in finding participants who were difficult to find (Naderifah et al., 2017). Fraud is a sensitive issue; however, it was easy to recruit research participants through chain referrals.

The inclusion criteria for the study were former female offenders of any racial group who were between the ages of 25 to 60 years. In addition, the inclusion criteria further included former female offenders who were residents of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality and were once incarcerated for fraud. Data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews which explored the social reintegration experiences of former female offenders who were incarcerated for committing fraud. The language used during the interviews was either Sepedi or IsiZulu because most of the participants understood those languages. The interviews were recorded using a tape recorder and transcribed by the researcher. The results from the transcribed data were analysed using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). More details of the analysis of data will further be discussed in chapter three. The research methodology will also be discussed in detail in chapter three.

1.9 Ethical Considerations

Prior to the commencement of the data collection process, ethical clearance to conduct the study was obtained from the Ethics committee of the Department of Psychology,

UNISA. Mouton (2001) emphasised that confidentiality, voluntary participation in a study, and the avoidance of harm, are vital ethical aspects in research. In line with Mouton (2001)'s guidelines for ethical research, the participants were assured that the study would not cause harm to them. The participants signed consent forms to participate in the study and they were assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation in the study. Pseudonyms were used instead of the real names of the participants in compliance with aspects of confidentiality and anonymity. Further details of ethical issues are discussed in chapter three.

1.10 Demarcation of the Study

The participants of this study comprised South African former female offenders who were residents of the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality and who were incarcerated for committing fraud. The findings of the study could not be generalised to former female offenders from other provinces in South Africa. The results of this study could be used as a baseline for offender reintegration.

1.11 Outline of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters.

Chapter one introduces and provides background information on this study by presenting the context, the problem statement, the purpose, the research questions, the research objectives, and the rationale.

Chapter two focuses on the discussion of the existing literature on the social reintegration of former female offenders.

Chapter three discusses the methodology that was employed by the study and the ethical considerations thereof.

Chapter four presents the results of the study with special focus on the social reintegration experiences of former female offenders who were incarcerated for committing fraud. This chapter commences with a discussion of the demographics of the participants and is followed by the discussion of themes and subthemes.

Chapter five outlines the conclusions in line with the objectives of the study. Furthermore, the recommendation for further research and the limitations of the study are also covered in this chapter.

1.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the introduction and background to the study, definitions of key terms, the rationale, significance, statement of the problem, research objectives and questions, research strategy and method, demarcation, and the outline of the chapters. The chapter also asserted that there is a global increase of incarcerated female offenders and thus, it necessitated a systematic investigation. Overall, the chapter depicted the significance of and the need to conduct this study. The next chapter focuses on the literature review and the theoretical background of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the introduction and background, rationale, significance, statement of the problem, research objectives, and research questions. The current chapter discusses the statistics of incarcerated women and crime, the incarceration experience of female offenders, rehabilitation programmes, re-entry challenges, coping mechanisms, and post-release support by the DCS, NICRO and Khulisa. The labelling and convenience theory form part of the theories upon which the study is based.

2.2 Women and Crime

This section discusses the statistics of incarcerated female offenders, the types of crimes committed, and the types of crimes committed by females and their pathways to crime. It is estimated that female offenders account for between 2–6% of total offenders and are incarcerated for fewer crimes than male offenders in Africa (Ackerman, 2014). Globally, there are 740 000 incarcerated female offenders and the data also show an increase of more than 100 000 over 10 years (Global Prison Trends, 2021). The incarcerated female offenders constitute 2.4% while the male offenders constitute 97,6% of total offenders in South Africa (DCS, 2021). The table below presents a historical overview of South African incarcerated female offenders.

Table 2.1: Incarcerated females in South Africa

Year	Number of female offenders	Total percentage of female offenders
2000	3,966	2.5%
2005	4,072	2.2%
2010	3,694	2.2%
2015	4,118	2.6%
2021	3,453	2.4%

Source: World Prison Brief: South Africa (2021)

The above table shows a slight increase in the number of incarcerated female offenders in South Africa from the year 2005 to 2015. However, there was a decline of two percent for the incarcerated female offenders between the years 2015 to 2021. The table shows that, despite the changes from the years 2000 to 2021, female offenders still constitute a small portion of the incarcerated population.

2.3 Pathways to Crime

Artz et al. (2012) highlight that female offenders' pathways to criminal behaviour include street women, harmed and harming women, drug connected women, and battered women. The table below presents a summary of pathways to crime:

Table 2.2: Pathways to crime

Category	Characteristics
Street Women	Characterised by women who have run away from home due to domestic violence, delinquency, and dropping out of school. They are often exposed to drugs and prostitution.
Harmed and Harming women	Harmed and harming women have a history of traumatic childhood through child abuse, neglect, and violence.
Drug Connected Women	Drug connected women are characterised by either selling or using drugs without being addicted to them.
Battered Women	These are the types of women who have been exposed to extensive domestic violence in life.

Source: Artz et al. (2012)

The above table distinguishes various factors that predispose female offenders to committing crimes. The table also shows that the causes of crime among female offenders are deeply rooted in their background. However, not all causes of crime stem from the offenders' background.

2.4 Crimes Committed by Female Offenders

This study focused on exploring the social reintegration experiences of former female offenders who were incarcerated for committing fraud. Therefore, it is vital to discuss the factors that drive female offenders to commit economic crimes or fraud. The main motivation for females to commit crimes lies in the economic need for money (Steyn & Booyens, 2017). Hesselink and Mostert (2014) also conducted a study on female offenders who were incarcerated for economic crimes, and discovered that female offenders committed crimes due to personal choices, financial problems, personal greed, unresolved personal problems, and substance abuse. Dastile (2019) conducted a study on black female offenders in South Africa and discovered that female offenders who committed fraud constituted 9%, and that greed and financial problems caused them to commit crime. The study was based on the general female population who were Black Africans. Mostert (2018) recently conducted a study on sentenced female offenders in Gauteng and the results depicted that lack of self-control and greed, financial difficulties, a troubled family life and domestic violence were the main causes of fraud among female offenders.

2.5 Pains of incarceration

This section focuses on psychological problems such as depression, major depressive disorder, and post-traumatic disorder as a result of incarceration. Incarceration has severe consequences for female offenders, and it includes dependency, social stigma, and mental health issues (Haney, 2001). The Substance Abuse Mental and Health Services Association (SAMHSA) (2020) claims that both male and female offenders experience trauma during their incarceration period, but females experience it more as they also develop post-traumatic stress disorders after being released. This argument is supported by Steyn and Hall (2015) who confirmed the prevalence of depression, substance abuse, psychotic disorders, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorders in South African correctional centres.

Rule 18 of The Bangkok Rules (2010) encourages the facilitation of regular health screening for pap smears, breast cancer screening, and all other gynaecological services to incarcerated female offenders. Most correctional centres do not offer these services because they are characterised by overcrowding, food shortage, and scarcity of the provision of health care services. Furthermore, the health conditions of female offenders are characterised by a shortage of health staff, high rate of Tuberculosis (TB) and Human Immune Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and other infectious diseases (Artz et al., 2012). Since female offenders do not get gendered health treatment in correctional centres, this simply means that they are released with health problems. Therefore, the unmet health needs of female offenders should become a priority during their reintegration period.

2.6 Rehabilitation Programmes

This section outlines the rehabilitation programme that former female offenders attend during their incarceration period. It also outlines the roles played by various stakeholders in helping the offenders. It is of paramount importance to define rehabilitation prior to a discussion of rehabilitation programmes. Murhula (2019) defines rehabilitation as a process through which an offender is helped to minimise criminal behaviour. Champion (2001) on the other hand, defines rehabilitation as a process of corrections that promotes the educational and vocational training of former offenders to bring about reform and help to integrate them back into society to lead productive and conforming lives. This means that former offenders are equipped with the skills to cope with the demands of life back in communities. In a nutshell, rehabilitating offenders is all about the behaviour modification of offenders and equipping them with skills that help them after their release.

The DCS has a responsibility to facilitate the rehabilitation programmes for offenders during their incarceration period (DCS, 2021). The challenge with the DCS is that the rehabilitation of offenders occurs in the context of an outdated design which is not conducive to the rehabilitation of offenders (Goga, 2015). As a result, there is little participation in reintegration and rehabilitation programmes by female offenders; there are also very few gendered programmes on offer (Qhogwana, 2017). South Africa has rehabilitation and reintegration programmes that have been developed for male offenders but these do not meet the all the needs of female offenders (Currie, 2012)., Spain similarly has rehabilitation and

reintegration of former female offenders programmes that are based on male profiles and do not cater for all the unique needs of females (Cerezo, 2016). The rehabilitation and reintegration programmes that female offenders receive during their incarceration period can be enhanced so that they are suitable for all genders.

2.5.1 Rehabilitation programmes at DCS

The DCS offender rehabilitation programmes that include skills development, psychological services, social work services, health and spiritual care (DCS, 2021). Concerning the rehabilitation of female offenders, “most female rehabilitation programmes are based on traditional male-dominated theories and centre on education, employment, economic status, drug use, delinquent peers, anger, and aggression” (Qhogwana, 2017, p. 76).

2.5.2 Psychological and social work services

Psychological and social work services are used by the DCS for the rehabilitation of offenders. Psychological services fall under the Psychological Services Directorate which focuses on the promotion of the mental and emotional wellbeing of all offenders. Psychologists diagnose offenders through interviews or psychometric tests during their assessments. All offenders also receive individual, group and family therapy by the psychologist, thus strengthening their rehabilitation in the long run (DCS, 2021). The above-mentioned information highlights the importance of psychological services offered in a correctional centre to offenders as they need emotional support to correct or modify their behaviour.

The social work services include crisis intervention, therapeutic interventions, development, administrative, assessment and evaluation services. Social work services empower the offenders with social functioning skills and help them solve their problems. Casework, group work and community work are the methods used to implement social work services (DCS, 2018). Social work services help the offenders to manage their social lives while the psychological services focus more on the mental wellbeing of offenders.

2.5.3 Health care services and spiritual care

The Directorate of Health Care offers free healthcare services to all offenders, while the spiritual services directorate is responsible for the moral and spiritual development of inmates (DCS, 2021). The DCS Spiritual or Religious services comprises the following role-players:

Table 2.3: Spiritual services role-players

Role player	Function
1. Chaplain	To manage the spiritual care programmes at the correctional facility
1. Spiritual and moral development coordinators	To coordinate spiritual care programmes at the correctional facility
2. Spiritual volunteers from different religions/churches	To assist in the facilitation of spiritual care programmes
3. External faith-based organisations, non-government organisations and non-profit organisations	To assist and support the facilitation of spiritual care programmes

Source: DCS (2021)

The above table depicts the role played by various stakeholders in supporting the efforts that are coordinated by the DCS for offender rehabilitation. The DCS also has spiritual services that help offenders through counselling, family support, and spiritual care (DCS, 2021). The DCS's health care services focus on offering the services that cater for the wellbeing of the offenders. In addition, the health services offer regular screening and treatment of communicable (TB and HIV) and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension (DCS, 2021). It is important to note the role played by both health and spiritual services on the wellbeing of the offenders. DCS's health care services also consist of services from various specialists such as gynaecologists, psychiatrists, physicians, orthopaedic surgeons, and urologists (DCS, 2018).

2.5.4 Education, skills development, and training programmes

The DCS's directorate of skills development offers educational, and skills development and training programmes for the rehabilitation of offenders. The main purpose in this case is to improve the education and skills development of the incarcerated offenders (DCS, 2012). The DCS offers skills programmes in wood machining, metal work, furniture polishing, fitting and turning, craft baking, spray and powder coating to empower the incarcerated offenders (DCS, 2018).

In addition, the DCS has partnered with the Department of Basic Education to facilitate the assessment for educational programmes such as the National Senior Certificate (NSC) (DCS, 2021). The DCS's skills development programmes help offenders by improving the skills of offenders, promoting self-employment and encouraging offenders to participate in learnerships, training, and skills programmes (DCS, 2012). The DCS has partnered with a variety of Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs) to facilitate the skills programmes (both short and long) and various trainings in different institutions of higher learning (DCS, 2021). The researcher is of the view that the skills development programmes offered by the DCS is a good approach but can be channelled in a way that targets the scarce skills in the market. It is of paramount importance to note that the education and skills development programmes are intended to help offenders when reintegrating back into the community (DCS, 2021).

2.5.5 Role played by National Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders

The organisation of NICRO was established in 1910 and focuses on crime prevention and offender reintegration with operations in all provinces except for Northwest (NICRO, 2021). Firstly, their Diversion programme focuses on a rehabilitative and educational approach aimed at restoration, reconciliation, and healing (Raj, 2016). Secondly, Raj (2016) explains that the Tough Enough programme targets offenders six months or less before their release and helps them with innovative ways of preparing for reintegration. NICRO offers reintegration services to offenders in general and it does not outline programmes that are specifically designed for females only (NICRO, 2021). The NICRO Annual Report shows that 22% of female offenders and 77.4% of male offenders have received their services (NICRO, 2021). It clearly shows that more males than females received NICRO's services.

2.5.6 Role played by Khulisa

Khulisa is a non-profit organisation that was established in 1997 with a special focus on rehabilitation. Over the years, Khulisa's services have expanded and they include the following programmes: Diversion and crime prevention services, entrepreneurship, agriculture, and mentoring youth in school (Khulisa, 2021). Khulisa uses a programme called My Path which has three phases: the first phase focuses on learning about understanding oneself, incarceration life, and how to find personal capabilities; the second phase dwells more on the offender's understanding of the outside world by focusing on goal setting and stress management; the third phase focuses on business and budget management (Dlamini, 2014). Having reviewed the rehabilitation programmes offered by NGOs, one can infer that they are isolated and do not adequately reach out to offenders once released (Chanakira, 2013). The roles played by NICRO and Khulisa show that they offer general reintegration and rehabilitation programmes. It also shows that their programmes are not designed specifically for female offenders. The two non-government organisations offer general services to both male and female offenders. It seems that there are no rehabilitation programmes designed specifically for female offenders. This is supported by scholars who discovered that research failed to ameliorate the rehabilitation programmes for female offenders (Artz et al., 2012; Singh, 2009; Qhogwana, 2017). Indeed, South Africa has a huge task to carry out if the DCS intends to rehabilitate female offenders.

2.6 Reintegration Programmes after Release

This section discusses the status of social reintegration programmes in South Africa and countries that offer reintegration programmes specifically for former female offenders. The social reintegration programmes are intended to supervise and support former offenders so that they reintegrate well into society (UNDOC, 2018). The discussion covers Australia, Canada, the United States of America and South Africa. It is important to define reintegration in this regard before getting into a discussion of the types of reintegration that are offered to former female offenders after their release. Reintegration is a complex process that happens and progresses with time (Davis et al., 2012). It simply means that reintegration does not happen in a day or two; rather it is a process through which former offenders learn to live a sustainable life after being released. Maruna et al. (2004) are of the view that reintegration is:

a systematic and evidence-based process by which actions are taken to work with the offender in custody and on release so that the communities are better protected from harm and reoffending is significantly reduced. It encompasses the totality of working with prisoners, their families, significant others, and victims in partnerships with statutory and voluntary organizations (p. 289).

This means that that reintegration is a teamwork initiative that yields results over time. This definition shows that reintegration is not one person's problem or responsibility. It incorporates the role of families, friends, community members, non-government organisations and the DCS.

2.6.1 Australia

Victoria Correction developed the Better Pathways Strategy in 2005 to facilitate the successful reintegration of former female offenders through the provision of housing, employment, counselling, substance abuse treatment and family connections. The Better Pathways Strategy was also developed in response to the increasing number of incarcerated female offenders and the rate of recidivism in Victoria, Australia (Sheehan, 2014). The Better Pathway's post-incarceration support to former female offenders in Australia includes financial support, family reunification, practical support to women through long-term, affordable secure housing, employment opportunities as well as access to drug and alcohol rehabilitation and training (Sheehan, 2014). In addition, there is a role played by the Out-care's St John of God Women's Program in the reintegration of former female offenders in Australia, as it supports former female offenders for up to six months upon release from incarceration. Their services include counselling, short-term crisis care for accommodation, employment prospects identification, and help to access government benefits (Lackner, 2012).

2.6.2 Canada

The community-based residential facility in Canada helps former female offenders with housing in a setup like a halfway house. They provide similar services to halfway houses and permit former offenders to look for jobs and further their studies (Australian Institution of Crime, 2018). The Peer Health Mentor Programme is another programme in Canada that helps former female offenders immediately upon their release to secure housing and health care services (Penal Reform International, 2019). The Canadian Government programmes may be worth adapting to a South African context.

2.6.3 United states of America

The United State of America is one of the countries that supports the reintegration of former offenders. The initiatives of supporting former offenders includes the development of the Second Chance Act, Helping Women Recover, the Serious Violent Offender Re-entry Initiative (SVORI) and Beyond Trauma (Garcia & Ritter, 2012).

i. Second Chance Act

The Second Chance Act was developed in 2008 by the United State government with the aim of providing funding for the reintegration programmes for all former offenders. Through the second chance initiative, the government works in partnership with non-profit organisations, faith-based organisations and the community in the facilitation of housing assistance, job opportunities, educational programmes, substance treatment, and basic life skills for the former offenders who re-enter their communities (Council of State Government Justice Centre, 2014).

ii. Helping Women Recover

Helping Women Recover is a programme that focuses on helping former female offenders who have a history of substance abuse. The programme helps former female offenders for a period of 18 months after their release from the correctional facility (National Institute of Justice [NIJ], 2021).

iii. Beyond Trauma

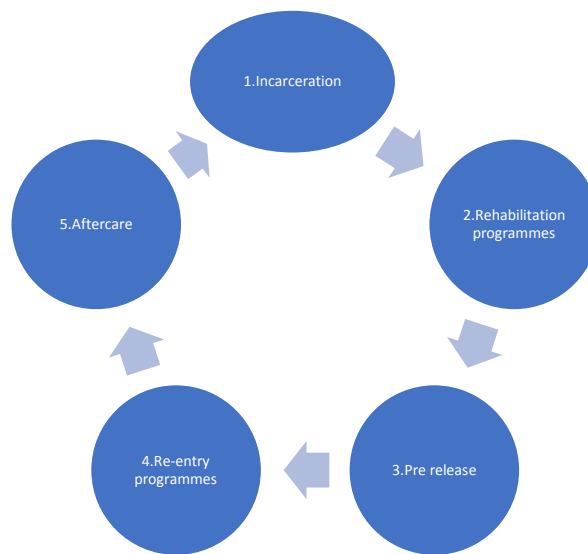
The other programme that helps former female offenders is Beyond Trauma. Beyond Trauma helps former female offenders with counselling skills that are useful in coping with reintegration challenges. The content of the programme includes focusing on self, rebuilding broken relationships, sexuality, spirituality, violence, abuse, and trauma (NIJ, 2021).

i.v. Serious and Violent Offender Re-entry Initiative (SVORI)

The SVORI was developed to help former female offenders to minimise their criminal behaviour, by providing shelter, education, and employment (Garcia & Ritter, 2012). It is of paramount importance to develop reintegration programmes designed to address the needs of

former female offenders. The reintegration role-players need to understand that there must be a link between the rehabilitation programmes, pre-release plans, reintegration programmes and aftercare (UNDOC, 2018). SVORI has good programmes and could be adopted by various countries with the intention of helping former female offenders.

Figure 2.1: Incarceration and aftercare processes in USA



Source: UNDOC (2018)

The above figure illustrates the summary of the United States of America’s approach of managing the incarceration and aftercare processes. It also shows that all the processes from incarceration and to the release are inter-connected. South Africa does not comply with the five steps that are required to achieve successful reintegration of offenders.

2.6.4 South Africa

The DCS has a social reintegration unit that focuses on the supervision of offenders who are placed under parole, and they are helped to reintegrate into community (DCS, 2021). The social reintegration services are not clear on how they assist in the reintegration of female offenders back into their communities, nor on whether the help former offenders who are not under parole or have completed their sentencing. Moreover, the annual report does not list the type of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes designed for female offenders.

This a big challenge as former offenders who have completed their sentence still need support. The various stakeholders cannot manage the rehabilitation of these offenders without assistance. These role-players need the support of the DCS and this can only be done through coordinated efforts to run successful reintegration programmes. The coordinated efforts could also entail managing the reintegration process like the procedure in which the DCS manages the admission of offenders.

The current literature confirms that the released offenders do not get support from the DCS after being released from the correctional facility (Chanakira, 2013; Murhula, 2019; Muthee, 2020). Furthermore, the correctional services department makes use of the same reintegration and rehabilitation programmes that are designed for males to rehabilitate former female offenders (Brown, 2018). The DCS needs to work with non-government organisations that are already facilitating reintegration programmes in communities. Moreover, the DCS is responsible for coordinating the post-incarceration reintegration programmes to avoid the duplication of services. It is also important for the DCS to design reintegration programmes that will benefit both male and female former offenders. In support of the enhancement of programmes, some important aspects to consider include gendered programming, follow-up services for the released offenders, basic provision of housing and employment and the overall development of re-entry plans (SAMHSA, 2020). There is a need for the continuation of support and services offered at the halfway house to the former female offenders in order to achieve successful reintegration into the community (Van Wyk, 2014).

i. Lessons learnt

There are countries such as Australia, the United States of America and Canada that have good programmes to assist former female offenders to reintegrate back into society. The important aspect for the reintegration can be the development of ‘second chance’ projects and other initiatives that could mediate re-entry challenges for former female offenders. Once more, shelter, counselling, and employment seem to be the common factors for inclusion when preparing former female offenders for re-entry.

2.7 Re-entry Challenges Facing Former Female Offenders

Former female offenders are released from correctional facilities without attending gendered rehabilitation programmes and at some point, their needs are not met (Carter, 2012). In support of the claim above, literature confirms that former female offenders face gendered challenges such as lack of shelter, stigma, unemployment, broken relationships, child advocacy and post-traumatic stress disorder (Currie, 2012; Richie, 2001). Former female offenders also face re-entry challenges that include stigma and discrimination, unemployment, family breakdown, lack of shelter, challenges with the custody of their children, stress and readjustment problems (Brown, 2018, McIver, 2020; Muthee, 2020).

i. Lack of shelter

It is imperative to note that former offenders need food, clothing, and shelter upon their release from the correctional facility (UNDOC, 2018). In most cases, former offenders who struggle with shelter have no families to help them after their release (Kerley, 2013). Former offenders face housing or shelter challenges upon their release from incarceration regardless of their gender (Brown, 2018; Muthee, 2020). In contrast to some former female offenders, other families help them with finances, housing, and social support after their release from the correctional facility (Western et al., 2014). In support of the role played by families, several authors corroborate that often families helped the former female offenders with a place to stay and welcomed them back (Noble, 2014; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAHMSA], 2020).

ii. Relationship challenges

The family serves as the first source of support that former female offenders reach when reintegrating into society after incarceration (UNDOC, 2018). Families also help former offenders with finances, housing, and social support after their release from the correctional facility (Western et al., 2014). The most crucial step in the reintegration process is to rebuild the relationships with family members (SAHMSA, 2020). However, it is difficult for former female offenders to re-establish family relationships because of the pain and separation that was caused by their incarceration (Muntingh, 2009). In support of this claim, Agboola (2014) has conducted a study in Gauteng province and the results revealed that

former female offenders experience broken relationships with their partners and children after being released from the correctional facility. Makhuza (2020) similarly found that former female offenders struggled to ameliorate mother-to-child relationships. Rebuilding the relationship with families serves as the most vital factor in the reintegration of former offenders (Burden, 2019). This is echoed by Brown (2018) who also argue for rebuilding broken relationships during social reintegration. It is true that former female offenders need a strong relationship with their significant other in order to settle well into community. Former offenders experience psychological readjustment during their reintegration process (Brand, 2016). Chikadzi (2017) similarly found that former offenders struggle to adjust to life back in communities because they are used to the incarceration culture.

iii. Stigma in communities

Both male and female offenders experience stigma and discrimination in communities upon their release from incarceration (Chanakira, 2013; Chikadzi, 2017; Labid, 2016; Muthee, 2020). The reintegration period is a critical time when former female offenders require support from their communities and families in order to reintegrate successfully into the community (Muthee, 2020). The stigma that former offenders experience is not conducive to successful re-entry into the community. In addition, Magadze (2016) posits that former offenders experience continuous stigma during their re-entry into community. The study titled "*Why do they need to punish you more? Women's lives after imprisonment*" revealed that former female offenders experience the continuation of stigma even after their release back into communities (Agboola, 2017). The continuation of stigma and discrimination against former offenders signals the lack of knowledge and forgiveness by people in communities. The DCS needs to conduct more awareness campaigns to educate people about forgiveness and reintegration processes.

iv. Unemployment

Former offenders face difficulties in securing employment because of their criminal records (Cantora, 2015; James, 2016). In a related study, Broek and Black (2021) found that former female offenders experienced discrimination based on their criminal records when searching for jobs. There is abundant evidence that the journey towards looking for employment is negatively impacted by the criminal records of former offenders (Ahmed &

Lang, 2017; Magadze, 2016; Vandala, 2017). The United States is using the ‘Ban the Box’ legislation which has also been adopted in over 150 other countries. The ‘Ban the Box’ system encourages employers to consider the qualifications of job seekers over their criminal records status when appointing staff (National Law Employment Project [NLEP], 2021). Methods similar to the ‘Ban the Box’ system create fair recruitment of job seekers into various positions. It is important to hire new staff based on qualifications rather than disqualified them due to criminal records. South Africa can adopt the same concept of ‘Ban the Box’ on the public service forms that are used by various government departments for recruitment purposes. In contrast to South Africa, Australia forbids discrimination against former offenders with criminal records and encourages fair recruitment of positions based on qualifications (Broek & Black, 2021).

A study conducted in Australia found that professional bodies also discriminate against former offenders for registering with them (Broek & Black, 2021). In support of this claim, Mdakane (2022) came to the same conclusion by finding that professional bodies prohibit former offenders from registering with them. The discrimination by professional bodies and by people in communities symbolises a permanent discrimination against former offenders. There is still more that needs to be done in order to help former offenders to be re-employed without being subjected to discrimination because of their criminal record. It seems inconsistent that institutions of higher learning permit former offenders to further their studies while employers and professional bodies disqualify them because of their criminal records. Perhaps the recruitment of positions by employers need a discussion of criminal record status rather than the qualification and experience. Surely these are some of the burning issues that DCS and the Department of Employment and Labour could discuss going forward. The Department of Employment and Labour can come up with initiatives like ‘Ban the Box’. Such initiatives could be piloted in government departments to check if they are indeed working. The main aim is to make sure that former offenders with qualifications are fairly recruited and given job opportunities. Employing former offenders is another way of developing them, and this helps in successful reintegration.

2.8 Coping Mechanisms

There are coping mechanisms used by former female offenders for the reintegration challenges. The current literature depicts that former female offenders use motherhood, relocation, and faith as coping mechanisms to face the hardships of re-entry (Larsen, 2017; McIver, 2020; Muthee, 2020).

i. Motherhood

A study conducted by Larsen (2017) in Texas confirmed that former female offenders used motherhood as an opportunity for 'a second chance'. In addition, Brown (2018) and McIver, (2020) confirm that motherhood helps former female offenders to reintegrate successfully. The main point derived from the above literature is that former female offenders use motherhood to rewrite their histories. Children seem to be a source of hope and motivation during their reintegration period (Covington, 2002; Noble, 2014).

ii. Relocation

Furthermore, Muthee (2020) discovered that former female offenders in Kenya use relocation, renting houses, and staying with relatives or friends to cope with the challenges of re-entry into society. This simply means that former offenders prefer to commence their reintegration life away from people known to them.

iii. Faith

Former female offenders use faith and believing in God as a coping mechanism (Larsen, 2017; McIver, 2020). A study conducted in the Western Cape found that faith facilitates successful reintegration by helping former female offenders with restoration, reconciliation, healing, and behavioural change. Faith-based organisations offer spiritual services for both the incarcerated and the released offenders (Frantz, 2017). In addition to the above findings, Johnson (2013) found that the coping mechanisms used by former offenders includes counselling, faith, skills development, and the rebuilding of relationships in the community. Faith is the commonly used coping mechanism by former female offenders because they believe that God does not judge anyone (Larsen, 2017). The social reintegration needs of former female offenders will be discussed in the next section.

2.9 Social Reintegration Needs of Former Female Offenders

This section discusses the needs of former female offenders to achieve reintegration into the community. Successful reintegration refers to the process whereby former offenders settle well into the community and live a crime-free life (Brown & Bloom, 2009). It is imperative for the DCS to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the former female offenders prior to their release and come up with a detailed reintegration plans that could translate into successful reintegration (SAMHSA, 2020). The social reintegration needs of former female offenders are unique because of their gendered pathways to crime such as a history of being abused, substance abuse, and taking the responsibility of caring for the children (SAHMSA, 2020). In addition, former female offenders have unique psychological and emotional needs that differ from male former offenders. It appears that policymakers do not comprehend the gender difference or the needs of female offenders when designing reintegration programmes (Green et al., 2015; Holmstrom et al., 2017).

The following factors help former female offenders to reintegrate successfully into the community: hope and courage, faith, support from significant others, the ability to meet basic needs, having shelter, medical help and employment (Lavigne et al, 2009; McIver, 2020). Larsen's (2017) study in Dallas Texas confirms that former female offenders believe that identity transformation, job resources, religion or faith and reintegration programmes are vital aspects for achieving successful reintegration into society. In another related study on the reintegration of former female offenders, the results indicated that former female offenders need counselling during their reintegration into the community (Van Wyk, 2014). It is clear that former female offenders need hope, faith, personal strength, meeting basic needs, and support from family and friends for successful re-entry into the community (Noble, 2014). The above literature shows what former female offenders need, for them to reintegrate successfully. Former female offenders need help and support in solving the re-entry challenges. If indeed the assessment of former female offenders was conducted properly, it would not be difficult for the DCS to meet the needs of former female offenders.

The White Paper on Corrections (2005) acknowledges female offenders, but it is silent on the strategies for addressing the unique needs of female offenders. This shows that there are no policies in place to support the transition of former female offenders into society.

More support from the DCS is needed to support former female offenders. The Bangkok Rules (2010) acknowledge that the needs of incarcerated female offenders are not always met by correctional facilities. This statement simply means that even the post-incarceration needs of former female offenders could not be met. The researcher believes that more budget and resources are needed in South Africa for the DCS to invest in gendered programming. There is a need for reintegration stakeholders to understand what former female offenders need during their reintegration journey to design appropriate programmes for them (McIver, 2020). Brand (2016) found that former female offenders believe that the reintegration process is a psychological concept. The above literature depicts that reintegration role-players need to understand re-entry from the narratives of former female offenders. The understanding of feminine narratives by role-players could help to address the challenges that former female offender face when re-entering the community. The next discussion focuses on the theoretical background that was used in the study.

2.10 Theoretical Framework

Convenience and labelling theories guided this study. The labelling theory explains the stigma of labels that offenders face during the reintegration process while the convenience theory explains the motives for committing fraud. These two theories complement each other and offer significant views to help understand the reintegration experiences of former female offenders who committed fraud. Some of the studies that have employed the convenience theory include Mostert (2018) and Muto (2011) while the labelling theory was used by Chanakira (2013), Magadze (2016) and Ndike (2014).

2.10.1 Labelling theory

The labelling theory was developed by Howard Becker in 1963 with a special emphasis on social labelling (Gwynn, 1993). The labelling theory focuses on the role of social labelling in the development of crime or deviant behaviour. The labels create a stigma of deviant behaviour making it difficult for labelled groups to be accepted in societies (Bernburg, 2009). According to Anderson and Taylor (2009), the labelling theory suggests that once a person is labelled a deviant the affected person will be denied essential life opportunities because of this stigma, and thus develop a greater propensity to repeat deviant behaviours. This theory labels women as non-violent but Gwynn (1993) argues that the

labelling theory is not directed at women. The theory failed to explain which labelling reinforces deviant behaviour (Bernburg, 2009). Gwynn (1993) further shows that the theory failed to explain the deviant behaviour of women because it does not outline the structural explanation of crime.

2.10.2 Peter Gottschalk's Convenience Theory

The convenience theory was developed by Peter Gottschalk in 2015 to explain why employees commit white-collar crimes. It has three dimensions namely, the economic, organisational, and behavioural dimensions (Gottschalk, 2016). The economic dimension refers to a situation it is convenient to attain illegal financial gain to cover specific needs; the organisational dimension consists of the offender who has the necessary access to money and can hide the illegal financial transactions, and lastly, the behavioural dimension refers to the ability of the offender to justify and accept their criminal behaviour (Gottschalk, 2016). The achievement of personal goals in the workplace together with aspects such as low self-control and techniques of neutralisation make white-collar crime a convenient option to abuse workplace opportunities (Gottschalk, 2017). It is important to note that “labelling theory successfully constructs the concept of convenience and explains the relationship between the desire for profit, opportunity in the workplace and willingness to engage in criminal behaviour” (Gottschalk, 2017, p. 6). In a nutshell, convenience theory views greed for money as the main factor that drives people to commit fraud. This theory is relevant to the proposed study because it explains the motives or reasons why people commit fraud.

2.11 Chapter Summary

The literature has outlined various factors that predispose female offenders to crime, the types of crimes they commit, and the fact that female offenders constitute less than 3% of the incarcerated population in South Africa. In addition, various rehabilitation programmes and the psychological pains of incarceration were discussed. The challenges faced by former female offenders when reintegrating into community include stigma, lack of shelter, unemployment, broken relationships, child advocacy, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Former female offenders use different coping mechanisms. It is evident that South Africa does not have reintegration programmes designed for former female offenders. South Africa can use lessons from Australia, Canada and USA to pilot reintegration programmes

specifically for former female offenders. The next chapter focuses on the research methodology that was used when undertaking the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the literature review and the theoretical background. This chapter discusses all the steps that the researcher has followed when conducting the research. In addition, the current chapter explains and justifies the methodology used in the study. The study employed a qualitative research methodology which enabled in-depth collection of data on the social reintegration experiences of former female offenders who were incarcerated for committing fraud. The selection of participants, data collection and analysis method, ethical protocol, and measures of trustworthiness are also discussed in this chapter.

3.2 Rationale for Using a Qualitative Research Approach

A qualitative approach was used in the study because the study aimed at exploring the social reintegration experience of former female offenders who committed fraud. The qualitative research approach was deemed appropriate because it is good at exploring the lived experience of research participants (Creswell, 2013). Domegan and Fleming (2007)

confirm that qualitative research has the strength of enabling one to explore social phenomena in instances where there is scarcity of knowledge about the issue being studied. Mohajan (2018) adds that qualitative research is good at answering the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions about the social phenomena being studied.

3.3 Rationale for Using Interpretative Phenomenology

The study has employed the interpretative phenomenology (Hermeneutic Phenomenology) design which was developed by Martin Heidegger (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). Interpretative phenomenology focuses on the study of individual narratives with the intention of understanding the participants’ lives and their world (Neubauer et al., 2019). Lopez and Wills (2004) believe that interpretative phenomenology looks for meanings that are produced through the narratives of the participants. Interpretative phenomenology was suitable for the study because it focuses on exploring the lived experiences of the research participants and it also explains their stories from the participants’ perspectives (Qutoshi, 2018). In addition, the study has employed interpretative phenomenology because it invests more in describing the realities of the research participants (Qutoshi, 2018).

The researcher interpreted and discussed the study results from the perspectives of former female offenders who were incarcerated for fraud. The researcher’s role in this case clearly depicts that the researcher cannot be detached from the study (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). Furthermore, interpretative phenomenology acknowledges the researcher’s role of leading and guiding the processes of the inquiry (Neubauer et al., 2019). The researcher supports the assumptions of interpretative phenomenology because researchers form part of the research project team. Once more, researchers play a crucial role in steering the research project in the right direction and in the discussion of the results. Lopez and Wills (2004) also support the notion of regarding the researcher as the expert in the research process.

3.4 The Research Process

The research process includes all the necessary steps that were taken by the researcher during the data collection stage.

3.4.1 Selection of participants

The selection of participants refers to the selection of the sampled population for inclusion in the study. Durrheim and Painter (2010) define a population as the larger pool of participants from which study participants are drawn. The study population comprised former female offenders who were residents of Tshwane district municipality, who had been incarcerated for committing fraud. Etikan et al. (2016) define a sample as a portion of a population selected for a particular study. Klopper (2008) defines a sample as the population that is included and meets the criteria for inclusion in a study. The study made use of two non-probability sampling methods namely, purposive and snowball.

Purposive sampling refers to a judgemental sample whose characteristics serve the purpose of the study (De Vos et al., 2011). Purposive sampling was appropriate for this study as it allowed the researcher to deliberately choose former female offenders who had once been incarcerated for fraud to share their social reintegration experiences. The researcher was familiar with some former female offenders who had sentenced for committing fraud and used purposive sampling to select the participant. The first participant was able to link the researcher with two former female offenders who met the criteria for inclusion.

The researcher also approached the Community Corrections unit to request the contact details of former female offenders who met the criteria for inclusion. The Community Corrections is a unit of the DCS that is based in the community. Their role is to facilitate the reintegration of offenders who are on parole (DCS, 2021). Consequently, the researcher was unable to source participants from the Community Corrections department because it had former offenders who were still under the care of the DCS and did not meet the inclusion criteria. The researcher reached out to the participants from their place of residence during the data collection process. Etikan et al. (2016) explain that chain referral begins with a participant who serves as a seed through which other participants are recruited. Naderifah et al. (2017) emphasise that in the selection of participants through snowball sampling, existing participants recruit future participants among their acquaintances. The snowball sampling method made it easy for the researcher to acquire former female offenders who were difficult to find. The snowball sampling method was suitable for the study because it would have been cumbersome to randomly identify former female offenders who had been incarcerated for

committing fraud. Fraud is a sensitive subject; however, it was easy to acquire participants through chain referrals for inclusion as participants in this study.

3.4.2 Sample size

Sample size is an important aspect during of the collection of data (Creswell, 2013). Kroll et al. (2007) confirm that sample size is determined by the research topic and the information that the inquiry aims to obtain. A small sample of ten participants was used in this study because it was difficult to source more participants who met the inclusion criteria. In addition, the study was able to discover the meaning of the lived experiences of the social reintegration period from the perspectives of former female offenders who were incarcerated for fraud.

3.4.3 Data saturation

Data saturation refers to the process where the researcher decides to stop data collection after discovering that there is no new information from the research participants (Guest et al., 2006). Data saturation was reached with ten participants and a sample size of 1 to 325 is acknowledged for phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2013). There is a debate about sample size and it argues that there is no sample size that fits all types of research designs because various research designs have different understandings of data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The researcher managed to reach data saturation when interviewing the eighth participant. However, the remaining two participants were interviewed by the researcher because they were willing to participate in the study. Furthermore, the last two participants were among the three participants who kept on postponing the interview appointments.

3.4.4 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

This study sampled former female offenders living in the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality aged 25–60 who had committed fraud and not any other economic crime. The reason for the using these age parameters was to attract a large pool of research participants. In addition, the age group (25-60) was used because the researcher believed that participants within these ages have an employment history which could have assisted the researcher to recruit more participants who met the inclusion criteria. The exclusion criteria comprised

former female offenders who had committed economic crimes other than fraud, and former female offenders who had been incarcerated for fraud but aged below 25 years or above 60 years. The exclusion criteria included female offenders who were still under parole as well as former female offenders who had been incarcerated for committing fraud and are not residing in the Tshwane district municipality.

3.5 Data Collection Method

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews. The interviews were recorded using a tape recorder. Data collection began early May 2021 with the first participant and was finalised by the end of November 2021. All the participants who were willing to participate in the study were given consent forms to sign (see Appendix A). The researcher arranged the interview appointments with the participants through the telephonic method. Data was collected in the comfort of the participants' homes. The major reason for collecting data at the homes of the participants was to make sure that they were calm and relaxed when sharing their narratives. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions. The researcher also used a tape recorder to capture all the responses for further analysis. De Vos et al. (2011) posit that semi-structured interviews allow flexibility in scope, and they helped in probing the perceptions and beliefs of former female offenders. Open-ended questions were used during the interview process (see Appendix B). The advantage of using open-ended questions is that they permit both the interviewer and interviewee to have a deeper discussion on the social phenomena under investigation (De Vos et al., 2011). The interviews lasted around 45 minutes and the interview guide was attached in the appendices. The interviews were held in the language of the respondents, namely isiZulu, English and Sepedi. The researcher managed to interview ten participants.

3.6 Reflexivity

This section explains the practical experience of the researcher and how the data collection challenges were managed. The section discusses Covid-19 safety guidelines, the definition of reflexivity, and the practical experience of the researcher. Data was collected during the Covid-19 pandemic; thus, it was vital for the researcher to comply with Covid-19 safety protocols to safeguard the wellbeing of the participants. The Disaster Management Act (Republic of South Africa, 2002) outlines the following restrictions: the use of health

protocols such as wearing a mask and using hand sanitiser when in public spaces, and keeping a 1.5 metre distance between two or more people. The researcher prepared the following for each interview scheduled: a bottle of sanitiser with 70% of alcohol, extra face masks, a logbook for taking notes, extra pens, and a tape recorder for each appointment for interviews.

Patnaik (2013) defined reflexivity as the process that allows researchers to have self-awareness and to act as the participants in the study. Moreover, reflexivity enables researchers to accept the way research procedures and outcomes affect them (Haynes et al., 2012). Introspective reflexivity helped the researcher to bracket specific attitudes and biases to avoid the researcher's influence on the research process (Patnaik, 2013). Such bracketing included the outsider perception of the researcher about the behaviour and lived experiences of former female offenders. It was vital for the researcher to coordinate the interviews and to rely on the answers provided by the former female offenders about their reintegration experiences. The researcher did not have prior lived experience of reintegration of former female offenders. Therefore, the researcher relied on the former female offenders' stories because they had accurate lived experience on offender reintegration.

The researcher compiled notes of each interview to consider their various interpretations as well as the observed emotions and gestures of each participant. This helped the researcher to organise the observations of the participants while considering personal observations. The researcher collected data in the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, Gauteng province. In addition, the researcher was familiar with the residential areas of the participants and used a navigator in cases where the directions were not clear. Securing the interview dates with former female offenders who met the criteria for inclusion was time-consuming.

Three participants continually rescheduled the interview dates and this made the researcher doubtful about their willingness to participate in the study. In other instances, two participants agreed to be interviewed and interview dates were arranged for them. They gave the researcher their home addresses but were subsequently not reachable on their cell phones. The researcher drove to their homes suspecting that it might be a network problem. When the researcher asked their family members about their whereabouts, there was no clear answer. In

addition, there was one participant who agreed to participate in the study but was not willing to confirm the appointment for the interview. The participant emphasised that she had no interest in the study and that the researcher should not bother by calling them back again.

The above-mentioned experiences made the researcher anxious and doubtful about the confirmations of the interviews. It was difficult for the researcher to understand these challenges at first. The researcher was of the view that the former female offenders were difficult to recruit and was worried about how they would answer interview questions. Moreover, the researcher was disappointed by the feedback and began to doubt the success of the data collection journey. The researcher's supervisor, however, encouraged the researcher to continue negotiating for the rescheduling of interviews because working with former offenders requires courage and perseverance. The researcher rescheduled more interviews with participants who met the criteria for inclusion and rescheduled the interviews with three participants who had been postponing appointments. The researcher visited the three participants at their respective homes to negotiate for securing another interview date. Fortunately, the three participants agreed to reschedule the interview after being told about the purpose of the research and their role as participants. At first, the three participants were of the view that the researcher was a journalist, and they were trying to avoid further labelling or public embarrassment.

Over and above the data collection challenges, the researcher was lucky to get participants who understood the research process and accepted the fact that they were former offenders. The researcher observed hope, wisdom, and courage through the data collection experience and the interactions with the research participants. The overall experience was exciting and informative to the researcher.

3.7 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

The researcher transcribed the recordings from interviews and used IPA to analyse the data. Alase (2017) argues that IPA focuses on the research participants and permits them to tell their stories without being disturbed. IPA is good at exploring the lived experience of research participants and the meanings attached (Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, IPA was appropriate for the study because it helped the researcher to acquire the underlying lived experiences of the participants (Alase, 2017).

3.7.1 Steps of IPA

During the first step of IPA, the researcher developed clear comments about the reintegration experience from the interview transcripts. The phrases, explanations, descriptions, and emotional responses were identified by the researcher when making the elucidatory comments (Cooper et al., 2012). The second step of IPA focused on transferring the notes from the interview transcripts into codes with the aim of exploring the deep-rooted meaning of the lived experiences of the participants (Alase, 2017). In support of the above claim, Cooper et al. (2012) postulates that the transcripts depict the true meaning of the participants' lived experiences.

Emerging and similar codes were transformed into themes during step three (Smith et al., 2009). The third step of IPA moves to a more interpretive stage through the formation of conceptual comments and insights which help in the development of themes (Cooper et al., 2012). This stage also helped in summarising a chunk of words into a few responses that explain the true meaning of the lived experience of the participants (Alase, 2017). The last step includes the process whereby the researcher finalises the writing of the themes that emerged from the participant's narratives (Smith et al., 2009). The themes that were formed were discussed in line with the available literature. The researcher interpreted the results after the analysis and this indicates that the researcher cannot be detached from the study (Cooper et al., 2012). Moreover, IPA's main goal is to bring results that incorporate the true reflection of the lived experiences of the research participants (Alase, 2017).

3.8 Measures of Trustworthiness

Klopper (2008) emphasised that trustworthiness is used in the evaluation of the soundness of research. The establishment of trust with the participants helped the researcher by enabling the participants to open up when sharing their lived experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The researcher aimed to achieve credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability with the intention of judging the originality of the study research (Klopper, 2008).

3.8.1 Conformability

Gunawan (2015) defines confirmability as the ability to confirm findings from the experience of the research participants. This is supported by Klopper (2008) who emphasises that research findings are based solely on the voices of the participants and not from any source of bias. This study focused on the views and experiences of former female offenders who committed fraud; thus, the researcher presented the findings of the study in a manner that was explained by the former female offenders who had committed fraud. Bracketing was used by the researcher in compliance with confirmability.

3.8.2 Credibility

Shenton (2004) defines credibility as the extent to which the study measures what it intends to measure. This study intended to explore the social reintegration experience of former female offenders who were incarcerated for committing fraud and thus, the sample comprised former female offenders who met the criteria for inclusion. The credibility of the study was achieved using data saturation, member checking, and reflective journaling (Patton, 2015). Member checking was used by the researcher to verify if the transcribed data had the same meaning and if there were additions by the participants (Morse, 2015). The researcher compared the interview audio results and verified with the participants to check if they contained the same meaning. Reflective journaling was used by the researcher to bracket personal thoughts and focused only on the former female offender's perspectives of their reintegration (Patton, 2015).

3.8.3 Dependability

Gunawan (2015) defines dependability as the consistency of research over time. Furthermore, Klopper (2008) posits that dependability is based on the consistency of the results over time if the study was to be re-investigated using the same sample and the same context. Dependability was observed by clearly stating the methodology used for this study such as the research design, the data analysis method, the data collection tools as well as the age groups and racial aspects of the participants. This could help upcoming researchers when conducting the same study to reach similar conclusions.

3.8.4 Transferability

Transferability is the extent to which the study results can be transferred to other contexts (Klopper, 2008). This means that the methodology that was used in this study can be used in a different area to compare the findings. In addition, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were explained in order to comply with transferability. The inclusion criteria for the study could help in cases in which a similar study was being conducted in a different context or area.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Mouton (2001) defines ethical considerations as a process concerned with what is wrong and right during the process of conducting research. Firstly, the proposal was reviewed by the Department of Higher Degrees Committee in the Department of Psychology (Ref no:49829165 CREC- CHS-2021). Secondly, ethical clearance was granted and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology at UNISA. Mouton (2001) emphasises that participants must be assured of the following: the study will do no harm to them, their anonymity and confidentiality will be protected, and the fact that they are free to withdraw from participating in the study at any time. It is also important to note that participants' names were replaced by pseudonyms. The participants for this study were former female offenders who had completed their sentencing period. Therefore, there was no need to request permission or ethical clearance from the DCS.

3.9.1 Informed consent

The process of obtaining a consent form begins with the establishment of a rapport or a working relationship with the participants to create trust and the researcher must explain the purpose of the study under investigation (Mdakane, 2020). Once the participants confirmed that they were ready and willing, a consent form was issued to them. The actual participation in interviews commenced after the participants signed the consent form. Mouton (2001) emphasised that informed consent should make the research participant aware of the aim of the study, give assurance of protection from harm, provide confidentiality to participants, inform participants that they can withdraw from the study at any time, as well as ensure that they sign the consent form. The participants were briefed about the main aim of the study and who the beneficiaries were. In order to apply the informed consent principle, the researcher

explained the purpose of the proposed study through the detailed participation information sheet.

Furthermore, the participants were assured of their confidentiality and that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. Voluntary participation was emphasised by the researcher (verbally and in writing) confirming that the participants had the right to choose to or not to participate in the study. The consent forms were issued to the participants who participated in this study confirming that they agreed to participate voluntarily.

3.9.2 The right to privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality

The participants were guaranteed privacy and anonymity and their information was also treated as confidential. The right to privacy, according to Mouton (2001), means that the research participants have the right to refuse to answer the e-mailed or telephonic questions and not to be interviewed at night or for long hours. The researcher adhered to confidentiality issues. The researcher made sure that all the matters discussed during the interview with the research participants remained confidential.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the methodology and the procedure that included the use of a qualitative research method, and the use of snowball and purposive sampling to select the former female offenders who met the criteria for inclusion. Data was collected through face-to-face interviews and IPA was used to analyse data in order to obtain the narratives of the former female offenders. The researcher's reflections of the research process were also outlined in the chapter. The next chapter discusses the results of the study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research methodology employed in the study. The present chapter discusses the findings that were obtained from the analysis of the interviews with former female offenders who had been incarcerated for fraud in the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, Gauteng Province. The breakdown of this chapter includes the profiles of the participants, the demographics of the participants and a discussion of emerging themes in relation to the reviewed literature.

4.2 Participant Profiles

The participants' real names were not used, instead, pseudonyms were used to respect and maintain the anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality of the participants.

4.2.1 Participant 1: Wanda

Wanda was a bit shy to talk about her incarceration before the interviews. Later, she was relaxed and began to openly explain her reintegration story. Wanda was a 52-year-old White African mother of two and was divorced. She was working as a paymaster in the public sector and had a Diploma in Accounting. She committed fraudulent activities and was sentenced to 6 years. Upon her release from the correctional facility, she was welcomed by her family and friends. Wanda's sister invited her and the two children to stay in her house. Despite staying in her sister's house, she was stigmatised by her friends and later struggled to get a job. During the time of the interview, she had eight years of experience in her reintegration journey. This means that Wanda was released in 2013.

4.2.2 Participant 2: Toto

Toto was free and relaxed during the interview and appeared comfortable to the researcher. Toto was 38-year-old Black African mother of four. Her highest qualification was Grade 12, and she was working as a personal assistant to the school principal in the Bronkhorstspuit area. She had been permanently employed prior to her incarceration and was unemployed during the time of the interview. She currently resided with her parents together with her children. She had been incarcerated for six years for committing fraud. As a

result, she struggled to find employment due to her criminal record and was often negatively labelled by her friends and community members. A few months after her reintegration, she got a job but was later fired because of her criminal record. During the interview she emphasised that she had been released in 2016.

4.2.3 Participant 3: Keletso

Keletso was a 46-year-old Black African mother of three during the time of interviews. She is a widow and had been employed before her incarceration. She was incarcerated for six years at the Johannesburg female correctional facility. She emphasised that she had been released in 2017. Keletso had a Bachelor of Arts in Health and a Social Services qualification and was previously employed by one of the universities in South Africa. The three children were staying with her parents during her incarceration period. Upon her release, she was employed and was also a spiritual leader in her church. She had not attended any reintegration programme since her release. Keletso came from a supportive family, and this enhanced her successful reintegration journey. She was relaxed and seemed to have a good understanding of the research processes. She had accepted her wrongdoing and was willing to rewrite her history during the reintegration period.

4.2.4 Participant 4: Randy

Randy was 31 years old during the interviews. She was a Black African single parent who had been employed before the incarceration period. She had a Diploma in Accounting and was working as an accountant in a private financial institution. She had been incarcerated for four years for committing fraud. Fortunately, she was able to secure a job and she was taking care of her child. She believed that it was important for the correctional services to offer counselling to former offenders during their reintegration period. Randy showed some elements of remorse during the interview. She was willing to share every aspect of her incarceration and reintegration experience. Moreover, she was actively involved in community work during the reintegration period, which is a sign of giving back to the community.

4.2.5 Participant 5: Wisani

Wisani was a Black African single parent. Wisani was reserved at the beginning of the interviews. She was 47 years old and had been permanently employed at an institution of

higher learning prior to her incarceration. Her highest qualification was Grade 12 and she was unemployed at the time of the interview. She had been incarcerated for eight years for committing fraud. Her sister was a teacher, who supported both her and the baby financially. During the time of the interview, Wisani emphasised that she was released in 2018. She also showed some elements of regret and guilt.

4.2.6 Participant 6: Monalisa

Monalisa was a 50-year-old African mother of three and was sentenced to six years for committing fraud. Monalisa was so insecure because she explained during the interview that she was tired of being judged by people. She had been married before her incarceration and went through a divorce after being released. She had been permanently employed as a social worker in the public service before her incarceration. Her children were under the care of her parents during her incarceration. She kept herself busy studying and managed to complete a Diploma in Human Resources during her incarceration period. She stayed with her friend upon her release. During the time of the interview, she mentioned that she was released in 2013. She felt remorse and displayed much sadness and sorrow when talking about her current situation.

4.2.7 Participant 7: Lolo

Lolo was a 48-year-old Black African single parent. Her parents were the main caregivers of her baby boy during her incarceration period. She had previously been employed as an accountant at a financial institution before her incarceration. She was incarcerated for six years for committing fraud. However, she had been able to find employment upon her release. She is an entrepreneur who believed that her incarceration period taught her to rebuild and rebrand herself. There were no more challenges for her because she was the one who was hiring people. She did not attend any reintegration programme post-incarceration. She was released in 2017 and was very comfortable and happy to share her reintegration story during the interview. Lolo's engagement in community work helped her to reintegrate successfully.

4.2.8 Participant 8: Karen

During the time of the interviews, Karen was 39 years old. She was a Black African mother of two, never married, and her highest qualification was an Honours degree in

Sociology. She had been permanently employed before her incarceration and was fortunate to be employed after her release. She was sentenced to eight years for committing fraud. Her children were under the care of her parents during her incarceration period. She kept herself busy by studying and she managed to complete an Industrial Psychology Honours degree during the incarceration period. She had four years of experience in her reintegration journey during the time of the interviews. Karen was released in 2017 and showed regret for what she had done to her employer.

4.2.9 Participant 9: Sadikie

This 35-year-old, single, Black African woman with no children worked in the retail sector as an accounting clerk. Sadikie’s highest qualification was Grade 12, and she was incarcerated for six years for committing fraud. She was welcomed by her family, especially her grandmother, upon her return. Her parents were not willing to welcome her back into their home. She was unemployed during the time of the interview and was released in 2019. Sadikie looked sad when talking about her parents because they rejected her upon her release.

4.2.10 Participant 10: Jowie

Jowie was very shy and looked sad during the interviews. She emphasised that she was emotionally unstable because she was still adjusting to the demands of the reintegration journey. Jowie was 30 years old and a single mother during the interview period. Her sentence was four years and she had a Diploma in Accounting. She had worked as a claims assessor in the public sector before her incarceration for fraud. Her mother was the primary caregiver of her child during her incarceration. Upon her release, she was unable to secure employment and mentioned that she was released in 2018.

4.3 Demographics of Participants

The table below describes the participants who took part in the study.

Table 4.1: Participants’ demographics

Names	Age	Children	Marital status	Highest qualification	Race	Number of years since released

Wanda	52	2	Divorced	Accounting Diploma	White	8 years
Toto	38	4	Single	Grade 12	Black	5 years
Keletso	46	3	Widow	BA Social Services	Black	4 years
Randy	31	1	Single	Accounting Diploma	Black	2 years
Wisani	47	1	Single	Grade 12	Black	3 years
Monalisa	50	3	Divorced	BA Social Work	Black	8 years
Lolo	48	1	Single	Accounting Honours	Black	4 years
Karen	39	2	Single	Sociology Honours	Black	4 years
Sadikie	35	0	Single	Grade 12	Black	2 years
Jowie	30	1	Single	Accounting Diploma	Black	3 years

4.4 Themes

The table below shows the themes that emerged from the participants' responses.

Table 4.2: Themes

Themes	Subthemes
4.4.1 Women Coming home	4.4.1.1 The release day 4.4.1.2 Families as recipients 4.4.1.3 Rebuilding family bonds
4.4.2. Accept us, we are back	4.4.2.1 Stigma in communities 4.4.2.2 Searching for a job 4.4.2.3 Breakthrough
4.4.3. Women and reintegration	4.4.3.1 Women as former offenders 4.4.3.2 Successful reintegration: our views 4.4.3.3 Our needs: what will work out for us

4.4.1 Theme 1: Women coming home

The first theme focuses on the journey that former female offenders embark on when reintegrating back into society. This theme derived from the following subthemes: the release day, families as recipients of former offenders, and rebuilding family bonds. This theme and its subthemes managed to achieve the first research objective of exploring the lived experiences of former female offenders. Central to this theme are the challenges that former female offenders face during their social reintegration. The results of the study revealed that all the participants experienced challenges that included stigma and labelling, unemployment, and broken relationships during their social reintegration. Below are some extracts from the participants' narratives:

Karen referred to the *“stigma and labelling, unemployment, and little challenge for reuniting with my two children. I tried apologising to my previous employer, and they were not willing to talk to me.”* This shows that stigma is a serious challenge to former offenders. **Sadikie** raised similar issues: *“Hmm I was stigmatised and labelled, had no job, and my parents were not willing to take me back (sad face). My grandmother gave me a place to stay.”*

Wanda said:

Stigma ... stigma ... stigma ... being labelled by my former colleagues, friends, families, and my boyfriend. He already got a new girlfriend and did not take care of our two sons.... (deep breath). My sister is the one who was my children's guardian and I had to stay with her upon my release. I had no job and was affected by my criminal record. Do you know that it is painful to have difficulty securing a job now because I was permanently employed prior to my arrest? (sad face)

Monalisa elaborated her story in the dialogue below:

Interviewer: What challenges did you face upon your release from a correctional facility?

Monalisa: *Firstly, I needed a place to stay and a job. I struggled to get a job on my own due to my criminal record status. The same friend who helped with a place to*

stay assisted me to get a job too. I am employed in a retail store as a packer. I was a professional social worker, a proper job before my incarceration (deep breath) but now I have to... to ... (stammering) to work in the retail sector. It was also difficult to reconnect with my children because they have a strong bond with my mother.

Several scholars corroborate the views of the participants; for instance, former offenders experience unemployment, lack of shelter, stigma, broken relationships, physical and mental health problems (Brown, 2018; Chikadzi, 2017; Schlager, 2013). It is vital to note that both former male and female offenders encounter re-entry challenges (Visher, 2015). It is evident that the literature supports the findings of the study pertaining to the challenges faced by the participants during their reintegration into community. Recently coming to the same conclusion, Muthee (2020), who conducted a study in Kenya, found that former female offenders experience unemployment, lack of housing, broken relationships, mental health, and substance abuse after their incarceration. Successful reintegration into society is affected by the challenges that former female offenders face when reintegrating into society (Schlager, 2013). Over and above this, research suggests that former female offenders face reintegration challenges that relate to their gender roles and their childhood history (Larsen, 2017; Noble, 2014).

Participants' narratives revealed that there are serious challenges that former female offenders experience when coming back to their respective homes. There seem to be lack of monitoring of the released former female offenders by the DCS. Research by Burden (2019) emphasises that despite the unique challenges these former female offenders face during their re-entry, the justice department is doing nothing to meet the needs of female offenders. McIver (2020) believes that policy developers can help to develop reintegration programmes that are best suited for former female offenders, only if they understand successful re-entry from perspectives of females. The researcher is of the view that it is unfair for community members to stigmatise and judge former female offenders when they return to their communities. The former female offenders have been punished by the court of law through their incarceration sentence. As a result, they have paid for their crimes. No one is perfect, and all people in their respective societies deserve second chances in life. Stigma is a sign of permanent punishment of the former female offenders.

4.4.1.1 Subtheme 1.1: The release day

On the release day, former female offenders were released from the correctional facility and they returned to their homes. The former female offenders expressed feelings about their release and articulated that they were happy to be released from the correctional facility. The transition can be quite challenging for former female offenders as some of them may be anxious about readjusting to societal demands (Western et al., 2014). Planning for the release and re-entry of former offenders is vital as it re-connects them with the societies from which they come (Covington, 2002). This is supported by UNDOC (2018) in which it is emphasised that pre-release planning is vital for successful reintegration into society. In support of the literature, the results of the study revealed that all participants were delighted to be released from the correctional facility. Despite the excitement of being released, there were feelings of stress and anxiety among the participants. The results of the study were extracted from the narratives of the participants:

Keletso explained: *“I was excited and anxious at the same time. You know... I was so excited because I was finally going to be reunited with my children. Anxious because I did not know what to expect.”* Monalisa was also happy to be released and she explained that...*it was such a relief because I could not wait to see my children. I have been waiting for this day to come. I have prepared my release from inside. ehmm... I kept myself busy by attending the reintegration and rehabilitation programmes. I also managed to complete my Diploma.* For Toto, she was also happy and as she puts it...*Uh... I was very happy to be released. I also was afraid of the unknown. You know, I feared being labelled by my friends and neighbours. It was also a relief and I regarded this as a chance to reunite with my children* (sad face).

One of the DCS staff members had alerted Randy about what to expect upon her release and as she puts it: *I feared coming out... you know ... mmm. Also fear of being labelled as a ‘bandit’. The DCS official told us that the name ‘bandit’ will be our new name and we will carry this stigma throughout. The word ‘bandit’ is a term or name used by friends and people in the society to describe someone who was once incarcerated.* Jowie narrated her experience in the dialogue below:

Interviewer: Think about the day you were released; how did it feel to be released from a correctional facility?

Jowie: *I was so happy to be released. emm... (sad face) on the other side the release caused me stress and anxiety. I do not feel that I have the courage to face my neighbours.*

Interviewer: Why?

Jowie: *Meeting them will bring back the old memories (deep breath). I wish I can just stay alone to regain the strength to meet them later. Sadikie narrated that...I had mixed feelings when I was released. I was scared... you know. I did not know what to expect from my family and friends. I was happy as I will be getting fresh air and freedom of movement.*

The study results cohere with previous research by emphasising that former offenders experience anxiety during the few months of their release when they are in public places (Western et al., 2014). Moreover, the change of environment through the movement from incarceration to the community, causes stress and difficulty in coping for former offenders (Chikadzi, 2017). It was understandable for the participants to feel anxious because they did not know the expectations of the people in the communities, they live in. They were used to the incarceration as a 'home' that has its own norms and standards. Unsurprisingly, a transition into community and the smell of freedom could elicit mixed feelings for the participants. In support of the narratives of the participants, it was emphasised that former female offenders were happy and delighted to be released from the correctional facility, despite their feelings of anxiety (Western et al., 2014). Indeed, the feeling of excitement about being released is crucial to participants because some of them had left their children behind. Thus, for some participants, the excitement was also about resuming their mothering duties.

Sadikie was welcomed back by her family, and especially by her grandmother. However, her parents were not willing to welcome her back into their home. Sadikie's parents did not want to associate themselves with a former offender. Sadikie was disappointed and felt it was unfair for her parents to abandon her in that manner. The expectation would be that parents should be the first people who love and welcome their daughter back home. Sadikie's parents displayed stigmatising behaviour, and the labelling theory argues that such stigma makes it difficult for former offenders to form social

relationships during their reintegration into society (Bernburg, 2009). Sadikie failed to reunite with her parents because of her history of incarceration. It shows that they regarded Sadikie as a former offender and did not wish to associate themselves with her.

Labelling theory argues that the use of stigmatising actions makes former offenders feel uncertain during their release from the correction facility (Bernburg, 2009). Sadikie was not expecting her parents to treat her in the manner they did. The fact that stigma and labels are common in communities makes it difficult for the released offenders to settle and reintegrate successfully. It is evident that labelling theory is in play when highlighting the stigmatising labels of Sadikie's story. The researcher posits that family support and care are vital when former female offenders return home. It would be extremely painful to be deserted by family members especially at a time when more support is needed from them. The release day is followed by the former female offenders' reintegration into their respective homes to reunite with their families. The next subtheme discusses the role played by families during former female offenders' return to their respective homes.

4.4.1.2 Subtheme 1.2: Families as recipients of former female offenders

This subtheme explains the role of families in welcoming former female offenders after their incarceration. The White Paper on Corrections (2005) regards the family as the primary place for correction of former offenders and regard it as the main site where correction must take place. This means that the correction of former offenders must begin within families from where they come. The family serves as the first area that former female offenders reach when reintegrating into society after incarceration (UNDOC, 2018). Families tend to help former offenders with finances, housing, and social support after their release from the correctional facility (Western et al., 2014).

The results of the study support the literature by pinpointing that the family serves as the reception point of former female offenders upon their release. The narratives of the participants too, are also in support of the literature by emphasising the role played by families in welcoming former female offenders back into society. Keletso was welcomed well by her family, and she explained that *“my sister made it such a big fuss because she arranged an intimate party for me. My children were extremely relieved to see me back.”* Randy too, as she explained...*my family welcomed me back with lots of love, joy, hope, and*

appreciation” (smiling). Wanda had a similar and as she puts it...Huu... (deep breath) I was welcomed well by my sister and all my friends, former colleagues but my boyfriend deserted me (sad face). My sister had a spacious house and a back room, and it was enough for us. Toto narrated her experiences in the dialogue below:

Interviewer: How were you welcomed by your families and friends?

Toto: *You know... I was so lucky to be welcomed well by my family, especially my mother. They welcomed me well... indeed. My four children were also happy to see me back.* The above extracts depict that the former female offenders were welcomed back by their families, given shelter, and their basic needs were taken care of. The literature supports the narratives highlighted by the participants on the supportive role played by their families upon their release from the correctional facility. However, in contrast to the other former female offenders, Monalisa narrated her experience saying that *...My husband was so angry at me, and he wanted to divorce me. He rented out our matrimonial house to some tenants. I ... I could not believe that I had nowhere to go in Gauteng (sad face). Through the Lord’s mercy, my old friend reached out for me and offered me a place to stay. I told my mother about my situation, and she suggested that I come home. She was staying in KZN with my three children.*

Monalisa’s experience was different from other participants because if it was not for her friend, she could have been homeless upon her release. Nine of the participants in this study received a warm welcome from their families. Monalisa experienced a good welcome from her friend because her husband was not willing to take her back. Families who support former female offenders by welcoming them back from incarceration are playing a vital role because former female offenders need their support more than ever. The next subtheme focuses on rebuilding the family relationships that were broken by the incarceration period.

4.1.1.3 Subtheme 1.3: Rebuilding broken family relationships

This subtheme focuses on the rebuilding of the strained relationships between the former female offenders and their children, spouses, parents, siblings, and friends. The crucial aspect of this subtheme is the effort invested by former female offenders and their

family members in fixing the broken relationships. The most crucial step in the reintegration process is to rebuild the relationships with family members (SAMHSA, 2020). However, it is difficult for former female offenders to re-establish family relationships because of the pain that was caused by the incarceration of female offenders (Agboola, 2017; Muntingh, 2009). The results of the study revealed that former female offenders had trouble in rebuilding broken relationships with their children and their family members. Some of the participant narratives are shared below.

Toto emphasised that her children were hurt by her incarceration, and they were closer to her parent than her. She further saw the need to reintegrate successfully so that she could have another chance to reconnect with her children. Jowie said *“My child had a close relationship with my mother than me (sad face). I need to have a relationship with my child. I am a reformed person and ready to be a better parent now”* (looking down).

It is important to note that familial relationships with the former female offender can be strengthened by visiting and supporting the former female offenders while incarcerated. Clearly, a lack of visits weakens the relationships that former female offenders had with their significant others. The mother-to-child relationship is also broken during the incarceration times of the mother concerned. As a result, children grow up without strong relationships with their mothers. Though former female offenders are delighted about their release, they tend to ignore the anger and turmoil felt by the children left at home, caused by their mothers' incarceration (Agboola, 2017). Furthermore, children experience emotional and physical problems as a result of the incarceration of their mothers (SAMHSA, 2020). Agboola (2017) argues that *“aggression, delinquency, substance abuse, poor school grades and mental health problems are some of the negative behaviour changes that children of incarcerated women exhibit as a result of the pain of separation from their mothers”* (p. 37). In support of the above literature, Monalisa shared the emotional turmoil felt by one of her children: *“My eldest son was always beating other children at school ... no longer playing with other children, emm. All the teachers complained about his wrong behaviour. Later, he was suspended from school”* (sad face). Monalisa believed that the eldest son understood that his mother was incarcerated and he was being punished for it.

Wanda said: *“My child never wanted to hear anything from me (sad). she was so angry at me and could not play with her peers anymore. She also failed most of the school subjects.”* Wanda’s sister arranged a booking for a counselling session for Wanda’s daughter as a strategy for mending the broken relationship between mother and daughter. Wanda’s child also suffered the consequences of her mother’s incarceration as she was stigmatised by her classmates at school. Fortunately, the stigmatisation was lessened because Wanda’s sister was staying in a suburb and the only problem was from the schoolmates.

The above narratives show that the incarceration period created a gap between the children and their incarcerated mothers, thus making it difficult for some of the participants’ children to have a strong mother-child bond. Monalisa, Jowie, Randy and Lolo also had difficulties in reuniting with their children upon their release. Their children were closer to their guardians who were taking care of them during their mothers’ incarceration. They acknowledged that the gap between them and their children might have been created by their incarceration. The researcher believes that DCS can play an important role in helping the former female offenders to rebuild the broken relationships prior to their release from the correctional centre. The actual plan can include the families of the incarcerated females in the pre-release programmes. This could help the DCS in implementing the social reintegration programmes that include the efforts from both the former female offenders and their families. Programmes such as the Green Light Family Reintegration Program (GLFRP) can be tested and developed in South Africa. The GLFRP renders reintegration services to former female offenders and their families in the United States. Their services comprise the role of family activities in assisting former female offenders during the reintegration period and how to resolve family issues (UNDOC, 2018).

The above subtheme discussed the rebuilding of broken relationships between former female offenders and their families. Once family relationships are mended, it is important to discuss issues that involve the community members. The rebuilding of broken family relationships answers the first research question on the lived experiences of former female offenders who committed fraud. The next theme explains the way former female offenders view themselves as changed or rehabilitated citizens and wish to be accepted back into communities.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Accept us, we are back

The previous theme was about the experiences of former female offenders on release day, and the ways in which families receive them back and re-establish the family bonds. This theme is about the needs of former female offenders who have come back to their communities from incarceration and hope to be welcomed and reintegrated in an acceptable fashion. This theme managed to achieve the objective of revealing the social reintegration needs of former female offenders who had committed fraud. The participants needed acceptance and to be welcomed back by the people in the community. Central to this theme is the idea that former female offenders view themselves as reformed citizens.

The results of the study revealed that former female offenders need acceptance, and they are also determined to reintegrate successfully into the community. Moreover, former female offenders believe that being reformed encourages them to account for and accept their mistakes. Therefore, the former female offenders were willing to account for their actions and were motivated to rewrite their history. McIver (2020) corroborates the study findings by postulating that determination to change and rewrite one's history helps former female offenders to successfully reintegrate into society. Similarly, Larsen (2017) highlights that most former female offenders have free will and motivation to change their behaviour during their reintegration. The participants shared their experiences in the following narratives:

Sadikie: *I have accepted my mistakes. I have also learnt from my mistakes. Accountability is important during the reintegration stage.*

Keletso: *Now that I am back, I am willing to do good to my children, family and community by living a crime-free life.*

Monalisa: *I am willing to reintegrate successfully because I need a second chance to be a good mother to my children. My children serve as a motivation towards my reintegration (smiling).*

The narratives of the participants are supported by the reviewed literature as it emphasises that former female offenders were determined to reintegrate successfully into their communities. Once more it is clear that the former female offenders view social reintegration as an opportunity for a second chance. They had been released and were now

back with their families, underlining the important role of families and community members to accept them so that they do not re-offend.

4.4.2.1 Subtheme 2.1: Stigma in communities

This subtheme dwells more on the behaviour of neighbours, friends, family members, and all the other people in the community who interact with former female offenders. Central to this subtheme is the societal reaction to former female offenders' return into the community. The results of the study highlighted that these former female offenders experienced stigma from families, friends, and other people in the community upon their reintegration. Magadze (2016) corroborates the study results by arguing that the stigmatising actions towards former offenders make them feel excluded from participating in community activities. The reintegration period is the critical time when former female offenders require support from their communities and families in order to reintegrate successfully into the community (Muthee, 2020). Karen was one of the participants who experienced stigmatising behaviour. Karen's experience is narrated in the dialogue below:

Interviewer: What challenges did you face upon your release from the correctional facility?

Karen: *Stigma and labelling, unemployment, and little challenges in reuniting with my two children. I tried apologising to my previous employer and they were not willing to talk to me. This shows that stigma is a serious challenge to former offenders (sad face).*

These experiences find resonance in several scholars' work (Chanakira, 2013; Muthee, 2020). The fundamentals of labelling theory support the narratives of the participants and the stigma that is prevalent towards the former offenders. Labelling theory is called 'societal reaction' because it is based on the perceptions, reactions, and views of the people in communities about the former offenders (Gay, 2000). Labelling theory focuses on the role of social labelling in the development of deviant behaviour. Moreover, labels create a stigma about deviant behaviour and thus make it difficult for the labelled group to be accepted in societies (Bernburg, 2009). Anderson and Taylor (2009) postulate that once a person is

labelled a deviant, she will be denied essential life opportunities because of the stigma. Monalisa narrated her story that symbolises the stigma towards former female offenders:

Stigma is still a problem in communities where we stay. I am saying this because I was labelled a former offender by my former colleagues, some friends, and neighbours. Upon my release, I was staying with my best friend in the same area I was staying in before my arrest. Life was not easy with the bandit stigma and my colleague's laughs at me whenever they see me in town. I was so discouraged to go out at some point (sad face).

Monalisa continued to struggle with stigmatising actions, and she indicated the following: *I quit my job and started selling Achar. Orders for Achar were made through my friend not knowing that it was my business ...esh (tone down). I was the one who was mixing it and preparing the packages. One day a customer came to buy Achar and I was alone because my friend was at work. Yooo?... that lady did not want to buy from me because of my incarceration history (shocked). She started discouraging people from buying from me. Suddenly I lost hope and ... eh... stopped selling. People will treat you like an animal. We are human too (sad face) and feel pain when being labelled a former offender. Toto's reintegration experience was not easy as explained in the dialogue below:*

Interviewer: What challenges did you face upon your release from a correctional facility?

Toto: *Shooo... (deep breath). People will label you as a former offender every time they see you. I had difficulty securing a job because of my criminal record.*

Interviewer: Who are you referring to when you say people?

Toto: *Neighbours (sad face).*

Interviewer: How did you feel when they called you that?

Toto: *I felt worthless and angry (emotional).*

In support of the above narratives, several researchers have confirmed that community members have the tendency of rejecting former offenders and using the labels that stigmatise

them (Agboola, 2014; Chikadzi, 2017). The stigma that occurs in communities is heart-breaking especially in the way all the participants of this study were stigmatised in their communities. Such stigma reveals that former female offenders are often treated as if they do not belong to the same communities anymore. Moreover, they regard former offenders as people who deviated from the societal rules and regulations. The stigma has an impact on the lives of former offenders as it impairs their successful reintegration into community (Becker, 1963; Domingo & Labid, 2016).

The reviewed literature and the labelling theory validate the findings of this study, that former female offenders experience stigmatising labels in their respective communities. Most study participants viewed stigma as an additional punishment. Stigma toward former female offenders is still a challenge in families, communities, and various organisations. It is important to note that despite the prevalence of stigma, former female offenders, just like any others, are supposed to reintegrate and live normal lives in society. People in societies live normal lives that include access to permanent employment, and likewise, former offenders also need jobs. Labelling by people in communities is unfair and unfortunate because the perpetrators of labelling do not understand that former female offenders need their support. Having achieved the objective of the study aimed at exploring the lived experiences of former female offenders, the study found that there was a prevalence of stigmatising behaviour against former female offenders in their respective communities. The stigma that former female offenders experienced negatively affected their social reintegration. The next section focuses on the former female offenders' experiences in looking for employment.

4.4.2.2 Subtheme 2.2: Searching for a job

This subtheme focuses on the job-hunting experiences of former female offenders. The crucial factor in this case relates to the stigma and discrimination that former female offenders face when applying or searching for a job. The eliciting of views around the issue of searching for a job achieved the objective of exploring this aspect of the lived experiences of former female offenders. It was discovered that participants' ability to acquire employment was negatively affected by their criminal records rather than by the lack of experience or qualifications. In support of this study's results, several scholars have confirmed that the search for employment by former offenders is negatively affected by their criminal records

(Ahmed & Lang, 2017; Magadze, 2016; Vandala, 2017). This is supported by Broek and Black (2021) whose study found that during the search for jobs, former female offenders experienced discrimination based on their criminal records.

This practice is clearly unfair because the appointment of new employees should have been based on the qualifications possessed rather than being negatively affected by their criminal record. This type of criteria discriminates against former female offenders being shortlisted for positions that they qualify for. Seven participants had post-matric qualifications and had high paying jobs prior to their incarceration. It can therefore be argued that it would be very helpful if the DCS and the Department of Employment and Labour could develop policies that promote the employment of former offenders who have qualifications or job experience.

Securing employment during social reintegration helps former offenders to minimise their criminal behaviour and reduce the rate of recidivism (Zakaria et al., 2018). A study by Dlamini (2016) on former offenders seeking employment found that they experience unfair treatment at work, lack of trust by employers, and rejection caused by stigma. According to the former female offenders interviewed in this study, their job search experiences were extremely challenging. Toto shared her experience and said: *“Eh ... I once got a job and got fired after discovering I have a criminal record.”* This would seem to be the case generally, as various of the other former female offenders in this study also struggled to secure employment based on their criminal records. Toto’s incident indicates that former offenders have limited access to societal opportunities. Wanda also narrated a similar view on the impact of her criminal record on her life and said the following: *“I have no job now and was affected by the criminal record. Do you know that it is painful to have difficulty in securing a job because I was permanently employed before my incarceration?”* (sad face). Jowie also shared her job-hunting journey and the employment challenges she experienced based of her criminal record and said: *I am unemployed now. I have declared my criminal status on my CV and did not get any call for interviews thus far. I know the reason why. Emmm... I mean the reason why there were no interview calls ... the stigma for the criminal record* (sad face).

The above interview extracts are in accordance with the reviewed literature on the negative impact of criminal records on the employability of former female offenders.

However, five participants of this study were able to get jobs, while another five were still unemployed. This shows that it is possible for former female offenders to be employed despite having criminal records. The researcher discovered that the job-hunting experiences of former female offenders differed from one participant to the other.

Having stable employment helps former female offenders to reintegrate successfully as they can afford to pay for their necessities (McIver, 2020). Employment is a key factor in successful reintegration because it helps former offenders to reconnect with the important elements of society (UNDOC, 2018). Five participants of this study who were currently employed believed that they were lucky to be employed with a criminal record. Research proposes that families and friends of former female offenders are a source of support during the re-entry period and families help them by finding employment for them (James, 2016; UNDOC, 2018). This was true for Monalisa's case in the way she acquired her job and narrated that ... *The same friend who helped with a place to stay, assisted me to get a job too. I am employed in a retail store as a packer now. I was working as a professional, a proper job before my incarceration (deep breath) ... but now have to... to ... (stammering) to work in the retail sector.* Randy was also able to get a job and she said, *"I was fortunate enough to get a job through a referral from my friend."*

Still on the discussion of searching for a job, it is crucial to highlight the legislation that is used in the recruitment of employees. Some legislation supports and some do not support the recruitment of former offenders in general. The use of 'Ban the Box' is discussed in this paragraph. The United States is using the 'Ban the Box' Legislation (in over 37 states), and it has also been adopted in over 150 countries. With the 'Ban the Box' system, when recruiting and filling positions, employers are encouraged to consider the qualifications of job seekers over their criminal records status (NLEP, 2021). It would be fair to utilise methods like that of the 'Ban the Box' system as it can lead to fair recruitment of job seekers into various positions. It is important to hire new staff based on qualifications rather than have them being disqualified due to criminal records. South Africa can adopt the same concept of 'Ban the Box' on the government forms for employment because it has a box that must be ticked for criminal record checking. It is critical for employers both private and public and DCS to come up with better mechanisms that do not discriminate against the employment of all people who were once incarcerated.

Moreover, participants highlighted that the DCS, government departments, and NGOs should all assist former offenders to find jobs or help them with funding for businesses. This may decrease the rate of recidivism and minimise the occurrence of reintegration challenges. This study found that, despite being affected by their criminal records, there were still possibilities that former female offenders may be employable. The procedure of searching and getting a job differs from one individual to the other, and it also depends on the kind of networks that the former female offenders have. The subtheme answered the first research objective by discovering that former female offenders experienced the stigma of having a criminal record when searching for a job. On a general note, some former female offenders were able to secure jobs despite having a criminal record. It is evident from the results that searching for a job is a process that differs from one individual to another. The next subtheme is the breakthrough.

4.4.2.3 Subtheme 2.3: The breakthrough

The breakthrough subtheme explains the different coping mechanisms that are used by former female offenders in dealing with their reintegration challenges. Former female offenders that were interviewed in this study confirmed that they had coping mechanisms that helped them to overcome the social reintegration challenges. The breakthrough subtheme was able to explain the reintegration for former female offenders. It is evident from the study results that the participants used faith and motherhood as the main coping mechanisms during their reintegration period.

In support of the results of the study, faith and trust in God emerged as a common coping strategy used by former female offenders to overcome their social reintegration challenges (Larsen, 2017; McIver, 2020). In addition, to the above findings, Johnson (2013) found that the coping mechanisms utilised by former offenders included counselling, faith, skills development, and the rebuilding of relationships in the community. The narratives of the participants cohere with the literature in emphasising that faith in God was used as a coping mechanism towards the reintegration challenges. The narratives are shared below:

Keletso: *God saved me from the time I was still inside, and he has a plan for my life. He is using me to show people that I am a changed person, who is a child of God.*

Monalisa: *It was through His mercy and purpose that I was incarcerated. I was inside and learnt about the Lord's mercy and power. Then, I surrendered myself to God.*

Wanda narrates her story in the following manner: *“My faith in God helped me to go through my incarceration period... here I am out now (smiling). I believe that the God that I pray has plans for me.”* Sadikie emphasised that the spiritual sessions she had received during her incarceration made her realise that she needs to believe in God. As result of the spiritual sessions, she then became a Christian. Jowie explained that *...God loves us all, including me (smiling). He who does not judge, if you believe in him, you have everything. I have inner peace through my living God. I know that God has forgiven me long time ago... ehm, I do not care about ordinary people, the God that I pray will show them the light one day (sad face).*

All the participants in this study emphasised that they had attended reintegration and rehabilitation services that included faith during their incarceration days. In essence, maintaining their faith during the reintegration period was a necessity because participants had full understanding of faith-related matters. The role played by faith can one of the factors that DCS use when planning for the reintegration programmes with community-based organisations. Having children is another vital factor that former female offenders can utilise as a source of hope and motivation during their reintegration period (Covington, 2002; Noble, 2014). In support of the above literature, participants' narratives are shared below:

Wisani: *I am out because God gave me the second chance to correct my mistakes. I would like to be a good mother to my one and only child. I am determined to change my behaviour for the sake of my child. Now I am living my life for her.*

Monalisa: *I am doing this for my children. I am ready to stand for any kind of challenge during my reintegration... I know that I must do this for the sake of my children (smiling).*

Wanda explained that social reintegration gave her a second chance in life, a chance to be a good mother to her children. Moreover, Wanda was able to reintegrate for the sake of her children. The former female offenders wanted to fill the relationship gap that was created

by their incarceration. This subtheme answered the first research objective on the experiences of former female offenders who were incarcerated for fraud. Their lived experiences were cushioned by various coping mechanisms that helped them to overcome their social reintegration challenges. Nine participants who were mothers were willing to reintegrate successfully for the sake of their children. They were willing to replay their role as mothers and strengthen their relationship with their children. In conclusion, faith and motherhood were used as the main coping mechanisms among the former female offenders. The next theme focuses on women and reintegration.

4.4.3 Theme 3: Women and social reintegration

This theme focuses on the understanding of the reintegration programmes that former female offenders attended after being released from the correctional facility. Central to this theme is the type of reintegration programmes that participants have attended during their social reintegration. The theme aimed at achieving the third objective by discussing the DCS support offered to former female offenders upon their release. The theme also outlines the reintegration programmes that are utilised specifically for female offenders which are being practised in other countries. It is vital to include the role played by the halfway house in the reintegration of former female offenders.

As depicted in the results of the study, it is evident that most former female offenders did not receive nor attend the reintegration programmes upon their release from the correctional facility. The findings reflect views expressed in literature arguing that reintegration and rehabilitation programmes are either do not exist or are poorly run (Chanakira, 2013; Chikadzi, 2017; Murhula, 2019; Ndiye, 2014). The lack of reintegration programmes simply means that there was no follow-up from the DCS. Moreover, the lack of aftercare illustrates that the release of former female offenders occurred without prioritising reintegration programmes. Prioritising social reintegration programmes can help in coordinating successful reintegration into society. The participants' narratives resonate with the literature by confirming that there were no aftercare services during the reintegration programme. Extracts from some of the narratives follow:

Interviewer: Explain the types of reintegration programmes that you were exposed to upon your release.

Lolo: *None, I was only exposed to rehabilitation and reintegration programmes during my incarceration period.*

Wisani also did not attend the reintegration programmes and said, *“I was dumped back home, and my family is forced to take me back and support me”* (angry face). Wanda explained her view saying: *“I did not attend any programme after my release”*. Monalisa: *“Mm ... there was nothing from DCS upon my release. The only programmes and skills we acquired was when we were still inside the correctional facility.”*

Interviewer: Explain the types of reintegration programmes that you were exposed to upon your release.

Toto: *Yooh.... (deep breath) I did not receive a reintegration programme from the correctional services. Mmm... It was so painful to be dumped back home without counselling or having a mentor for guidance (sad face).*

The rehabilitation and reintegration of former female offenders in Spain is based on male profiles and does not cater for the unique needs of females (Cerezo, 2016). South Africa too, has rehabilitation and reintegration programmes that have been developed for male offenders and do not entirely meet the needs of female offenders (Currie, 2012). The literature shows that correctional services do not offer reintegration programmes that are designed to help former female offenders during their reintegration times because existing programmes are designed for males. The rehabilitation and reintegration programmes that female offenders receive during their incarceration period can be enhanced so that they are suitable for all genders. The DCS have the responsibility of creating rehabilitation and reintegration programmes that will cater for the needs of former female offenders.

The DCS can fund and establish more halfway houses as an alternative way of offering the aftercare services to former female offenders. Research by Van Wyk (2014) confirms that the halfway house serves as a transitional space for successful reintegration because it provides counselling sessions and educational skills to former female offenders. This section outlines the different reintegration programmes used in various countries that include Australia, Canada, and Russia. The Russian Federation is a programme that was established to assist former female offenders with counselling, employment opportunities, legal advice, and basic

computer skills during their reintegration period (UNDOC, 2018). In Canada, the Elizabeth Fry Society of Canada helps reintegrate former female offenders through permanent housing, and life skills, as well as individual or group counselling (UNDOC, 2018). Victoria Correction in Australia developed the Better Pathways Strategy in 2005 to facilitate the successful reintegration of former female offenders through the provision of housing, employment and family connections (Sheehan, 2014). The Better Pathways Strategy was also developed due to the increasing number of incarcerated female offenders and the rate of recidivism in Victoria, Australia (Sheehan, 2014). Through the partnership between the non-government organisation and the Victoria Correctional services, the Better Pathways Strategy is responding to females' behaviour towards offending and their reintegration into communities (Sheehan, 2014). The Better Pathway's post-incarceration support of former female offenders in Australia includes financial support, family reunification, practical support of women through long-term, affordable secure housing, family reunification, and employment opportunities, as well as access to drug and alcohol rehabilitation and training (Sheehan, 2014). There is also a role played by the Out-care's St John of God Women's Program in the reintegration of former female offenders in Australia, as it supports former female offenders for up to six months upon release from incarceration. Their services include counselling, short term crisis care on accommodation, employment prospects identification, and help to access government benefits (Lackner, 2012).

It is thus clear that there exist reintegration programmes in other countries that are tailored specifically for former female offenders, and the DCS could adopt a few of these programmes and test them for suitability in South Africa. In conclusion, it is clear that there is limited pre-release planning for offenders, which consequently impairs the social reintegration of former female offenders (Brown, 2018).

4.4.3.1 Subtheme 3.1: Women as former offenders

This theme focuses on how former female offenders who were incarcerated for committing fraud perceive themselves. The female pathway of offending and the main motives for committing fraud are also discussed. There are different meanings attached to the notion of being a former offender incarcerated for committing fraud. The subtheme helped in the first objective of exploring the reintegration experiences of former female offenders. The

crux of the matter is that the participants understand the reasons why they committed fraud. The participants were able to see that what they did to their employers was totally wrong.

The study revealed that former female offenders committed fraud due to personal choice, financial problems, and personal greed. Dastile (2019) supports the results of the study by confirming that female offenders commit fraud due to their greediness and financial problems. Furthermore, the main motivation for females to commit crime lies in their economic needs for money (Steyn & Booyens, 2017). For Karen and Wisani, being a former female offender who was incarcerated for fraud taught them that:

Karen: *One must have self-control if you have a high position that deals with the management of finances. I stole from my employer because of my greediness.*

Wisani: *Crime does not pay. Greed and the desire to meet a specific lifestyle is problematic because you can end up doing illegal things unaware.* Karen and Wisani's stories about their greed for money display the dimensions of convenience theory. Gottschalk (2016) developed the convenience theory to explain why employees commit white-collar crimes through the economic, organisational, and behavioural dimensions. Karen had the necessary systems due to the position she held, and it was convenient for her to steal from her employer. Karen falls under the organisational dimension. Wisani was driven by the greediness of living a luxurious life. Wisani's boyfriends used to buy her expensive gifts using the money from his fraudulent activities. Wisani was not as involved in fraud as much as her boyfriend.

The economic dimension refers to where convenience exists to attain illegal financial gain to cover specific needs; the organisational dimension refers to having the necessary access to money and the means to hide the illegal financial transactions; and lastly, the behavioural dimension refers to the ability of the offender to justify and accept their criminal behaviour (Gottschalk, 2016). The fundamentals of the convenience theory were supported by Mostert (2018) who confirmed that female offenders tend to commit fraud due to greed, self-enrichment, and the opportunity to commit fraud. Prior to her incarceration, Monalisa also practised fraudulent activities because of her position at work: *"I was greedy and in life, we need to guard against our levels of greed. I wanted to live an expensive lifestyle that is far more than my salary."* Lolo falls under Gottschalk's (2016) organisational dimension

because she had the necessary access to money and was able to hide the fraudulent financial transactions.

Lolo explains: “*I was so greedy and could not stop stealing money illegally from my employer. I used to hide some transactions somewhere on the system and it was not easy for my colleagues to discover that*” (laughs). Keletso believes that being a former female offender who was incarcerated for committing fraud means that you will always be judged because of one’s incarceration history. Wanda narrated her understanding of being a former female offender who was incarcerated for fraud saying: “*Eeh... (looking down). It is a shame and I regret doing what I did to my employer. Little did I know that I would lose my pension fund*” (sad face). Wanda had the necessary access to money where she was working. She was driven by greed and intended to steal because she was handling and managing a lot of money. She had access to systems that could make cash pay-outs to clients. Wanda explained that she conducted fraudulent activities for five years before her incarceration. This means that she was able to steal and hide her illegal financial transactions from her colleagues and employer. Wanda’s experience of being driven by greed and having access to money because of her position supports the fundamentals of the convenience theory. Most of the participants for this study revealed that they were driven by their greediness to conduct fraudulent activities. The next subtheme is successful reintegration from the former female offenders’ perspectives.

4.4.3.2 Subtheme 3.2: Successful reintegration: our views

This subtheme focuses on the view on successful reintegration from the perspectives of the former female offenders. The subtheme aimed at achieving the second objective by eliciting the social reintegration needs of former offenders. It examines the aspects that constitute successful reintegration according to the former female offenders. This discussion also includes both the aspects that perpetuate successful reintegration and the barriers to reintegration. There is limited literature on the reintegration and rehabilitation of former female offenders in South Africa (Singh, 2009). The rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders in South Africa is inadequate because it relies on the role of NICRO, the Civil Society Prison Reform Initiative (CSPRI) and Khulisa (Magadze, 2016).

Successful reintegration refers to the absence of recidivism from the reintegrated former offenders which further perpetuates community safety (Brown & Bloom, 2009). According to the results of the study, successful reintegration is all about having a supportive family and having a stable job. Research corroborates these findings by confirming that strong family and community support and comprehensive reintegration programmes are vital for achieving successful reintegration of former offenders into society (Brown, 2018; Magadze, 2016; Visher, 2015). Keletso narrated that ... *Successful reintegration is a result of a good family structure that supports the former offender and by having a stable income. I have settled well in my community. Currently, I am managing my organisation. I have hired former female offenders and am still willing to hire more women who need second chances in life. It was through God's mercy that I made it this far. I must empower other women too.* Jowie explained that *successful reintegration is about being able to settle well into community without committing crime. It is also about financial independence.* Monalisa said *“successful reintegration means being able to provide for my children and total desistance from crime.”*

In line with the above extracts, Brown (2018) found that for former female offenders to reintegrate successfully into the community, they must get assistance with securing jobs, social support, and family reunions. Some countries such as Australia, Afghanistan, USA, and Northern Ireland offer reintegration services to former female offenders. Sheehan (2014) postulated that the Better Pathway's post-incarceration support to former female offenders in Australia provides financial support, employment opportunities, family reunification, and practical support to women with funding to support women with long-term, affordable, and secure housing, access to drug and alcohol rehabilitation and training.

The development of the Second Chance Act of 2008 in the USA gave birth to the reintegration programmes which assisted former offenders with employment opportunities, housing, substance abuse treatment, mentoring and family programming (Garcia & Ritter, 2012). It is important to acknowledge the good work being done by some countries in supporting the reintegration of females. The former female offender's perspective can help in identifying a few aspects that are essential in successful reintegration. The perspectives of the participants of this study believe that having a supportive family and being employed constitutes successful reintegration into society. The findings resonate with Dlamini (2016)

by confirming that former female offenders need employment and shelter for them to reintegrate successfully into society. Larsen (2017) also conducted a study that highlights the successful reintegration journey of former female offenders, revealing that re-entry programs such as 'Exodus Ministries' identified motherhood, religion, fundamental life changes, identity transformation, and utilising resources, as essential factors needed for successful re-entry into the community upon release.

The factors that facilitate successful reintegration were discussed and it is vital to include the aspects that hamper successful reintegration. Brand (2016) postulates that homelessness negatively affects the successfulness of the reintegration period, and that having a stable shelter is a basic need for social reintegration (Western et al., 2014). Barriers to successful reintegration include unemployment, lack of shelter, stigma, low self-esteem, and anti-social behaviour (Brown, 2018). The participants of this study did not emphasise the need for shelter during their reintegration period. However, stigma was emphasised by all the participants of this study, revealing its negative impact on their reintegration. The next subtheme focuses on the aspects that former female offenders need during the reintegration *period*.

4.4.3.3 Subtheme 3.3: Our needs; what will work out for us?

This subtheme presents vital needs of former female offenders during their reintegration journey. According to the perspectives of former female offenders, this subtheme presents the core needs that make reintegration a success. The theme has succeeded in the identification of the social reintegration needs of former female offenders. Their needs can shape their desired change or things that will help them to successfully reintegrate into communities. There is a need for reintegration stakeholders to understand what former female offenders need during their reintegration journey, and thus to design proper programmes for them (McIver, 2020). Brand (2016) also studied offender reintegration and found that former female offenders believe that the reintegration process is a psychological concept. **Toto** narrated her story as depicted in the dialogue below:

Interviewer: How are your needs met during the social reintegration period?

Toto: *We rely on the social grant for my mother and the children for survival at home. My mother helps me a lot because I am unemployed.*

Interviewer: What is it that you need the most to maintain your life during the reintegration process?

Toto: *Eeh... money, money, money (smiling). My biggest wish is to get funding to start my own business. 'A salon'....yaaa...It is so difficult to find a job with a criminal record. I was employed after my release and eeh.... (sad face) was fired because of my criminal record. I prefer to be my boss.*

Interviewer: Do you need money only? (smiling)

Toto: *Yes, air... no, wait.... I need counselling too.*

Wanda narrated her story saying that “*I need a piece job so that can assist my sister in buying food for everyone at home where we stay. Emm... in-fact I need money to maintain myself and my children.*” Monalisa explained that “*I wish I can get a better job with a better salary (laughs). You know ...we need money. Life maintenance is expensive, and I need to balance my needs and my children’s future too.*” Unlike other participants who were not working, Keletso was among the five participants who were able to secure jobs after their release. She shared her story in the dialogue below:

Interviewer: How are your needs met during the social reintegration period?

Keletso: *I have a stable job and I’m also a spiritual healer in my church. I have support from my children and friends. As a result, I managed to form fulfilling relationships in my community.*

All the participants interviewed in this study were staying with their families or friends, and so did not complain much about shelter. Five unemployed former female offenders emphasised the need to get a job as one of the major needs during their reintegration period. They believed that employment enabled them to be economically active. ‘Economically active’ means that they are able to buy essentials for themselves and their children. Having a job also limits the burden that is carried by the families or friends they

stay with. Seven out of ten participants in this study emphasised that they needed counselling sessions because they believed that it could strengthen their reintegration journey. This is supported by Van Wyk (2014) whose study of former female offenders revealed that halfway houses play a crucial role in providing counselling and life skills to former female offenders. Magadze (2016) emphasises that it is vital for former female offenders to receive counselling sessions during their reintegration journey as it minimises reintegration challenges. The females who participated in this study stressed the importance of the counselling sessions they received from the psychological and social work services during their incarceration period and had hoped that they would continue beyond their period of incarceration. Furthermore, Keletso narrated that:

I think the correctional department is not doing enough to assist ex-offenders during the process of social reintegration. They should partner with companies, other government departments and NGOs to assist former offenders to find jobs or help them start small businesses. This could in turn decrease the numbers on recidivism. Monalisa narrated her needs too and she said:

I wish I can get a better job with a better salary (laughs). You know we need money. Life maintenance is expensive, and I need to balance my needs and my children's future too. The DCS must come up with a way to support the former offenders during their reintegration journey. The reintegration burden is solely on families and friends of former offenders and not much is done by DCS. As former offenders, we need second chance projects and counselling to strengthen our reintegration journey”.

The above narratives concur with the reviewed literature as regards the fact that former female offenders need counselling sessions and employment during their social reintegration. Sadikie needs funding because she has an idea of starting a poultry farm as a business but does not have start-up capital. She is tired of looking for a job and being discriminated against because of her criminal record. She believes that for her to reintegrate successfully, getting funding for her business from any of the funding organisations would satisfy her needs. Like Sadikie, Toto also wishes to get start-up capital to start her salon. She had a bad experience with one employer and believed that she could be her own boss. On a

general note, it was noted that participants in this study needed employment, funding for businesses, and psychological counselling during their reintegration period.

Ways of enhancing reintegration services include the development of needs based on gender, culture, and race, follow-up services for the released offenders, basic provision of housing and employment, and the overall development of re-entry plans (SAHMSA, 2020). Successful re-entry can be improved by developing an approach that includes the active involvement of communities, families, and the DCS. The approach must include the risk plan, community resources that can be useful to the former offender, the preparations of the affected families, and job security for former offenders (Muntingh, 2009). Moreover, the establishment and funding of halfway houses is crucial in helping former female offenders. Halfway houses provide shelter, counselling sessions, and business skills (Van Wyk, 2014). If the establishment of halfway houses was a priority for the DCS and relevant government departments, it would have been easy to link the needs of former female offenders to the services rendered at the houses.

Five participants in this study were unemployed and emphasised the need for financial stability. According to them, financial stability was about getting a job or running a business. This subtheme 'Our needs, what will work out for us', answered the research objective and question concerning the social reintegration needs of former female offenders. In addition, the urge of former female offenders to job-hunt, answers the second research objective by pinpointing that employment is identified as one of the major needs of former female offenders during their social reintegration into society. The next section summarises chapter four.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a brief overview of the participants' biographies as well as the themes derived from the analysis of the results. The results show that the lived experiences of former female offenders were characterised by broken family relationships, unemployment, stigma, and anxiety. Moreover, acceptance, employment, and counselling sessions were some of their identified needs during their reintegration period. Lastly, nine participants did not receive nor attend social reintegration upon their release. The next chapter will discuss the conclusion, limitations, and recommendations of this study.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings, the executive summary, the recommendations, and the limitations of the study. The main objective of the study was to explore the social reintegration experiences of former female offenders who were incarcerated for committing fraud. The findings of the study are presented in line with the objectives of the study. Some of the recommendations are based on the findings of the study while others emanated from the recommendations of the study participants.

i. The first objective was to explore the social reintegration experiences of former female offenders during their social reintegration

The results revealed that the social reintegration experiences of former female offenders were clouded by challenges such as unemployment, stigma, anxiety and broken relationships. In another related study that was conducted in Kenya, findings confirmed that former female offenders face unemployment, stigma, anxiety and substance abuse, mental problems and broken relationships challenges (Muthee, 2020). The participants were delighted to be released and anxious at the same time during their release day. They felt anxious because they were not sure about the reaction of community members towards them. Former female offenders were welcomed by their families and friends during their reintegration into community. The families of the participants experienced stigma from their friends, neighbours and other people in the community. The results also depict that families of the participants also experienced the stigma because people did not want to be associated with a family related to the former offender. As a result of the reintegration challenges, the participants used faith as a coping mechanism. The participants mentioned that they had attended faith-related programmes during their incarceration. As a result, the participants emphasised that their belief in God was their main source of strength.

Some of the participants experienced stigma from employers when searching for a job and the same participants were disqualified because of their criminal record history. However, five participants were able to secure employment despite the stigma, whereas the other five were unemployed. Among the five unemployed participants, three believed

themselves to be unsuccessful in securing employment because of their criminal records. The remaining two unemployed participants had given up on the search for a job because they wished to get funding to start their own businesses.

The results of the study revealed that nine participants experienced broken relationships with their children because their children had developed a close relationship with their primary caregiver. These participants believed that the incarceration period caused the broken mother-to-child relationships. The broken relationships were also prevalent between the former female offenders and their significant others. Research confirms that it is challenging to mend the broken mother-to-child relationships (Agboola, 2017; UNDOC, 2018). The DCS can use their psychologists to monitor the profiles of the incarcerated female offenders. It can create platforms for building and strengthening the mother-to-child relationships of the incarcerated women. Such efforts can help during the reintegration period because the former female offenders would have nurtured their relationships with their children.

ii. The second objective was to elicit the social reintegration needs of former female offenders who committed fraud.

Acceptance by their friends, children and the community at large are the first things that former female offenders need during their reintegration. The participants viewed themselves as rehabilitated and changed people who wish to rewrite their histories in their societies. According to the participants, they admit that they were driven by greed and the love of money to conduct fraudulent activities. Through their incarceration period, the participants believed that they were accountable enough. Their release was a formal way of commencing the participants' new chapter of their lives and hence they need to be accepted back into their communities. Secondly, counselling was discovered to be a basic need of former female offenders through the findings of the study. Counselling sessions would be helpful because they could help former female offenders in dealing with the adjustment from incarceration back into communities. Counselling could also help in facilitating the aftercare services that the DCS does not render. Thirdly, the results of the study found that the former female offenders highlighted the need for employment. Five out of 10 former female offenders were unemployed and their biggest wish was to get financial stability. Financial

stability for them meant being independent through employment or running a business. It is crucial for the DCS to understand the needs of former female offenders in order to achieve the goal of successful reintegration. As pinpointed by McIver (2020), the reintegration stakeholders must understand what former female offenders need during their reintegration so that proper programmes are designed specifically for them. Without their needs being identified, nothing will work out for the reintegration of former female offenders. The time has come for the DCS to enhance their reintegration programme in order to suit the needs of former female offenders.

iii. The third objective was to determine the role played by the DCS and NGOs during the social reintegration of former female offenders

The findings of this study revealed that nine out of ten former female offenders did not receive social reintegration programmes. Only one participant had attended the social reintegration programmes which included restorative justice, ‘changing lanes’ and anger management. It is crucial for the DCS to monitor the implementation of reintegration programmes. Moreover, the participants emphasised that there is lack of follow-up or post-incarceration support offered to the participants. This means that they were just released, and the families of the participants continued where the DCS left off their responsibilities. Several scholars corroborate the experiences of the participants by confirming that the DCS does not offer aftercare services to the released offenders (Chanakira, 2013; Chikadzi, 2017; Murhula, 2019; Ndiye, 2014).

The lack of aftercare services by the DCS is a challenge and it automatically creates a burden for social reintegration for former female offenders and their families. The DCS can prioritise aftercare services which will in turn minimise the reintegration challenges faced by former female offenders. Notwithstanding the need for social reintegration programmes, there is also a need for the DCS to develop and fund halfway houses. The halfway houses can play a critical role in the reintegration of former female offenders. In a nutshell, the DCS can adopt the best reintegration programmes that are used in neighbouring countries and pilot them in South Africa.

5.2 Recommendations

Having completed the study, the researcher compiled relevant recommendations that emanated from the former female offenders who participated in the study, the reviewed literature and from the researcher's own thought processes. These recommendations are categorised in the sub-headings below.

5.2.1 Recommendations to the Department of Correctional Services

It is vital for the DCS to prioritise the planning and monitoring of the pre-release plans. The pre-release plans help in preparing the family and the communities about the preparation for the release that is about to commence. It is important for the pre-release plans to include the family, the community and the relevant community-based organisations. The main aim is to create a state of readiness about the former offender who is about to be released. The smooth functioning of the pre-release plans can help in accelerating the social reintegration.

The DCS has a role to play in educating the public about the services they render. More emphasis should be put on the following steps: the incarceration period; pre-release plans; the release day; and the social reintegration. The public awareness sessions help in stipulating the roles that families and communities can play in supporting the former female offender.

There is a need for the DCS to restructure their correctional facilities into centres that cater for the needs of female offenders. In order for the DCS to accommodate various genders, change must start during the incarceration period. This can begin by enhancing the current rehabilitation and reintegration programmes. Thereafter, it would be much easier for the DCS to design and implement the social reintegration programmes in a gendered manner.

The DCS can re-design their in-house courses in line with the shortages of skills in the labour market. The main intention is to make sure that former female offenders are employable or self-employed after their release from the correctional facility.

The DCS needs to monitor their social reintegration programmes to see if they meet the expectations and the needs of the former female offenders. The monitoring role could automatically lead to a need for aftercare services. The aftercare services could help the DCS

in minimising the recidivism rate of former female offenders. It is also crucial for the DCS to standardise and coordinate the social reintegration programmes rendered by various stakeholders to avoid duplication of services. The coordination could also help in making sure that the social reintegration programmes are designed in a gendered manner.

There is a need for the DCS to work with the Department of Employment and Labour to develop employment opportunities that target the former offenders or to create second chance projects. Such projects could generate job opportunities for former female offenders. Therefore, the success rate of social reintegration could be accelerated by employment.

The DCS need to exert influence on policy to erase the criminal record as a way of creating a fair recruitment process for both former offenders and non-offenders. This would help in hiring people based on their qualifications rather than their being disqualified by having a criminal record. In essence, this would help former offenders who have qualifications be fairly recruited and increase their chances of being employed. It is suggested and encouraged that the DCS develop and fund more halfway houses in South Africa rather than relying on other government departments for funding support. Halfway houses could therefore be used as the reception areas for former female offenders.

The DCS should prioritise counselling as one of the services rendered during the social reintegration of all former offenders. This could be achieved by appointing more social workers and psychologists at the DCS who work specifically with the former offenders and their families during the reintegration period. The counselling sessions by the social workers and psychologists could help in mending the broken relationships between the former female offenders and their children, families and spouses. Moreover, counselling sessions could also help former female offenders in dealing with social reintegration challenges.

5.2.2 Recommendations for future research

There is a need for future research that emanated from the findings of the study. Firstly, there is a need to conduct a study that focuses on former female offenders who have successfully reintegrated into society. This is crucial because it can serve as a foundation of what is needed by former female offenders in order to reintegrate successfully back into their communities.

Secondly, future research could focus on the DCS social reintegration programmes and their effectiveness for former female offenders. Such research could elaborate on the various social reintegration programmes that are available and the way they are beneficial to the former female offenders.

Thirdly, research could be conducted into the social reintegration voices of former female offenders that cut across various provinces, ethnic and cultural groups. The study could explore and discover rich data from various cultural and ethnic groups.

Lastly, future research could explore the experiences of children during the incarceration and after the release of their mothers. Their voices could be of great help in mending the broken relationships between mother and child.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of the study was the sample size. Only 10 participants were interviewed for the study, however, data saturation was reached despite the small sample. A small sample of one participant is acceptable in phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2013). Indeed, the aim of the study was achieved with the small sample of participants. The second limitation was the accessibility of the research participants. The inclusion criteria for the study made it difficult for the researcher to recruit more participants. In essence, the researcher did not get ethical clearance from the DCS, and this made the recruitment of participants very challenging. Thirdly, the data collection tool was not pre-tested using a small sample that had the same characteristics of the participants. The fact that the data collection tool was not pre-tested posed a limitation for the study.

5.4 Conclusion

The findings revealed that former female offenders faced the following challenges when re-entering their community: stigma and labelling; unemployment; anxiety; and broken relationships. Moreover, most of the participants did not attend or receive reintegration programmes upon their release from the correctional facility. It is evident that participants in this study needed counselling, to be accepted back into society and obtain employment, for them to reintegrate successfully into communities. Therefore, the DCS must pay attention to the reintegration process in the same way that they manage the admission of offenders during

their incarceration. The study recommends that the DCS design gender specific reintegration programmes, increase funding of halfway houses and more effectively coordinate the reintegration programmes that are offered by Khulisa and NICRO. Future research could focus on a study on former female offenders across different ethnic and cultural groups to obtain rich data on the social reintegration experience of former female offenders. The overall limitations of the study that were discussed includes the omission of pre-testing the data collection tool, the inaccessibility of research participants and a small sample size.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Consent forms to participate in the study

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits, and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal, and publications proceedings.

I agree to the recording of the Interviews. I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname

Participant Signature..... Date.....

Researcher's Name & Surname.....

Researcher's signature..... Date.....

Appendix B: Interview guide

Personal details

Age:

Marital Status:

Dependents:

Ethnic Group:

Previous employer:

Highest Qualification:

- a) Think about the day you were released; how did it feel to be released from a correctional facility?
- b) How were you welcomed by your families and friends?
- c) What challenges did you face upon your release from a correctional facility?
- d) What does it mean to be a former female offender who was incarcerated for fraud?
- e) Explain the types of reintegration programmes that you were exposed to upon your release?
- f) What aspects of the reintegration programmes did you like the most?
- g) What is it that you need the most to maintain your life during the reintegration process?
- h) What does successful social reintegration into community mean to you?
- i) How are your needs met during the social reintegration period?
- j) Do you have any suggestion that you think is important and it was not covered?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix C: Participant information sheet

Good day,

My name is Gladys Moabelo and I am a Masters of Arts student in Psychology. I am conducting a study on the social reintegration of former female offenders who committed fraud: a case of Tshwane district municipality. It is hoped that this information may help in improving the social reintegration programmes that are offered to former female offenders. Hence, I wish to invite you to participate in my study. Note that your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will not be held against you in any way. If you agree, to take part, I shall arrange to interview you at the time and place suitable for you. The interview will not take more than an hour. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any given time and you may refuse to answer any questions you feel uncomfortable with answering.

The interviews will be tape recorded and only the supervisor and the researcher will have access to the tapes. The tapes and interview schedules will be kept for three years following any publications or for six years if there is any publication emanating from the study. Please be assured that that your name and personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be included in the final research report.

For more questions and clarity seeking questions about the proposed study can be directed to the following contact details: my email address is 49829165@mylifeunisaac.onmicrosoft.com, contact number is 066 304 3559 and my supervisor's email is emdakam@unisa.ac.za and his contact number is 012 429-6833.

Appendix D: Ethical clearance certificate



COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

23 April 2021

Dear Kwena Gladys Moabelo

NHREC Registration # :
Rec-240816-052
CREC Reference # :
49829165_CREC_CHS_2021

Decision:
Ethics Approval from 23 April 2021
to 23 April 2024

Researcher(s): Name: Kwena Gladys Moabelo
Contact details: 49829165@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Supervisor(s): M. Mdakane
Contact details: mdakam@unisa.ac.za

Title: Exploring the social reintegration experiences of former female offenders who committed fraud

Purpose: Masters

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Science Ethics Committee. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

The **low risk application** was **reviewed on the 23 April 2021** by College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the College Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.



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4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date (**23 April 2024**). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **49829165_CREC_CHS_2021** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Signature : pp



Prof. KB Khan
CHS Ethics Chairperson
Email: khankb@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 8210

Signature : PP



Prof. K. Masemola
Executive Dean : CHS
E-mail: masemk@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 2298



Appendix E: Editing certificate



Editorial Certificate

**EXPLORING THE SOCIAL REINTEGRATION EXPERIENCES OF
FORMER FEMALE OFFENDERS WHO COMMITTED FRAUD**



GLADYS K. MOABELO **19— 04— 2022**

CLIENT ISSUE DATE

This document certifies that the above manuscript was proofread and edited for proper English language | Grammar | Punctuation | Spelling and Style by one of our highly qualified Professional Academic Editors, most of whom are Members of Professional Editors Guilds. The editor endeavoured to ensure that the author's intended meaning was not altered during the review. All amendments were tracked with the Microsoft Word "Track changes" feature. Therefore, the authors had the option to reject or accept each change individually.



Dr Nomzamo Dube

DIRECTOR



Noel Neville Nyathi (MA)

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Imzamo Yami Consultancy enhances the performance of Corporates, Governments, Municipalities, Institutions of Higher Learning and Researchers through Corporate and Academic content creation services which include Social Science Research | Data analysis | Documentation | Copywriting | Proof reading and Editing. We envision to be a leading social science and humanities research organisation providing expert and practical solutions to organisations, municipalities, institutions of higher learning and communities across Africa.